

1 **GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE**
2 **CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A. AND**
3 **CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**

4
5 **STANDING RULES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**
6 **Revised November 13, 2008**
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10 (Capitalized terms used and not otherwise defined herein shall have the same meanings
11 defined for them in the Constitution of the General Assembly of the National Council of the
12 Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and Church World Service)
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14 **ARTICLE I — PROCEDURES FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS**
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17 ***Section 1. Calendar of Meetings***
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19 The General Assembly shall receive a schedule of dates for each quadrennium as mutually
20 determined by both the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors.
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23 ***Section 2. Preparation and Adoption of Agenda***
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25 The General Assembly Planning Committee, in consultation with the Committee on
26 Collaboration, shall prepare an agenda for each meeting of the General Assembly. The
27 agenda shall be designed to advance the total welfare of the General Assembly, NCC and
28 CWS, in light of circumstances existing at the time. The Planning Committee will provide
29 appropriate updates to the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors
30 regarding the upcoming agenda. The Committee on Collaboration will assign specific
31 portions of the agenda to the respective Co-Moderators.
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34 ***Section 3. Procedures for Reports and Announcements***
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36 A. The Committees of the General Assembly, the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board
37 of Directors, when bringing reports to the General Assembly, shall indicate in each such
38 report:
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- 40 (1) an outline of the procedure that was followed in preparing the report;
41 (2) the attendance when the report was adopted; and
42 (3) any negative votes or abstentions when the report was adopted.
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44 B. The General Assembly, when making announcement of actions on matters of public interest
45 shall indicate an analysis of the voting on these matters, including the number of approvals,
46 disapprovals, and abstentions.

47 **Section 4. Procedures for Elections of Additional Officers**

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49 In the event that the General Assembly at any time determines to add additional officers to
50 those specifically named in the Constitution, any nominations for individuals to fill such offices
51 shall be processed through the Nominations Committee and brought to the General Assembly
52 for a vote, provided that:

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54 (1) the person nominated has consented to the nomination; and
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56 (2) the person nominated has the approval of his/her communion.

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58 **Section 5. Procedures for Committee on Reference**

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60 A. The General Assembly shall have a Committee on Reference which shall be composed of
61 up to twelve delegates of the General Assembly appointed by the Co-Moderators during the
62 initial session of the meeting to serve only for the duration of that meeting. The Co-
63 Moderators shall also appoint the chair of the Committee.
64
65 B. Provision shall be made during each of the first two plenary sessions of the meeting of the
66 General Assembly for the introduction of new business. Any proposals which are
67 introduced by delegates to the General Assembly shall be in written form. All new business
68 shall be referred without debate to the Committee on Reference for study and report.
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70 C. If time and circumstances permit, the Committee on Reference may invite proponents and
71 opponents of any proposed resolution to speak to the Committee concerning the text and
72 intent, but the Committee may deliberate in executive session.
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74 D. Provision shall be made in a later session of the General Assembly meeting for a report
75 from the Committee on Reference. Substantive discussion and consideration of items of
76 new business by the Assembly shall be scheduled by the Co-Moderators so as not to
77 interfere with the consideration of previously scheduled agenda items.
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79 E. With regard to any item of new business which requires the expenditure of funds not
80 previously budgeted or the allocation of staff time not previously scheduled, such item shall
81 be referred to the NCC General Secretary and the CWS Executive Director for their review
82 and comment. The Committee on Reference will then consult with the General Secretary
83 and the Executive Director and report to the General Assembly any recommendation of the
84 Committee with which the General Secretary and the Executive Director agree.

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87 **Section 6. Guests and Visitors to General Assembly Meetings**

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89 A. It is desirable for selected guests to be invited to meetings, granted visitor status and
90 recognized by the Co-Moderators, including particularly, but not limited to, such persons as
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92 (1) communion executives and church leaders in the geographical area and
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94 (2) presidents and chief executive officers of ecumenical agencies and organizations in
95 the geographical area.
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- 97 B. Guests and properly accredited representatives of the press shall be welcome to attend
98 open sessions of the General Assembly and its Committees.
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101 **ARTICLE II – PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION**
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103 Section 1. Certification of Eligibility
104

105 A church body may be recognized by the General Assembly as a Christian communion eligible for
106 election to membership in the General Assembly and therefore the NCC and CWS (hereafter
107 referred to as the General Assembly) upon its acceptance of the nature and purposes of the
108 General Assembly as set forth in the Preamble and body of the Constitution and upon satisfaction of
109 the following criteria:

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111 A. It shall have a basis of association on which the communion exists as a Christian body. Such
112 basis of association may be a constitution or may be in the form of a creed, statement of faith,
113 covenant, or other form of confession.
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115 B. It shall have identity as an autonomous and stable church body within the United States.
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117 C. It shall have demonstrated a spirit of cooperation with, and respect for, the convictions of other
118 communions.
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120 D. It shall have a definite form of church government including a responsible central body and a
121 general agency or agencies for the furtherance of its work and for the training of its ordained
122 ministry or similar ministry leadership.
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124 E. It shall have a communicant membership of at least 20,000 persons and at least 50 local
125 churches, unless special circumstances warrant exceptions.
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127 Section 2. Recommendation for Membership
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129 The Membership and Ecclesial Relations Committee may recommend an eligible non-member
130 communion for election to membership in the General Assembly provided that the Membership and
131 Ecclesial Relations Committee has notified the General Assembly that the non-member
132 communion:

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134 A. has satisfied requirements as set forth in Section (1), above,
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136 B. conforms to the provisions of Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution,
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138 C. has expressed a desire to become a member in community with other member communions; and
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140 D. understands its commitment to the other member communions, including participation in
141 leadership and financial responsibilities.
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144 Section 3. Recognition, Representation and Participation
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146 A. Recognition of Communions Formed Through Unions:
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148 A communion resulting from the union of one or more communions which have been members of
149 the General Assembly with one or more communions not previously members shall be

150 recognized as a member of the General Assembly, upon receipt by the Assembly of a statement
151 from the new communion that it accepts the provisions of Article III of the Constitution and that it
152 desires to become a member of the General Assembly on the basis of that Article.

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154 A communion resulting from the union of two or more communions, each of which has been a
155 member of the General Assembly, shall be recognized as a member of the General Assembly,
156 upon receipt by the Assembly of a statement of intention of the new communion to fulfill the
157 obligations of General Assembly membership.

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159 **B. Communion Representation**

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161 The nature of representation from member communions and the relative authority of their
162 delegates and other representatives on boards and committees of the General Assembly may
163 differ as between communions and, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution, is subject
164 to definition and qualification only by the communion concerned. All delegates and other
165 representatives, however, have equal status, responsibility and vote on the General Assembly
166 bodies to which they have been elected or appointed.

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169 **Section 4. Seating of Member Communion Representation**

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171 The member communion representation and subsequent modifications thereof shall be seated
172 when the Membership and Ecclesial Relations Committee certifies that the communion has satisfied
173 the requirement for representation under Article V of the Constitution.

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175 **Section 5. Voting**

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177 On matters providing for vote by communions, each communion shall be entitled to cast one and
178 only one vote. On all other matters, each delegate to the General Assembly shall be entitled to cast
179 one and only one vote.

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181 **Section 6. Privilege of a Communion to Register Dissent or Abstention**

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183 A member communion, may, through action of its delegates to the General Assembly, formally
184 register its dissent or abstention from any action. The registration of dissent or abstention shall be
185 made prior to the adjournment of the meeting at which action is taken, recorded in the minutes, and
186 (if the communion so requests) also recorded in each publication published by the General
187 Assembly of that action.

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190 **ARTICLE III – PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPMENT**
191 **AND ISSUANCE OF DOCUMENTS AND STATEMENTS**

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193 **Section 1. General Stipulations**

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195 **A.** The General Assembly may formulate and issue documents and statements of several
196 types to member communions and to the general public. These Rules define terms and
197 prescribe the procedures to be followed with respect to such documents and statements,
198 which are classified into the following categories:

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Policy Statements

Position Papers

Study Papers

Policy Statements

Resolutions
Issue Papers
Messages

Study Documents
Consultation Reports

All documents issued in the name of the General Assembly must conform to one of these categories and must receive the specified approvals or clearances before issuance.

B. It is recognized that, in the course of conducting programs for which they are assigned responsibility, the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors (collectively “Boards”), and their respective Commissions and Committees develop numerous analytical materials for internal and constituency use as well as a variety of informational and interpretative releases for public use. These rules are not intended to prescribe procedures for the development and release of such material.

C. The General Assembly may appropriately issue in its own name:

- Policy Statements which are expressions of the General Assembly outlining its basic policy conviction or position with respect to Christian principles and their general application in today’s society and world.
- Resolutions which make application to a specific field of principles or policies previously approved by the General Assembly.

