

Articles of Faith & By-Laws

2006 Edition



ASSOCIATED
BROTHERHOOD
OF CHRISTIANS

www.abofc.org

The Associated Brotherhood of Christians

is an association of churches and ministers working together for the up building of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the spread of the New Testament Gospel.

Preface

The history set forth herein is authentic in essence but may be slightly incorrect as to dates and places. It has been compiled from the best-known facts available. Personalities and places are too numerous to make mention of them all; however, it is necessary to refer to a few of them.

History

For over three centuries, following the outpour of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, the evidence of this supernatural experience continued to be observed. Despite a gradual waning away of the sign of other tongues that accompanied the visitation on the Day of Pentecost, history is replete with many individuals who witnessed a personal experience such as the 120 believers on the day of Pentecost. This is especially true of the days of reformation and the immediate events which followed. Luther, Finney, Wesley, Williams, Moody, and others tell of certain supernatural visitations that came upon them. It was common to see people fall under the power of the Spirit and be heard uttering some unintelligent language.

However, little thought was given to a return to Pentecost until the late 1800s. Just when and where the first latter day visitations were experienced may never be known. However, some positive evidence of the return of the Holy Ghost in Pentecostal fashion was recorded in a visitation at Moorehead, Minnesota in 1892. News of similar visitations was common in the years immediately following that date. Evidence of the latter day outpouring of the Holy Ghost became very clear in the early 1900s as people began to study the scriptures to determine when the outpour would begin. The following description of historical events shows that the Apostolic outpour of the Holy Ghost was not extinguished with the death of the Apostles.

In the year 1900, Charles F. Parham opened a place for the work of the Lord in Topeka, Kansas. This place was to be known as *Bethel Bible School*. The students at this school were intensely hungry for a deeper, more spiritual Christian life. For a whole year, their search of the Bible continued to reveal that such a life was possible. Deeper levels of the Spirit awaited those who would earnestly seek them. About this time, the students began to intensely study the Pentecostal Experience according to Acts 2:4. Could they have this experience today, and if so, what would be the evidence? The study of this subject was strongly encouraged by Brother Parham. The students came to unanimous consent that they, too, could have this Pentecostal experience and that the evidence of it would be the same as that given to those who waited in the upper room, as recorded in Luke 24:44-53 and Acts 2:4. Upon this decision, they became more intense and earnest in prayer. On January 1st, 1901, following the Watch Night service, Mrs. N. O. LaBerge, a student of Bethel Bible School, was gloriously filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance. This was the first person known to have received the Holy Ghost in the Pentecostal Order in modern times.

Following this initial outpouring of the Holy Ghost among the students of Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, the news spread rapidly to other cities and towns, and soon many others had received this wonderful blessing. It spread like a flame from Topeka southward to Houston, Texas. As many received the Holy Ghost in real Pentecostal Order, the city of Houston became a springboard in the spread of the message.

Brother W. J. Seymour went from Houston to the city of Los Angeles, California, where he had been invited to conduct a revival in a Nazarene church. Brother Seymour boldly defended his newfound experience, earnestly alleging that the Holy Ghost filling, according to Acts 2:4, was for us today. On returning to the Church for his next service, he found the doors locked and his friends set against him. However, he found refuge in the home of Brother Lee, who reluctantly received him for the time being.

Brother Lee was not happy with his new guest but being a strongly professed Christian, he could not easily turn him away. This visitor, with his strange experience, seemed to set in motion the wheels of prayer that would soon open doors for his ministry.

In the meantime, Brother Lee became quite stirred. After having a vision of two men, whom he took to be Peter and John, he expressed his desire to receive the Holy Ghost and asked Brother Seymour to lay hands on him and pray. Instantly, he was slain by the power of the Spirit and spoke a few words in another tongue.

A Sister Ashbury was having a cottage prayer meeting in her home and invited Brother Seymour to come over. It was at this home that Brother Lee received further confirmation of his baptism, and almost simultaneously six others were filled with the Holy Ghost in real Pentecostal Order (They spoke with tongues and magnified God.) This was on April 9th, 1906, at Easter Season. Soon this was noised abroad, and tremendous crowds gathered around this home to see and receive this new experience. As a result of the overflowing crowds, it was necessary to seek a larger building for meetings. The meetings were relocated to an old, vacant, frame building at 312 Azusa Street. It was from this humble location that the news of another Pentecost spread to the four quarters of the world.

