

# **CAL – WEST**

## **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

### **OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND MINISTERS OF CALIFORNIA AND NEIGHBORING WESTERN STATES, INCORPORATED REVISED MAY 6, 1979**

#### **PREAMBLE**

WHEREAS, Churches of the congregational order have historically held to certain truths, chief among which are the freedom of the Christian individual maintained at all costs and all hazards; the right of the local Church to self-government in all matters temporal and spiritual; the fellowship of the Churches in the spirit of love, without compulsion or restraint and free from the bondage of creed or ecclesiastical control and,

WHEREAS, the Congregational Way is one of the great outer and corporate expressions of the inner and individual life; and,

WHEREAS, the needs of our time demand that these timeless principles be revived and given regional, as well as local, expression, and,

WHEREAS, it is desirable that the free Congregational Christian Churches have an organization embracing the entire State, of which members shall be Churches and Ministers, and through which they may take counsel and may realize their common purposes, and advance God's Kingdom:

THEREFORE, we, the Churches represented by delegates here assembled, and the Ministers, likewise assembled at the Congregational Church of the Messiah in Los Angeles, California, this 9th day of February, 1964, do covenant in this State Association of Congregational Christian Churches to walk together in the ways which God anciently revealed to our forefathers, and in such further ways as He may reveal to us, the present form and purposes being hereinafter stated. Amen.

#### **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this Association shall be the Association of Congregational Christian Churches and Ministers of California and Neighboring Western States, incorporated; hereinafter called the Cal-West Association or the Association.

#### **ARTICLE – II**

The purposes of the Cal-West Association shall be:

1. To provide means by which Congregational Christian Churches and ministers of this and neighboring western states may, without in anywise disturbing or altering their present associations and affiliations, consult and advise together as churches and ministers upon matters of common concern to them, both temporal and spiritual;
2. To provide an opportunity for fellowship in a free relation of affection among these covenanting churches and ministers;

3. To aid, in such was as may from time to time be appropriate and proper, the continuance and growth of those Christian purposes and practices which have been the historic and accepted characteristics of Congregational Christian Churches;
4. Upon application by member churches or ministers, to provide for them such assistance, whether advisory, consultatory or otherwise as may be proper and expedient;
5. Upon request by a member church, to give expression to the principle of fellowship in the matters of examining, ordaining, installing, and recognizing ministers in accordance with the historic usage of the vicinage council.

### **ARTICLE III – BASIS OF FAITH**

In accordance with traditional Congregational principles, the Cal-West Association recognizes the Scriptures as a sufficient guide for faith, conduct, and practice.

### **ARTICLE IV – RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBER CHURCHES**

The churches of the Cal-West Association have, and shall retain, among their other rights and privileges, the following specific rights and responsibilities, and no ecclesiastical authority over any church or minister shall be assumed by the Association. The Cal-West Association has no power to ordain, censure, or depose a minister or a church.

Specific rights and privileges of the member churches are as follows:

1. Selecting and calling and dismissing their own minister or ministers;
2. Purchasing, owning and controlling their own properties;
3. Writing their own covenant and/or statement of faith;
4. Deciding upon their own interpretations and observances of the Sacraments and Ordinances;
5. Determining their own basis for church membership;
6. Assisting with organization of other free churches on the basis of free Congregational principles.
7. Ordination is the right and business of the local church, but the following statement of things commonly held among us is germane to the purposed of the Cal-West Association.
  - a. The local church being complete under the headship of Christ in all spiritual and ecclesiastical power has, and shall retain, the inalienable right to ordain its own minister. The local church may call an ecclesiastical council as an expression of the fellowship of the churches, but it shall be remembered that ordination is by the local church
  - b. Ordination by the local church is valid and sufficient, but it is conducive to orderliness and continuity of record that the fact of a minister's ordination be listed with a larger body or bodies. This may include the Cal-West Association.