D. The General Assembly or a General Assembly Committee may appropriately issue in its own name:

- Issue Papers, Messages, Study Documents and Consultation Reports which deal with concerns and issues which are primarily in its area of responsibility, the application of which is consistent with General Assembly policy.

E. An individual (with respect to a Committee item listed in subsection 1-D above) or group of at least ten delegates (with respect to a General Assembly item listed in subsection 1-C or 1-D above) participating in the General Assembly or a General Assembly Committee may file with the Chairperson of the entity a minority report (or digest thereof with appropriate citation made to enable a reader to secure the whole text), dissent, or protest and be assured of attachment thereof in such document or statement. Whenever the issuance of a document or statement shall be accompanied by a media release, the Co-Moderators shall assure that such release contains appropriate reference to any minority report, dissent or protest attached to such document or statement.

Section 2. Policy Statements

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A. Definition A Policy Statement is an expression of the General Assembly outlining its basic policy conviction or position with respect to Christian principles and their general application to today's society and world. A General Assembly Policy Statement may be approved only by the General Assembly, provided the prior approval of the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors has been obtained as described below. Policy Statements are developed for the following purposes:

- for guidance of NCC and CWS and their program operations;
- for consideration by the member communions;
- for the influencing of public opinion.

A Policy Statement shall be concise. It shall be so phrased as not to bring into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree. Should any new statement reiterate, elaborate upon or further refine any existing Policy Statement, the General Assembly shall indicate at the time of its adoption whether it takes precedence over or replaces all or part of the earlier statement.

B. The General Assembly may consider proposed Policy Statements or revisions or rescissions of Policy Statements from the following sources:

1. A joint committee of NCC and CWS charged with developing and recommending a Policy Statement which is affirmed by both Boards
2. A Policy Statement jointly initiated, developed and recommended by both the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors

C. The procedure for presentation of a proposed Policy Statement to the General Assembly shall be as follows

(i) a sponsorship sheet, specifying the following, accompanies the proposed Statement:

- originating body or persons;
- a statement that both the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors have approved the proposed Policy Statement; and
- proposed distribution and bodies to assume responsibility;

(ii) a supporting document, including the following, accompanies the proposed Statement:

- identification of the circumstances or situation which makes the Statement advisable and timely;
- specific purpose for Statement;
- theological basis of Statement;

- 303 • a brief exposition and evaluation of other major viewpoints on the
304 issue not embodied in the Statement;
305 • titles, dates, and nature of previous actions dealing with the same
306 subject which have been taken by the General Assembly and by its
307 member communions; and
308 • indication of whether it is to take precedence over or replace in whole
309 or in part an earlier Statement by the General Assembly;
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311 iii) the text, accompanied by the sponsorship sheet and supporting
312 document, is submitted for a first reading in one meeting and brought
313 for action at a subsequent meeting; provided that the requirement for
314 a first reading may be waived by consent of three-fourths of the
315 delegates to the General Assembly present and voting upon
316 recommendation of the NCC Governing Board or the CWS Board of
317 Directors.
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319 D. If substantive changes have been made in the text since first reading, the
320 Committee on Reference shall determine whether it is substantially the same
321 document and, if not, may either recommend to the General Assembly that the new
322 proposal be received for first reading only or that the substantive changes be
323 received for first reading only or that the substantive changes be offered on the floor
324 by the sponsoring body as committee amendments. If the amendments are
325 accepted without objection, a new first reading is not necessary. If objection to any
326 amendment is heard, the General Assembly, by majority vote, may order a new first
327 reading, postponing action until the next regular session of the General Assembly.
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329 E. Immediately following the next regular session of the General Assembly at which
330 any proposed Policy Statement is given a first reading, the Co-Moderators shall
331 transmit copies of the proposed statement, sponsorship sheet, and supporting
332 document to all delegates to the Assembly and to the headquarters offices of all
333 member communions. All communions are to be requested to study the proposed
334 statement according to their own procedures, to submit suggestions with respect to
335 substance or editorial change to the Co-Moderators for transmission to the
336 sponsoring body and, at their individual discretion, formulate communion positions
337 with respect to the matter. A General Assembly delegate or Committee, a
338 communion or a Board may prepare an alternative view for circulation to the General
339 Assembly. Any changes to the first reading document must be approved by the
340 NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors in order for a second
341 reading to proceed. In addition, prior to a second reading of a proposed Policy
342 Statement, documentation must be presented setting forth all parties who have been
343 consulted and given input into the proposed Policy Statement, stating that all
344 required approvals of parties have been obtained to allow the proposed Policy
345 Statement to proceed to a second reading, and that all relevant notification
346 requirements have been fulfilled.
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348 F. A Policy Statement adopted by the General Assembly must be approved by at
349 least a two-thirds vote of delegates present and voting, and must receive affirmative
350 votes equal to at least one-fourth of the total authorized number of General
351 Assembly delegates.
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Section 3. Position Papers