Thousands, not only in Los Angeles, but throughout the world, soon embraced this glorious blessing. People from all walks of life came and were filled with the Holy Ghost. Among the thousands that received the Holy Ghost experience were ministers from various denominations. From the very highest in the ministerial profession, men humbled themselves to the will of God, and were found speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance. Truly a new day of good things had come.

With this visitation of God and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost according to Acts 2:4, came other revelations of truth. This is particularly noticeable in that many of those from Topeka, Kansas also received the revelation of water baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ, according to Acts 2:38, and the fullness of deity in the Lord Jesus Christ. However, during the years from 1911 to 1915, the message of the Name met severe rebuttal and was almost silenced. Those who received this revelation dared not leave it silent, and those who opposed it became more bitter against it. Finally, about the year 1915, the breach between the two opinions became wide enough that it could not be bridged, even though every effort to avoid this had been made. Now the Pentecostal people were experiencing their first major division. From here forward they were to be divided into two factions: the *Trinity* and the *Jesus Name*.

Those of the Trinity followed Matthew 28:19 as a formula for water baptism. Those of the Name followed Acts 2:38 for their formula for water baptism. This was a regrettable division and wrought envy and harm among the Pentecostal people. Nevertheless, those to whom God had revealed this wonderful truth must preach it. It would seem fitting at this juncture to make honorable mention of some of the early advocates of the Name message, including Brother Frank J. Ewart, Brother Howard A. Goss, Brother Glenn A. Cook, Brother G. T. Haywood, and Brother A. D. Urshan. Those mentioned make up only a few of the many who were instrumental in carrying this Jesus Name message to the whole world.

A body of ministers arose from among these various organizations who were interested in fellowship among all Blood-bought people. In 1933, near the community center of Thomas Town, Mississippi, a small group of ministers and their wives, including Brother and Sister J. W. Johnson, Brother and Sister Henry A. Riley, Brother and Sister Ernest E. Partridge, and Brother and Sister L. W. Onstead met for the purpose of discussing the need of forming a fellowship. This fellowship would include all the brethren and churches who believed the Bread of Life message and would not exclude any other brethren or churches which did not understand the message as long as they desired fellowship with this group of brethren. With much discussion, it was agreed that this would not be another organization but an Association. The name they adopted was the *Associated Ministers of Jesus Christ*. Rev. E. E. Partridge was elected as Chairman, Rev. J. W. Johnson was elected Vice-Chairman, and Rev. H. A. Riley was elected Secretary and Treasurer. It was also agreed that there would be an annual conference subject to date, time, and place called by the officials.

This Association was born not only of desire, but of necessity. The desire arose from the fact that many were being refused fellowship in other organizations. These men were clean, humble, and honest, but because of some minor points of doctrine were disallowed Credentials in other organizations. Therefore, it was necessary to form some legal body, authorized to issue Credentials and any other legal protection that such a body could afford.

After several years of operation as an unincorporated ministerial association, the *Associated Ministers of Jesus Christ* faced several problems that arose in the early part of World War II. Ministers were asking for military exemptions so that they might continue their duties as ministers of the Gospel. To comply with Federal and State regulations, they were compelled to incorporate in order to be recognized as an official body. At the General Conference held at Faith Tabernacle, 408 Magnolia Street, North Little Rock, Arkansas, in July of 1941, Chairman E. E. Partridge informed the delegates that it would be necessary to change the name of the *Associated Ministers of Jesus Christ* to include the laity as well as the ministers in order to incorporate as a religious body. Several names were submitted, and the name adopted as the official body was *The Associated Brotherhood of Christians*, which was submitted by Rev. L. W. Onstead.

In this association there are many who believe in the Bread of Life message, or what is many times called Spiritual Communion. We who do believe this message, feel that our salvation is not contingent upon the observance of the literal sacrament of the Lord's supper. The bread that we break is the communion or fellowship of the Body of Christ, I Corinthians 10: 16. We believe that there is a truth in the Bread of Life message that is the basis for Christian fellowship among all blood-washed, Spirit-filled people. That truth is this: we are all participants of that one bread, and we, thereby, become one bread, and one body unto Him, I Corinthians 10: 17. We feel that Jesus was endeavoring to set forth a lesson on the night of the last Passover that would exemplify this fact. This principle of the Associated Brotherhood of Christians is not based upon not eating the literal elements, but upon the proper discernment of the Lord's body (Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular, I Corinthians 12:27.). We are made one by drinking of the cup of the New Testament in His blood. The basic intention of this Association is to encourage a Brotherhood among Christians everywhere, that we all may be one in heart and soul and be tolerant where we may not agree doctrinally.