### **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP**

There shall be two categories of members in the Cal-West Association: (1) voting members, and (2) associate members who shall have no vote.

1. **Voting members** of the Cal-West Association shall consist of Congregational Christian Churches located in the state of California or in neighboring western states, hereinafter called "member churches"; and ministers of Congregational Christian Churches who reside in California or neighboring western states, hereinafter called "minister members."

Churches and ministers may become members upon written application to the Cal-West Association and upon acceptance of the application by the members thereof. Dissolution or resignation of a member church; or death, resignation or removal of a minister member, automatically terminates said membership as a voting member of the Cal-West Association.

2. **Associate members** of the Cal-West Association shall consist of any Christian Church or minister located in California or in a neighboring western state, in sympathy with the purposes, goals and convictions of the Association as stated in this Constitution and Bylaws (hereinafter called these Bylaws). Christian Churches and/or ministers may apply for an associate membership which is granted upon acceptance by vote of the Cal-West members. Associate members are entitled to participate in general membership meetings of the Association but are not entitled to vote. No notice of any meeting of the Cal-West Association need be given to any associate member.
3. **Definition of a Congregational Christian Church.** For the purpose of these Bylaws, a Congregational Christian Church shall be "a body of Christians complete under God in spiritual authority and ecclesiastical power, regularly meeting and worshipping in one [place, united by a mutually owned covenant, in fellowship with sister Congregational Christian Churches, and recognized by the laws of the place in which it is located as a duly constituted church."
4. **Definition of a minister.** For the purpose of these Bylaws, a minister is a person, usually trained and ordained, who has been chosen by a local Congregational Christian Church to serve as its minister; or such person who has served as a minister of a Congregational Christian Church but is retired, or otherwise no longer engaged in full time Christian service; or any properly trained and qualified chaplain, missionary or college or seminary professor. In all cases such a person must be a member of a Congregational Christian Church in California or in a neighboring western state.
5. **Definition of a lay preacher.** For the purpose of these Bylaws, a lay preacher is a person who has not completed his/her academic or theological preparation, or does not contemplate initiating such format study, or has not been ordained, nevertheless, has been set apart by a local church for full or part-time Christian service. In every case a lay preacher must be a member of a Congregational Christian Church in California or in a neighboring western state. A lay preacher may become a minister member of the Association when he is granted ministerial standing by his local church.
6. **Voting and other rights of members** shall be as follows:
  - a. Each member church of the Cal-West Association shall be entitled to two (2) votes through its designated delegates at all Association meetings. Each minister member is entitled to one (1) vote at such meetings. The Board of Directors shall have the power to determine and apply the rules for voting by proxy.
  - b. Before the start of each meeting, each delegate shall register by name and by the church represented. Each minister member shall register by name and indicate the church in which membership is held. Only registered delegates and minister members shall have the right to vote.
7. **Financial responsibility of members** for operating expenses of the Cal-West Association shall be met by voluntary contributions from member churches, from free will offerings made at Association meetings, and such other means as approved by the membership.
8. **Personal liability** for any indebtedness or liability to the creditors of this Association shall not be imposed upon any member of the Board of Directors, a member church, or a minister member who is or has been a member of this Association. Any and all creditors shall look only to the assets of the Association for payment.

## ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

1. **The Annual Meeting** of the members of the Cal-West Association shall be held the first Sunday in November of each year at 2:00 p.m., or at any other time, at a place determined by the Board of Directors. Written notice of the time and place of the Annual Meeting shall be delivered personally to each voting member or sent by mail or other form of written communication, postage prepaid, addressed to the member's address as shown on the records for the Association. Notice shall be mailed or delivered at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting.
2. **The Semi-Annual Meeting** of the members of Cal-West Association shall be held the first Sunday in May of each year at 2:00 p.m. or at any other time, at a place determined by the Board of Directors. Written notice of the time and place of the Semi-Annual Meeting of the members shall be given in the same manner as the Annual Meeting.
3. **Special Meetings** of members of the Cal-West Association may be called at any time by the Moderator, by the Board of Directors, or by any four (4) member churches. Written notice of the time and place of special meetings shall be given in the same manner as for the Annual Meeting of the Association.
4. **A quorum** for any duly called meeting shall consist of delegates or member churches and ministers present and voting.

## ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

1. **The officers** of the Cal-West Association shall be the Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Scribe, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer-Registrar, and Parliamentarian. Officers shall be members of the Board of Directors.
  - a. Officers shall be elected by the members at the Annual Meeting of the Association for terms of one (1) year or until their successors are elected and qualified. Only the Scribe, the Corresponding Secretary, the Treasurer-Registrar and the Parliamentarian may succeed themselves, with tenure limited to five (5) years in every case.
  - b. A vacancy in any office shall be filled by the Board of Directors until the next meeting of the members of the Association, at which time the members shall elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.
2. **Duties of the officers** shall be as follows:
  - a. **The Moderator** shall (1) function as president and preside at all meetings of the Association and Board of Directors, (2) in corporation with the Board of Directors, have general supervision of the business and affairs of the Association, appoint ad hoc committees for any Association business, prepare agendas for all meetings, and (3) have such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board of directors or members of the Cal-West Association.
  - b. **The Assistant Moderator** shall (1) function as Moderator when the Moderator is absent, and (2) perform other duties as may be prescribed by the Moderator and/or the Board of Directors.
  - c. **The Scribe** shall (1) function as recording secretary, (2) make and keep a full and permanent record of all meetings of the Board of Directors and the Association, and (3) discharge such other duties as prescribed by the Board of Directors or members of the Association.

- d. **The Corresponding Secretary** shall (1) send out all mailings, (2) give notices as may be necessary, (3) compile and keep up to date the Association annual handbook, (4) file and keep all records other than the minutes and (5) discharge such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or the Association members.
- e. **The Treasurer-Registrar** shall (1) receive and safely keep all funds of the Cal-West Association and deposit them in the bank or banks designated by the Board of Directors, (2) pay out such funds only on checks of the Association signed by officers designated by the Board of Directors, (3) in consultation with the officers, prepare a budget to be presented at the Annual Meeting, (4) arrange for an annual audit of the Association's books and report the results of the audit at the Annual Meeting, and (5) discharge such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or the Association members.
- f. **The Parliamentarian** shall assist the presiding officer in the proper application of Robert's Rules of Order (to the extent not to conflict with these Bylaws) at all meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Association members.

## ARTICLE VIII – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 1. **The number of members on the Board** shall be nineteen (19) including the officers, the Immediate Past Moderator, twelve (12) elected members. At least nine (9) members shall be lay members and all must be members of member churches. The first Directors shall be those named in the Articles of Incorporation.
- 2. **Responsibilities and powers of the Board** shall be as follows:
  - a. The Board shall be responsible for the conduct of business of the Cal-West Association, but all action of the Board shall be subject to approval or ratification by the members of the Association.
  - b. Members of the Board shall receive no financial compensation for their services as Directors.
  - c. The Board shall be responsible, with the Moderator, for planning the meetings of the Association. Notice of such plans shall be included in the call to the meeting.
  - d. Without limiting the general powers, the Board shall have the power to (1) select and remove agents and employees of the Association and prescribe such [powers and duties for them as may not be inconsistent with law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, (2) manage and control the business and affairs of the Association and make rules and regulations not inconsistent with the law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, (3) recommend to the members that the Association borrow money and incur indebtedness for the Association, and for that purpose to cause to be executed and delivered, incorporate name, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations, or other evidence of debt and securities.. However, each such action must have prior approval of the Association.
- 3. **Terms of office and election** shall be as follows:
  - a. The term of office for each Director, excluding the Officers and Immediate Past Moderator, shall be elected for three (3) year terms or until a successor is elected and qualified. The terms shall be so arranged that those of four (4) Directors shall expire each year.
  - b. Successors for Directors whose terms expire, excluding the Officers and Immediate Past Moderator, shall be elected for three (3) year terms at the Annual Meeting in the year such terms expire. They may be elected for two (2)

consecutive terms, after which there must be a lapse of one year before they may again serve on the Board.