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A. RESOLUTIONS

1. Definition: A General Assembly Resolution is an expression of the General Assembly or of one or more General Assembly Committees with respect to a current moral, ethical, or religious situation confronting the churches, the nation, or the world. It commends a matter for reflection or action to member communions. It is based upon Policy Statements of the General Assembly and applies existing policy to a particular problem. It has application only to the immediate situation and does not in itself add to the body of General Assembly policy. It represents agreement by a substantial preponderance of the members of the adopting body that the conviction or view expressed is based on Christian foundations and insights and is a part of their witness to Jesus Christ. It shall be phrased so as not to bring into question the Christian commitment of those who hold different opinions. A proposed Resolution which contains new policy must be processed as a proposed new Policy Statement.
2. The introduction and background of each proposed General Assembly Resolution shall make reference to the Policy Statement upon which the Resolution is based and shall also clearly state the objective to be accomplished by the Resolution and the manner in which its effectiveness may be evaluated.
3. A General Assembly Resolution may be adopted by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the delegates present and voting and, in that vote, by at least one-fourth of the total authorized number of delegates to the General Assembly.
4. Each proposed Resolution shall be supported by such documentation as may be required to facilitate discussion of the proposed Resolution.
5. A proposed General Assembly Resolution may be presented to the General Assembly for consideration and adoption:
 - a) by a member communion;
 - b) by either Board if the subject of the proposed Resolution is primarily within the field of work of that entity;
 - c) by a Committee of the General Assembly if it is within the field of work for which it was elected or appointed; or
 - d) by any individual member of the General Assembly, provided that at least ten other delegates sign the proposal indicating their endorsement and support.
6. All Resolutions that either Board proposes to present to the General Assembly shall be referred to the other Board for review.
7. All resolutions of the NCC Governing Board or the CWS Board of Directors that commend a matter for reflection or action to member communions, based upon a General Assembly Policy Statement, shall be reported to the General Assembly at its next regularly scheduled meeting and shall be received as a report from that Board.

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8. A Resolution may be adopted and issued by a General Assembly Committee in its own name provided that it shall have found that the Resolution proposed is a clear application of existing General Assembly policy and is clearly within the mandate of that Committee. A Resolution adopted by a Committee shall be reported to the next following General Assembly meeting by the Committee chairperson.
 9. A proposed Resolution may be presented directly to the General Assembly if the text with required documentation shall have been received by the Co-Moderators six weeks in advance of the meeting at which action is proposed. The Co-Moderators will be responsible for mailing it to all delegates four weeks in advance of the meeting. Resolutions so processed need not go through the Committee on Reference.
 10. A proposed Resolution that is introduced at the General Assembly by at least eleven delegates to the General Assembly shall be classified as New Business and shall be handled by the Committee on Reference, which may recommend concurrence, non-concurrence, modification, postponement, or referral. The recommendation of the Committee on Reference shall be reported to and acted upon by the General Assembly.
 11. Proposed Resolutions may be received by the General Assembly without being mailed out in advance if they come from either the NCC Governing Board or the CWS Board of Directors.
 12. In the alternative, proposed Resolutions may be received by the General Assembly without being mailed out in advance if they:
 - a) relate to issues and situations developing within thirty (30) days of a meeting;
 - b) address situations which are national or international in scope;
 - c) provide supportive documentation; and
 - d) contain a data sheet stating:
 - why the Resolution is being submitted late;
 - to whom the Resolution is addressed;
 - reference to the policy base;
 - content outline; and
 - nature of action requested.

448 B. ISSUE PAPERS

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1. Definition: An Issue Paper presents a particular position or stance. Because of its advocacy purpose, it need not include nor allude to other points of view.
 2. An Issue Paper may be developed by or at the request of either Board.