For several years, Rev. H. A. Riley published a paper named, *Manna*, which he later changed to *Good Tidings*. This publication was adopted as the official publication of the Associated Brotherhood of Christian and was renamed *Our Herald*.

The Associated Brotherhood of Christians continues to unite people in fellowship for the purpose of reaching our world with the gospel. Fellowship is key to accomplishing the mission Jesus has passed on to us to complete. Now, more than ever, we require His Spirit and the fellowship of our brothers and sisters in Christ to finish this race. From the foundation of this rich history, the Association will go forward, arm in arm, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation until the day of His glorious return.

Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this association shall be to affect a more efficient ministry, that we may be better fitted to promulgate the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and that we may be recipients of such blessings and legal protection as such association may bring to us. To point the lost to the way of salvation and urge all believers to seek a Spirit-filled life. To publish through pulpit and press at home and abroad the true plan of salvation as given to the world on the day of Pentecost. To establish new churches and set them in biblical order insofar as possible. To ordain ministers and workers and send them forth with license or credentials to perform the duties of the Christian ministry. The aim of this association is not to build a fellowship around and on some controversial issues of doctrine, but to promote Christian fellowship which will endeavor to *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace*. Remembering that the Lord, Himself, prayed for the unity of all His people everywhere. *That they may be one, (John 17:20-21), and by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples - that the world may believe that God sent not His Son into the world to "condemn" the world; but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17).*

Discipline

The Word of God as taught and revealed by the Holy Ghost (John 14:26; I Corinthians 2:10-13) shall constitute our Discipline, Rules of Order and Doctrine.

Preface To Articles of Faith

Be it understood that this is a Christian association, based upon brotherly love and Christian principles. Its intentions are to promote Christian fellowship and to encourage unity of the Spirit among all Christians everywhere, not making controversial issues and doctrinal convictions a test of fellowship. We recognize, acknowledge, and appreciate the fact that there are convictions, revelations, and doctrinal truths revealed to some Christians which are not revealed to, nor understood by others. In such cases, the Associated Brotherhood of Christians recommends that both parties be considerate of each other, recognizing the fallibility of man, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace until we all come to the unity of the faith. This being in effect the general principles of this association, we, therefore, will follow in our Articles of Faith with only the fundamental truths we deem necessary for our general good.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

- A. The Scriptures** - We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, infallible in its original writings. (*II Timothy 3: 16, II Peter 1:21*)
- B. The Godhead** - We believe in the one ever living, eternal God, infinite in power, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose, in His absolute deity. That this one true God has revealed Himself as Father in creation; as Son in redemption; and as the Holy Ghost in this church age. That God was manifest in the flesh (Jesus Christ), justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (*I Timothy 3: 16*). That the fullness of deity was revealed and manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ; and that Jesus is the Name of God for this dispensation. (*I Corinthians 8:6, II Corinthians 5: 1, Matthew 1:21, Ephesians 4:6*)
- C. Fallibility of Man** - We believe in the fallibility of all mankind. Through the transgression and fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, all men are declared to be sinners, therefore, in order to be restored to favor with God, all must be born again. (*John 3:3-5*)
- D. Suffering of Christ**- We believe in the vicarious suffering of Jesus Christ the Son of God; that through His shed blood, an atonement for sin has been made for all mankind. (*Isaiah 53:1-12, Matthew 26:28, Hebrews 9: 11-28*)
- E. The Crucifixion and Resurrection** - We believe that Jesus Christ was rejected by the world, especially His own nation, was tried and suffered under the hands of Pilate, died on the cross by crucifixion, was buried, rose again the third day, His resurrection being confirmed by many definite proofs. He was seen by many witnesses for about forty days after His resurrection, after which He ascended on high, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God, there to intercede and advocate for all believers. (*Hebrews 12:2*)
- F. Grace** - We believe that our present dispensation is a time of grace, that we are saved by grace through faith, not of works lest any man should boast. (*Ephesians 2:4-10*)
- G. New Covenant** - We believe that God took away the first covenant that He might establish the second (*Hebrews 8:6-10, 10:9*) and that under this new covenant in this dispensation, none of the statutes of the Mosaic Law are binding. "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." (*Romans 7:6*) "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." (*Romans 10:4*) "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached." (*Luke 16:16*)

H. The Church - Jesus said: "Upon this Rock I will build My church." We believe that it is a Spiritual house (church) to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices (*I Peter 2:5, See John 4:23 and Hebrews 13:15-16*).