4. **Vacancies** on the Board of Directors shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Directors even though less than a quorum or by the sole remaining Director. A successor Director so elected shall serve only until the next meeting of the Association, at which time the members of the Association shall elect a Director for the unexpired term of the predecessor.
5. **Suspension** of a Director from office, for specific cause, shall be by vote of the majority of the remaining Directors. Such suspensions shall be reviewed by the members at the next meeting of the Association and either confirmed as a dismissal or rejected as a reinstatement.
6. **Meetings** of the Board shall be held on call by the Moderator or by any three (3) Directors. Written notice of the time and place of such meeting shall be delivered personally to each Director or sent by mail or by other written communication, charges prepaid, addressed to each Director at the address shown on the records of the Association. Notices shall be mailed or delivered at least seven (7) days before the time of the meeting.
7. **A quorum** of Directors shall consist of seven (7) members.
8. **Special meetings** of the Board of Director, however, called and noticed, shall be as valid as meetings held after regular call and notice if a quorum is present, and if, either before or within thirty (30) days after such meeting, each of the Directors not present signs a written waiver of the notice or a consent to hold the meeting or an approval of the minutes. All such waivers, consents, or approvals shall be filed with the Association records and made a part of the minutes of said meeting.
9. **Action without a meeting** may be taken by the Board of Directors if all members of the Board individually or collectively consent in writing to such action. All written consents shall be filed with the minutes of the next meeting of the Board of directors.
10. **Board action reports** shall be submitted in summary for acceptance at the next regular meeting of the Association. Upon request by the majority of members present the full text of Board actions shall be read.

## ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

1. **The Nominating Committee** shall consist of six (6) members, with two (2) members appointed by the Board *of Directors* each year for terms of three (3) years. It shall be comprised of three (3) minister members and three (3) lay members of member churches. The Board *of Directors* shall make these appointments at least two (2) months *before prior to* the Annual Meeting and shall designate the chairman *of the Nominating Committee*.
  - a. This committee shall be responsible for presenting at least one (1) nominee for each office *and committee member* to be filled at the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor if consent of the nominees has been secured.
  - b. Three (3) members of this committee shall constitute a quorum.
2. **The Missions Committee** shall consist of ~~seven (7)~~ three (3) members each to be elected by the Association at the Annual Meeting for a term of three (3) years. *The terms shall be arranged so that one new member is elected annually and will and to*

hold office until a successor is elected and qualified. No member may be elected to succeed himself after completion of one (1) full term without having been off the committee for one (1) year. Members of this committee are to be nominated by the Nominating Committee.

The newly elected Missions Committee shall meet at or immediately following the Annual Meeting for the purpose of organization and election of its officers. The outgoing chairman shall convene the meeting and conduct the election of new officers.

- a. In addition to the advancement of Christian giving in general, the Missions Committee shall have as its special concerns: (1) the fostering of benevolent projects within the geographical area of this Association in cooperation with the Missionary Society of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, (2) the responsibility of presenting to **the** membership **meetings** projects which the local churches may support, and (3) the responsibility **to** for **receiv~~ing~~** and **spend~~ing~~** monies for projects approved by members of the Association.
- b. The projects undertaken by the Association through the Missions Committee shall be considered extra obligations of outreach over and above **what that which** is regularly given through the Mission Society of the National Association Congregational Christian Churches.

3. **The Spiritual Resources/Christian Education Committee** shall consist of ~~seven (7)~~ **five (5)** members each to be elected by the Association members at the Annual Meeting for a term of three (3) years and to hold office until a successor is elected and qualified. The terms shall be so arranged that ~~three two~~ terms shall expire the first year, two terms shall expire the second year and the remaining ~~two one~~ terms expires the third year. No person may be elected to succeed himself after completion of one (1) full term without having been off the committee for one (1) year. Members of this committee are to be nominated by the Nominating Committee.