455 3. Issue Papers shall not be distributed unless each such paper contains the following
456 statement prominently displayed on the title page or equivalent thereof: "This Issue Paper
457 presents information in support of a single point of view. It is not a statement of policy by
458 the General Assembly, which has requested preparation of this paper, or any of its member
459 communions."
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462 C. MESSAGES

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- 464 1. Definition: A General Assembly Message is a statement developed and issued by
465 the General Assembly or the Co-Moderators in connection with a meeting or an
466 observance with other religious and secular bodies.
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 - 469 2. Each Message should indicate clearly the issuing body or person, the purpose of the
470 Message, and the audience to which it is addressed.
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472 **Section 4. Study Papers**

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474 A. STUDY DOCUMENTS

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- 476 1. Definition: A Study Document is a study and analysis of a subject or a problem which
477 involves substantial ethical, moral or religious elements and on which it is deemed
478 important that the members of the churches be more thoroughly informed as an aid to
479 the formulation of Christian opinions and judgments or on which the judgment of
480 individuals or groups is desired.
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 - 482 2. A Study Document shall clearly and fairly set forth various points of view held by
483 Christians.
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 - 485 3. Boards or General Assembly Committees may determine what Study Documents shall
486 be prepared and circulated in their respective fields.
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 - 488 4. Advance approval by the General Assembly of a proposed Study Document is not
489 required but may be sought if deemed desirable by the entity concerned or by the Co-
490 Moderators. The scope and plan for development of such a document shall be reported
491 to the General Assembly in support of the request for approval.
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 - 493 5. When a Study Document is issued by a Board or General Assembly Committee, the
494 following statement shall appear in a conspicuous place: "This document is issued by
495 the (name of entity). It is a Study Document; it is not a Policy Statement. It is not to be
496 construed as an official statement of attitudes or policies of the General Assembly." The
497 introduction to the document shall include the substance of the definition of the term
498 "Study Document" as set forth in "1" above.
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 - 500 6. A Study Document may be issued by the General Assembly if circulated to members of
501 the General Assembly four weeks in advance of the meeting and approved by a simple
502 majority. When issued, it shall bear an introduction similar to that specified in the
503 preceding paragraph indicating that it is not a statement of the policy of the General
504 Assembly.
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506 B. CONSULTATIONS AND CONSULTATION REPORTS

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508 1. Definition: A Consultation is a gathering of persons from the churches and elsewhere
509 representing diverse points of view whose counsel is desired on a subject specified in
510 the call. It is called by an entity or officer of the General Assembly.

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512 2. A Consultation does not determine policy nor speak for the General Assembly, but it
513 makes its report or recommendations to the body or officer calling it, which will
514 determine what use to make of them. In any such use, the report or recommendations
515 shall be clearly identified as expressing the view of the participants but not necessarily
516 those of the General Assembly or its member communions. The following statement
517 must be prominently displayed on its report: "This document is issued by the (name of
518 General Assembly entity). It is the report of a consultation; it is not a Policy Statement.
519 It is not to be construed as an official statement of attitudes or policies of the General
520 Assembly."

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522 3. Member Communions of the General Assembly shall be afforded the opportunity to
523 participate in a Consultation in appropriate ways, including sending representatives and
524 receiving the products of the Consultation.

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526 4. Minority reports from a Consultation may be submitted to the convening entity, and
527 protests or dissents will be noted and recorded by the Consultation.

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529 5. A joint Consultation may be held by an entity of the General Assembly in conjunction
530 with any comparable agency or body, but participation by the General Assembly entity
531 will be governed by these Rules.

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534 **Article IV – STANDING COMMITTEES**

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536 There shall be the following Standing Committees of the General Assembly: Committee on
537 Collaboration, Constitution and Standing Rules Committee, Membership and Ecclesial Relations
538 Committee, Nominations Committee, Ecumenical Networks Committee, Inclusiveness and Justice
539 Committee and General Assembly Planning Committee. The General Assembly may designate
540 additional committees as it shall deem necessary.

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542 Section 1. Standing Committee Membership

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544 A. Subject to the requirements indicated in this Article IV and in the Constitution, the General
545 Assembly shall determine the size and composition of its Standing Committees, and shall be
546 responsible for the election of the membership of the Standing Committees. The members and
547 the chairpersons of all Standing Committees of the General Assembly, with the exception of the
548 Nominations Committee, for an ensuing quadrennium shall be elected by the General
549 Assembly, upon nomination by the Nominations Committee, at the last meeting of the
550 quadrennium. The members and chairperson of the Nominations Committee shall be elected
551 by the General Assembly at the last meeting of the quadrennium from among the delegates of
552 the General Assembly for the ensuing quadrennium upon nomination by an ad hoc committee
553 appointed by the Co-Moderators for the sole purpose of making such nominations.