I. Church Membership:

- a. Repentance - We believe in and teach repentance and faith toward God as the first step for the sinner, as there is but one true entrance into the great Spiritual Church which is the body of Christ (*Ephesians 1:22-23*). God accepts a sinner only when he repents. Therefore, repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Jesus' Name (*Luke 24:45-47, Acts 2:37-38*).
- b. Baptism - We believe in water baptism by immersion and that it should be administered in the name of the Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ, or Lord Jesus Christ as practiced by the Apostles (*See Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, I Corinthians 1:13, Colossians 3:17*).
- c. Baptism of The Holy Ghost - We believe in and teach the baptism of the Holy Ghost for believers, witnessed by the physical sign of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (*Acts 2:41, 10:46, 19:6*). This procedure is recognized as being the teaching of the Apostles regarding the New Birth and as placing us as members of the New Testament Church (*Acts 2:41, 47, I Corinthians 12:13, 18*).

J. Holiness - Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God, for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord (*II Corinthians 7:1, I Thessalonians 4:7, Hebrews 12:14, I Peter 1: 15-16*).

K. Divine Healing - Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement and is a privilege for believers. As the Lord made our bodies, it is not incredible that He should heal them (*Isaiah 53:5, Mark 16:15-18, James 5:14*).

L. Spiritual Gifts - We believe the nine gifts of the Spirit should be manifested in the church today, and that all Spirit-filled believers should earnestly covet the best gifts for the edification of the church (*I Corinthians 12:8-11, 14:1*).

M. Fruits of The Spirit - We believe the Spirit-filled believers will produce the fruit of the Spirit in their lives and their walk will be according to Godliness and holy living (*Galatians 5:22-23, I John 2:6, I Peter 1:16; Titus 2: 11-13; II Corinthians 7:1*).

N. Communion - Whereas the word Communion expresses fellowship, we believe in Communion with God through the Spirit as typified in the Shadows of the Old Testament and taught by Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament. In order to have this Fellowship with God we must be a partaker of the Flesh and Blood of Jesus through the Spirit, as there is no Spiritual Life outside of Him. We believe that the literal emblems of bread and fruit of the vine used at the Passover were shadows of good things to come. As they were partaking of these emblems Jesus said, "This is MY BODY, which is broken for you," and "This is MY BLOOD which is shed for the remission of sins." (*Matthew 26:17-29, Mark 14:12-25, Luke 22:1-20, I Corinthians 11 :23-27*) That, since Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us (*I Corinthians 5:7*), the Passover instituted at the time of the exodus of Israel from Egypt (*Exodus 12*) is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (*Romans 14: 17*). When we are all baptized into the one body by the Holy Ghost we are made to drink of the one Spirit (*I Corinthians 12:13*) So then, the cup of Blessing which we bless is the Communion (fellowship) of the Blood of Christ and the bread which we break is the Communion (fellowship) of the Body of Christ (*I Corinthians 10:16*). For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread (*I Corinthians 10:17*). Hence, we believe in partaking of the flesh and the blood of the Lord THROUGH THE SPIRIT as referred to by the scripture. (*John 6:48-63*). We hold then that partaking of natural or literal elements is not essential to our salvation and therefore, refrain from partaking thereof, but with due Christian courtesy, we respect those who may hold an opposite view.