The newly elected Spiritual Resources/**Christian Education** Committee shall meet at or immediately following the Annual Meeting for the purpose of organization and election of its officers. The outgoing chairman shall convene the meeting and conduct the election of new officers.

- a. The Spiritual Resources/**Christian Education** Committee shall be charged with the duty of deepening the devotional life of the Association and its member Churches and ministers by fostering corporate and personal prayer, by conducting devotional services at all regular meetings of the Association, and by faithfully reminding the fellowship of the claims of Christ and His Gospel.

- ~~4. The Christian Education Committee shall consist of seven (7) members each to be elected by the Association members at the Annual Meeting for a term of three (3) years and to hold office until a successor is elected and qualified. The terms shall be so arranged that three terms shall expire the first year, two terms shall expire the second year and the remaining two terms expire the third year. No person may be elected to succeed himself after completion of one (1) full term without having been off the committee for one (1) year. Members of this committee are to be nominated by the Nominating Committee.~~

~~The newly elected Christian Education Committee shall meet at or immediately following the Annual Meeting for the purpose of organization and election of its officers. The outgoing chairman shall convene the meeting and conduct the election of new officers.~~

- a. The ***Spiritual Resources***/Christian Education Committee shall be charged with the duty of assisting churches with Christian Education programs, and of helping to implement the Congregational Way by providing speakers, workshops, or seminars at some, though not necessarily all, regular meetings of the Associations, or at such other times as may be deemed appropriate; and shall seek to provide specific help to the Cal-West churches in their churches in their ***Spiritual Resources and*** Christian Education programs as requested.
  - b. ***Three (3) members of this committee shall constitute a quorum.***
5. The Youth Committee shall consist of ~~seven (7)~~ ***five (5)*** members each to be elected by the Association members at the Annual Meeting for a term of three (3) years and to hold office until a successor is elected and qualified. The terms shall be so arranged that ~~three two~~ terms shall expire the first year, two terms shall expire the second year and the remaining ~~two~~ terms ***shall*** expire the third year. No person may be elected to succeed himself after completion of one (1) full term without having been off the committee for one (1) year. Members of this committee are to be nominated by the Nominating Committee.

The newly elected Youth Committee shall meet at or immediately following the Annual Meeting for the purpose of organization and election of its officers. The outgoing chairman shall convene the meeting and conduct the election of new officers.

- a. The Youth Committee shall provide opportunities for inter-group fellowship among the young people of Pilgrim Fellowship and Heritage of Pilgrim Endeavor in the Cal-West churches by planning meetings to be held at the same time and [place as the regulars meetings of Cal-West, as well as at such other times and places as may be appropriate. ***The Committee*** shall plan a summer camp program, and shall seek to provide specific help to the Cal-West churches in their Youth programs as requested.
  - b. ***Three (3) members of this committee shall constitute a quorum.***
6. The Credentials Committee shall consist of three (3) members, two (2) of whom shall be minister members, to be elected by the Association at the Annual Meeting. Terms shall be for three (3) years with initial election of three (3), two (2), and one (1) year terms. Members of this Committee are to be nominated by the Nominating Committee.
- a. The Credentials Committee shall be charged with the duty of examining the credentials of applicant members and churches ***seeking Cal-West membership, review the facts, then present*** and reporting their findings to the ***Board of Directors, who present the facts to the Association for voting on candidates' approval. Accepting membership shall be reported to the Cal-West Directory for publication.***
  - b. This committee may also consult with and advise local churches and candidates upon request in matters of licensure and ordination, and make recommendations to the Association regarding candidates for "In Care" status.
  - c. ***Two (2) members shall constitute a quorum.***
7. **Other Committees** shall be created by the Association and/or the Board of Directors as shall be deemed necessary to carry out the purposes of the Association as specified in its Bylaws.
8. **Vacancies on Committees** shall be filled by the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE X – AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws maybe amended or revised by two-thirds (⅔) vote of the members present and voting at any Association meeting, providing that notice of the proposed amendment(s) or

revision shall have been given at the previous meeting of the Association. The full text of the proposed amendment(s) or revision shall be printed and distributed with the call to the meeting at which such charge is to be considered.