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555 B. Vacancies may be filled and persons added through election by the General Assembly at
556 any meeting.

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558 C. Delegates to the General Assembly shall constitute a majority of any Committee, although
559 other representatives of member communions or the Boards may also be elected or appointed
560 to a General Assembly Committee as recommended by a Board committee or the General
561 Assembly Nominations Committee based upon needed expertise for a particular committee.
562 All delegates or other representatives on Committees shall be selected in consultation with the
563 appropriate officials of their respective communions.

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565 D. The membership of each Standing Committee shall conform to the composition, if any,
566 specified in Article V, Section 3.B of the Constitution.

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568 E. With the exception of ecumenical officers, members shall not serve for more than two
569 successive quadrennia on the same committee, and shall be eligible for re-election only after
570 another quadrennium has elapsed.

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572 F. The members of Standing Committees shall take office at the beginning of the quadrennium
573 and shall serve through the quadrennium unless other provision is made by the General
574 Assembly or is stated at the time of election.

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576 G. If a new committee is established during a quadrennium, its members and chairperson may
577 be elected by the Assembly at the meeting at which the committee is established or at any
578 meeting thereafter, upon nomination by the Nominations Committee.

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581 Section 2. Composition and Responsibilities

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The composition and responsibilities of the Standing Committees shall be as follows:

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A. Committee on Collaboration. The Committee shall be responsible to ensure collaboration
586 between NCC and CWS as they seek to fulfill the purposes of their member communions in
587 coming together as a General Assembly and as members of the NCC and CWS. The
588 Committee shall be elected by the General Assembly and comprised of the President of
589 NCC, two other members of the NCC Governing Board nominated by that body, the
590 General Secretary of NCC, the Chair of CWS, two other members of the Board of Directors
591 of CWS nominated by that body, and the Executive Director of CWS. The NCC General
592 Secretary and the CWS Executive Director will assign staff to support the Committee. (See
593 Article V, Section 10, of the Constitution, which provides that the Committee shall:

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596 1. Act *ad interim* on behalf of the General Assembly, exercising in such capacity all powers
597 of the General Assembly except those powers not authorized to committees under
598 Article V, Section 9, of the Constitution.

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601 2. Assign specific portions of General Assembly agenda sessions to the respective Co-
602 Moderators.

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605 3. Perform such other responsibilities as are delegated to it by the General Assembly or in
606 the Constitution or these Standing Rules.

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609 4. Report its *ad interim* actions to the General Assembly at its next scheduled session.

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B. Constitution and Standing Rules Committee. The Committee shall be composed of an equal
612 number of members from the NCC Bylaws Committee and the CWS Bylaws Committee and

- 610 shall be co-chaired by the respective chairs of those Committees. The composition must
611 include at least four delegates of the General Assembly. The Committee shall:
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- 613 1. Formulate and recommend for consideration by the NCC Governing Board and the CWS
614 Board of Directors and for action by the General Assembly amendments to the Constitution
615 and Standing Rules of the General Assembly.
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 - 617 2. Establish and maintain liaison with the Bylaws Committees of NCC and CWS and with the
618 Nominations Committee.
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 - 620 3. Review and recommend to the General Assembly for adoption Standing Rules for the
621 General Assembly and its Committees and amendments thereto.
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- 623 C. Membership and Ecclesial Relations Committee. The Committee shall be composed of (i) the
624 Ecumenical Officers of the member communions who wish to serve on the Committee, (ii) at
625 least one member from each of the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors, and
626 (iii) such other delegates or representatives as shall be recommended by the Nominations
627 Committee and elected by the General Assembly. The Committee shall:
628
- 629 1. Explore with communions eligible for membership in the General Assembly their receptivity to
630 the possibility of membership, interpret the purposes and work of the General Assembly, NCC
631 and CWS to such bodies; and, when appropriate, encourage communions to make application
632 for membership in the General Assembly.
633
 - 634 2. Review applications for membership in the General Assembly and formulate
635 recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.
636
 - 637 3. Recommend certification by the General Assembly of communions as being eligible for
638 membership in the General Assembly.
639
 - 640 4. Make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning participation of non-
641 member bodies.
642
 - 643 5. Annually convene a meeting of Ecumenical Officers of the member communions in order to
644 share concerns and coordinate their approaches to serving the communions and the
645 General Assembly in enhancing the Christian unity work of the member communions.
646
 - 647 6. Determine accreditation, subject to appeal to the General Assembly, of communion
648 delegations to the General Assembly as meeting the minimum requirements for
649 representation as set forth in Article V, Section 2.B of the Constitution, and report its findings
650 and recommendations thereon to the General Assembly.
651
 - 652 7. Assist the member communions to participate more fully in the programs of the General
653 Assembly.
654
 - 655 8. Assist with providing orientation to member communion delegations to the General
656 Assembly.
657
 - 658 9. Explore with the national structures of the Catholic Church and evangelical and pentecostal
659 bodies means to witness together to the body of Christ, including inviting their participation in
660 General Assembly meetings and other events and seeking invitations to participate similarly
661 in their life.
662