- O. Foot Washing** - Since Jesus did not wash the disciples' feet in public, in the temple, or the synagogue, and since there is no scriptural reference to it other than as a common custom, we believe He was giving us an example of love and humility (*Luke 22:24-27, John 13:12-15, I Timothy 5:10*). Hence, we do not support the practice of washing feet in public as a church ordinance.
- P. Second Coming of Christ** - We believe in the second personal coming of the Lord as taught by the Scriptures (*Acts 1:11, I Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28*).
- Q. Resurrection** - We believe in the resurrection of the dead (*Job 19:26, Isaiah 26:9, Daniel 12:2, Revelations 20:11-15*).
- R. Judgement** - We believe that all will appear before the judgement seat of Christ to be judged according to the deeds done in the body (*Ecclesiastes 12: 14, II Corinthians 5:10, Revelations 20:11-15*).
- S. The Sabbath** - We do not hold that our salvation is contingent upon keeping of certain days or times (*Romans 14:5-6, Galatians 5:1, Colossians 2: 16*).
- T. Marriage and Divorce** - We believe that divorce and remarriage is unscriptural and forbidden, except where fornication (as defined by the scripture) is proven to be the cause of separation (*Matthew 19:3-17; I Corinthians 5:1*).
- U. Moral Standard** - We believe in the highest possible standard of moral living. Therefore, we do not tolerate the doctrine of Free Love, Spiritual Companionship, Social Purity or any other kindred teachings that might lead to immoral conduct.
- V. Believer's Security** - We believe that it is possible for those who have been enlightened and have tasted of the good Word of God to fall from their steadfastness in Christ (*Hebrews 3:12-19, II Peter 3:17*). Therefore, the believer is secure from the judgements of God only as he maintains his fellowship with Christ.
- W. Meat and Drinks** - We believe in total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks. We believe that the eating of meats referred to by Moses under the Law and the drinking of tea or coffee is not obligatory to our Christian experience. However, anyone may refrain from these things at his or her own discretion but must not try to impose such personal opinions upon others.
- X. Redemption of the Body** - We believe we shall receive our redeemed bodies at the second appearing of our Lord (*Romans 8:22-23; I Corinthians 5:1-5, 15:43-55; I Thessalonians 4:16-17*).
- Y. War** - We believe that war comes from the enemy of mankind and that it is condemned by the Word of God: That if smitten on one cheek, we as Christians should "turn the other also." (*Matthew 5:39; Luke 6:29*). Thou shalt not kill (*Matthew. 5:21*). We therefore, desire to be loyal to our government and, above all, loyal to God, and since the Scriptures forbid us to kill, we recommend that our members accept the provision offered them by the laws of our government which gives them the privilege to register as a conscientious objector to war in any form, or to register as an objector to combat duty where the bearing of arms is required.
- Z. Seven Principles of the Doctrine of Christ** - We believe in the seven principles of the doctrine of Christ (*Hebrews 6: 1-2*), with all their connections throughout the New Testament as revealed by the Holy Spirit from time to time.

Government

We believe in local church government and that each church is a unit within itself whose militant supervisory head is the Pastor. The Associated Brotherhood of Christians does not believe in, nor condone lordship, official hierarchy or dictatorship over the affiliated ministry and churches, but that each church is a local unit within itself. The Pastor, as overseer of the flock, is responsible to GOD alone for the leadership of his charge. The pastor, at his own discretion, may choose any assistant pastor, deacons, or other officials he deems necessary for the welfare of the local church. These officials should be agreed upon and properly installed by the membership of said church. All church school teachers, youth leaders, welfare workers, and any auxiliary work, or officials of such work, shall be chosen by the pastor and properly installed by the membership of the church. Any of the above-named officials, by reason of the lack of interest in their work or failure to cooperate with the Pastor or other officials of the church, for the good of the church in general may at any time be replaced by the Pastor. Should any pastor (or minister) fall into conduct unbecoming a minister, the church may ask such a one to resign. If he will not willingly do so, they may appeal for help to any three ministers of this "Brotherhood" who will take evidence of the matter and render a fair trial. If a decision cannot be reached, they may postpone final action until a General Conference, then the matter will be brought before the Conference for disposition.

Financial Plan

We believe in the giving of tithes and offerings as the financial plan for the support of the gospel work. However, we recommend that each Pastor organize the plan most suitable for his locality of work.

Ownership Of Church Property

Church property may be deeded to the church, naming local trustees as parties of the second part, or may be deeded to The Associated Brotherhood of Christians, naming the official board as trustees or parties of the second part. Trustees are acting in legal status only, and do not attempt to direct matters of the local churches, except where the purchase, sale or exchange of property is involved. Property deeded to The Associated Brotherhood of Christians may be withdrawn from its protection by a signed petition of four-fifths of the membership of the local church requesting such a change, all expenses to be paid for by the requesting parties.