#### **ARTICLE XI – PARLIMENTARY AUTHORITY**

Robert's Rule of Order, current edition, shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not covered by these Bylaws.

## CAL-WEST CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS – MAY 1979

1. May 4, 1969 Amendment to **ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**  
**Section 4 – COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS**  
Accepted by Association (May 4, 1969 Minutes, pages 1 and 2)
2. May 4, 1969 Amendment to **BYLAWS 3 – COMMITTEES**  
**Sections (b) and (c) – Committee on Missions**
3. Nov 1, 1970 Revised **ARTICLES & BYLAWS** accepted by Association  
(Nov 1, 1970 Minutes, page 1) and  
(May 3, 1970 Minutes, page 2)
4. May 2, 1971 Amendment to **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING**  
**Section 7 – Associate Membership**  
(May 2, 1971 Minutes, page 2) and  
(Nov 7, 1971 Minutes, page 3)
5. Nov 3, 1974 Amendment to **ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS & COMMITTEES**  
**Section 5 – SPIRITUAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
(Nov 3, 1974 Minutes, page 1)
6. May 2, 1976 Amendment to **ARTICLE I – NAME**  
**ARTICLE II – PURPOSE, Section 1**  
**ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP & VOTING, Section 3 & 4**  
(May 2, 1976 Minutes, page 1 and 2)
7. Nov 7, 1976 Amendment to **ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS – Paragraph 1**  
(Nov 7, 1976 Minutes, page 3)
8. Nov 6, 1977 Amendment to **ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS & COMMITTEES**  
**Section 1 – OFFICERS**  
**Sections (d) and (e) and add (f)**
9. May 6, 1979 Revised **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**  
Accepted by Association 79-8-52  
(May 6, 1979 Minutes, page2)
10. Nov 2, 1980 Amendment to **ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES**  
80-8-52
11. May 1, 1983 Amendment to **ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS THEIR DUTIES**  
**Section 1 – OFFICERS**  
**Paragraph (a)**
12. Nov 1, 1987 Amendment to **ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS**  
87-A-9 **Section 4 – Quorum**
13. Nov 1, 1987 Amendment to **ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES**  
87-A-8 **Sections 6, 7 became Sections 7, 8**  
**Section 6 becomes CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

For Consideration as a "Constitution and Bylaw" Amendment  
Cal-West Board Meeting ~ February 26, 2006

Article V – Membership

There shall be two categories of members in the Cal-West Association: (1) voting members, and (2) associate members who shall have no vote.

1. **Voting members** of the Cal-West Association shall consist of Congregational Christian Churches located in the state of California or in neighboring western states, hereinafter called "member churches"; and ministers of Congregational Christian Churches who reside in California or neighboring western states, hereinafter called "minister members."

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3. **Definition of a Congregational Christian Church.** For the purpose of these Bylaws, a Congregational Christian Church shall be "a body of Christians complete under God in spiritual authority and ecclesiastic power, regularly meeting and worshipping in one place, united by a mutually owned covenant, in fellowship with sister Congregational Christian Churches, and recognized by the laws of the place in which it is located as a duly constituted church."

**If a Church is considered to be "in breach of fellowship" (e.g., fails to make a yearly financial contribution to the Association and/or fails to send a delegate to the Annual or Semi-Annual Meeting) for three years, the Board of Directors may recommend that the Church be dropped from membership and the Association may so vote. The minister(s) of that Church may likewise be dropped from membership.**

4. ...