- 663 10. Periodically review the criteria, standards and processes for membership in the General
664 Assembly and recommend changes as necessary or desirable.
665
- 666 D. Nominations Committee. The Committee shall be composed of an equal number of members
667 from the NCC Nominations Committee and the CWS Nominations Committee. The composition
668 must include at least four delegates of the General Assembly. The Committee shall:
669
670
- 671 1. Nominate members of the Standing Committees and any additional officers of the
672 General Assembly as required or permitted by the Constitution and Standing Rules, and
673 perform such other duties as appropriate.
674
 - 675 2. Formulate and communicate to the member communions provisions regarding their
676 privileges and responsibilities in naming delegates to the General Assembly and
677 delegates and other representatives to Committees of the General Assembly.
678
 - 679 3. Determine the eligibility of and nominate persons for election by the General Assembly
680 as additional delegates to the General Assembly in accordance with Article V, Section
681 2.C of the Constitution.
682
 - 683 4. Recommend, after clearance with the appropriate officials of member communions,
684 General Assembly members and others for election by the General Assembly as
685 additional officers or chairpersons and members of its standing and special committees
686 unless otherwise provided in the Constitution.
687
 - 688 5. Review the composition of Standing and Special Committees and note any concerns
689 regarding diversity of representation, reporting any such concerns to the General
690 Assembly and to the Nominating Committees of NCC and CWS.
691
- 692 E. Ecumenical Networks Committee. The Committee shall be composed primarily of
693 representatives from state and local councils of churches with at least one member from each of
694 the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors, all as recommended by the
695 Nominations Committee and elected by the General Assembly. The Committee shall:
696
- 697 1. Discern the historic, present and emerging gifts of unity and justice from across the
698 nation.
 - 699 2. Proclaim the need for a generation of ecumenical commitment in and for the third
700 millennium.
 - 701 3. Help the member communions and Boards build relationships with and among current
702 and emerging local, state, regional, national and global manifestations of the ecumenical
703 movement.
 - 704 4. Establish and maintain active, on-going, multifaceted, collaborative networking processes.
705
- 706 F. Inclusiveness and Justice Committee. The Committee shall be composed of delegates and
707 other representatives nominated by their respective communions, including at least one member
708 from each of the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of Directors, all as shall be
709 recommended by the Nominations Committee and elected by the General Assembly. The
710 Committee shall:
711

- 712 1. Monitor, review and evaluate all programs, staffing patterns, policies and operations of
 713 the General Assembly affecting racial/ethnic persons, gender, and persons of all social
 714 and economic classes and levels, and make appropriate recommendations to the
 715 General Assembly regarding the effectiveness or relevance of those programs.
 716
- 717 2. Monitor the nominating process and membership of the Standing Committees and other
 718 committees for inclusiveness.
 719
- 720 3. Identify contributing factors, steps and resources leading to justice and inclusiveness and
 721 make recommendations with action steps to the General Assembly for implementing
 722 policies that increase inclusiveness and facilitate the participation of racial/ethnic
 723 persons, women and men, and persons of all social and economic classes and levels in
 724 the life of the General Assembly.
 725
- 726 4. Monitor the functioning of the General Assembly and its committees to identify barriers to
 727 inclusiveness and make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly for
 728 reducing or eliminating such barriers.
 729
- 730 5. Serve as an advocate for justice against racism, sexism, classism and structures that
 731 historically exclude people in the church and society and as an enabler with the General
 732 Assembly, NCC Governing Board, CWS Board of Directors, Standing Committees, other
 733 appropriate committees and member communions for the concerns of those adversely
 734 affected by racism, sexism, classism and other structures that exclude people.
 735
- 736 G. General Assembly Planning Committee. The Committee shall be composed of (i) a Chairperson
 737 and at least one member from each of the NCC Governing Board and the CWS Board of
 738 Directors, as recommended by the Nominations Committee and elected by the General
 739 Assembly to serve from the conclusion of a regular General Assembly meeting through the
 740 conclusion of the next regular General Assembly meeting, and (ii) NCC and CWS Staff as
 741 assigned by the NCC General Secretary and the CWS Executive Director, respectively. The
 742 Co-Moderators may appoint additional members as needed. The Committee shall set direction
 743 for General Assembly meetings, consulting with NCC Governing Board, CWS Board of Directors
 744 and member communions in developing agendas and planning all aspects of the General
 745 Assembly meetings.
 746