Resolution I

A motion was passed requiring all Affiliate Churches to pay an annual membership fee of \$50.00. New churches desiring affiliation would be required to submit the following to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Association:

1. Completed application requesting membership
2. List of the church board
3. Copy of the church deed
4. Copy of the church minutes, in which the vote was taken to affiliate with the Associated Brotherhood of Christians.

(Passed 1990 Conference)

Resolution II

- A. A motion was passed requiring all affiliated churches to adhere to the by-laws of the Association, and the leadership of said Churches must be a member of the Association. *(Passed 1999 Conference)*
- B. Deeded Churches of this Association, (naming the official board as "Party of the First Part") shall not appoint or elect a Pastor that is not in fellowship with this Association. Only exceptions will be with the permission of the official board of this association. *(Passed 1999 Conference)*
- C. Deeded Church property shall not be removed from the trusteeship of the official board of the A. B. of C. when said property has been deeded by the founding Pastor or said church membership.

The existing church membership may remove itself from fellowship of this association and its protected tax status as provided by The by-laws of this association. Nevertheless, the property will remain under the Associated Brotherhood of Christians. (*Passed 1999 Conference*)

General Instructions to Our Pastor and Members

Suggested Scriptures to read in connection with the instructions and recommendations offered below:

Conduct - *II Kings 6:1-3, Mark 2:1-4, Ephesians 4:1-3, Romans 13:10-13, I Timothy 3:7, 1 Peter 1:13-15, 2:11-13*

Duties - *I Timothy 2:1-3, II Timothy 4:1-2*, also read the entire Epistle of St. Paul to Titus. It covers both the conduct and duties of the ministry.

- A. Any lay minister or licensed worker who identifies himself or herself with any local church should consult with the pastor before conducting services or revivals in the local vicinity where the church is established. Such meetings should be so conducted as to be of good to the local church.
- B. All Pastors should approve and cooperate as far as possible with evangelistic efforts in nearby open fields. Pastors and evangelists working together will prove beneficial and successful.
- C. Any Minister or licensed worker affiliated with this association, but who is not a member of a local church, shall practice ministerial courtesy and discretion by consulting with the local pastor when conducting services in the immediate vicinity of an established church. Failure to do so could be deemed a misdemeanor on the part of the offending party and could result in the cancellation of credentials. Proper ministerial courtesy will avoid any unpleasant feelings and will also work for the good of all concerned. Ministers of the gospel should have proper training in ministerial ethics and principles, especially when occupying the office of pastor.
- D. We believe it to be unwise to try to establish churches too close to those of like faith. Where the establishing of new churches will infringe upon the church already established, there should be a thorough agreement between both churches. Ministerial guidelines should be established to help insure proper communication between the presbyters, and the churches in their respective states.
- E. Any lay-minister or worker identifying themselves with a local church will be expected to contribute to both its temporal and spiritual welfare. Affiliate churches should have established guidelines concerning a departing pastor, to prevent the lack of ministry within the church, and/or a possible take-over by another organization, resulting in the loss of property and/or the congregation.
- F. Should any disagreement arise between our ministers that cannot be settled satisfactorily between themselves, they may each choose one or two other ministers, and those chosen selecting one more to make the odd number. Those chosen shall hear the evidence and settle the matter in the most brotherly way possible. If no agreement is possible, they may appeal the matter to the official board, who shall endeavor, in the fear of God, to offer a satisfactory agreement. Such matters will be handled at a general conference only, when official board is asked to intervene, unless provision is made otherwise. A deeded church which has given oversight of the church property to the official board of the A. B. of C. as trustees of said property, must give in advance a one-year notice of any new projects or change to church property, so proper planning can be done.
- G. Any minister or worker departing from holy living and the principles of fellowship of this association will be given a fair and impartial trial as per "Paragraph F" and if found guilty shall be discontinued from the ministerial record. Their name shall be published in *Our Herald* the official publication of this organization as "discontinued"; no further statement being deemed necessary. Ministers who fail to tithe and support the association, as required by the by-laws, shall be disqualified from holding any official office or leadership position in the Associated Brotherhood of Christians.
(*Passed 1999 Conference*) - This will supersede requirements of our application for minister's and worker's license as worded in this manual. A financial report will be given to the official board by the secretary prior to the conference business meeting, to ensure that nominations for any office has complied.