747 Section 3. Special Committees

- 748
- 749 A. The General Assembly may establish or discontinue special committees as may be required from
 750 time to time.
 751
- 752 B. The General Assembly may elect or provide for the appointment of the members and the
 753 chairperson of any special committee. The chairperson and a majority of the members of a
 754 special committee shall be delegates to the General Assembly. Each member of a special
 755 committee shall be in good standing in a member communion and chosen in consultation with
 756 the appropriate official of that communion.
 757

758 **ARTICLE V — PAYMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES**

759 **Section 1. General Costs**

760 General costs of the General Assembly shall be shared equally between NCC and CWS. Costs
 761 of attendance of delegates at General Assembly meetings shall be borne by the communion or
 762 related organization represented by any delegate.
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Section 2. Committees of the General Assembly

The member communions or their related organizations are expected to pay the travel expenses of their members who serve on Standing and Special Committees of the General Assembly.

Article VI – RULES OF ORDER

Section 1. General Rules of Order

- A. Except insofar as inconsistent with provisions of the Constitution or Standing Rules, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, latest edition, shall be the official parliamentary authority for all formal bodies of the General Assembly.
- B. Any one or more delegates to the General Assembly or members of any General Assembly committee may participate in a meeting of such Assembly or committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.
- C. No action may be taken by the General Assembly or any committee by written vote without a meeting unless all its delegates or members consent in writing to adoption of a resolution authorizing the action.

Section 2. Special Rules of Order

- A. The General Assembly may adopt Standing Rules to define further its organization, govern the conduct of its meetings, and prescribe procedure for the consideration and adoption of Policy Statements, Resolutions, Issue Papers, Messages, Study Documents and Consultation Reports.
- B. All recommendations for adoption or amendment of Standing Rules of the General Assembly shall be submitted to the Co-Moderators at least 30 days before the meeting of the General Assembly at which the action is requested; and the delegates of the Assembly shall receive written notice of the substance of the proposal at least 15 days prior to the meeting.
- C. A two-thirds vote of members present and eligible to vote shall be required to adopt or to amend the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

Section 3. Ex-Officio Membership

- A. The term "ex-officio" as used in the Constitution and these Standing Rules shall mean "voting membership by virtue of office" except as otherwise defined in these Standing Rules or the Constitution.
- B. The elected head of any General Assembly committee shall be an ex-officio member of all committees subordinate to that committee.

817 Section 4. Open Meetings
818

819 A. All meetings of the General Assembly, its committees and subcommittees, and similar meetings
820 are ordinarily open to the public.

821
822 B. Meetings permitted by this rule to be open to the public shall be conducted in areas having
823 reasonable facilities for observation by the public.

824
825 C. Observers to a meeting may be subject to any charges or registration fees paid by the official
826 participants.

827
828 D. Notice of meetings shall be published as follows:
829

830 1. Each entity of the General Assembly shall prepare for the Co-Moderators by February
831 1 a schedule of all regular meetings, which shall contain the dates and places of such
832 meetings in the ensuing year. At least one copy of the schedule of regular meetings shall
833 be sent to the member communions by the Co-Moderators and it shall be available to
834 media outlets.

835 2. Special meetings may be scheduled as provided in Article V, Section 7-B of the
836 Constitution.

837
838 E. Portions of the meeting may be closed for consideration of specific subjects if the closed
839 session is authorized by two-thirds of those present and eligible to vote, a quorum being
840 present, and if the vote is taken during an open meeting and duly recorded and entered in the
841 minutes. Documents distributed in open meetings shall be considered public. Great restraint
842 should be used in closing meetings. Closed sessions should be used as seldom as possible.
843 Subjects that may be considered in closed session are limited to issues related to consideration
844 of admission of new member communions; communications with attorneys or accountants; and
845 confidential third party information. A report on the results of a closed session shall be made
846 immediately upon its conclusion or as soon thereafter as is practicable.

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