Restrictions And Limitations

- A. Ministers are not necessarily limited to or restricted by the "Articles of Faith" stated in this minute book, except as to the fundamentals of salvation, holy living, and the principles of fellowship of this association.
- B. Such Ministers will be at liberty in their own pulpits, but not to the detriment or opposition of our association at any time.
- C. If, at any time, a minister shall be guilty of opposing and voicing opinions against this association and such acts be proven, they shall surrender their credentials and forfeit their afore mentioned privileges.

Declaration: The Associated Brotherhood of Christians, its ministers, and its churches denounce same-sex relationships and marriages. While our hearts and prayers go out to those who are involved in such relationships, anyone choosing such a lifestyle would be disqualified from membership in our association and its affiliated churches. We have no desire to discriminate against any individual or group, but according to the Holy Scriptures, such relationships are considered sinful.

(Leviticus 20: 13 "If man lie with mankind as he lieth with a woman, both have committed an abomination."

Romans 1:16-32 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man... Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. They changed the truth of God into a lie. For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: women and men changed their natural use and burned in their lusts one toward another and received in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient."

II Timothy, 3: 1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves ... without natural affection ...from such turn away."

(Passed 1999 Conference)

OFFICIAL BOARD

The official board of this association shall consist of chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary-treasurer. Anyone who serves on the official board must have financially supported the association for at least three consecutive years prior to election.

(1998 Conference)

Amendment: No licensed minister will be permitted to be a member of the official board who does not believe in principle and in practice, the fundamentals and essentials of the Pentecostal/Apostolic doctrines, and also the Bread of Life message according to the Holy Scriptures, as are herein set forth in this manual.

(2005 Conference)

Duties of the Official Board are defined as follows:

Chairman: His duties shall be to act as agent in all legal matters pertaining to the association. He shall sign all documents, licenses, and credentials of the association. He shall officiate at all general conferences and shall be duly respected when present at any state, district, or special called conference. He shall offer every legal and spiritual help possible for the good of the work in general. Such office should not be filled by mere acts of political maneuvers, but the one chosen and accepted should have a definite call to such an office and must have proven this calling. He must have been a member of this association for at least five years before being eligible for election. He shall serve for two years, or as long as his life and conduct are in harmony with the Word of God, and conducive to the good of the work in general. He may resign at will.

Vice-Chairman: His duties shall be to sign all documents, licenses, and credentials. In the absence of the Chairman, he shall act in business matters for the association, and at all conferences. He may be called upon by the chairman to act at any time. He shall be duly respected at all state, district, special-called, and general conferences. He shall be chosen and elected with utmost precaution. He must have been a member of this association for at least three years before being eligible for election. He shall serve for two years, or as long as his life and conduct are in harmony with the Word of God, and conducive to the good of the work in general. He may resign at will.

Secretary-Treasurer: His duties shall be to keep all records, sign all documents, licenses, and credentials. To keep a record of all monies received and disbursed. He shall be chosen with utmost precaution and shall serve for two years, or as long as his life and conduct are in harmony with the Word of God, and conducive to the good of the work in general. He may resign at will.

Declaration: The national secretary-treasurer shall provide the Arkansas state presbyter with the necessary funds to establish a bank account for the purpose of repairs and upkeep of our national campground. these funds will come from the general account.

Executive Orders

In cases where problems arise in local churches that cannot be resolved by the pastor and congregation, the party or parties of that congregation may request the official board or their appointed representatives to mediate and agree to work with such in a spirit of cooperation. If all attempts fail to reach an agreement, the requesting church parties may request that the official board of the association enact the executive order relating to their church problems. By doing so, the church is entrusting to the association the settling of their issues and the dissolving of their impasse. These orders can only be enacted with the full agreement of the official board and the governing membership of the requesting church. Once enacted, the actions cannot be withdrawn until the conclusion of the matter. The request for such action shall be in writing by the requesting party. The minutes relating to this action shall be considered records of the association and will be kept on file by the secretary of the association. AT NO TIME CAN THE EXECUTIVE ORDERS BE USED TO REMOVE CHURCH PROPERTY FROM THE FOUNDING PASTOR OR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

Executive Order:

1. Learning by past experiences, in the loss of church properties from church congregations, in the area of church government, we hereby reinforce the by-laws for the protection of all churches of the association. Hereafter, this point of order and establishment is standard: In all churches of the Associated Brotherhood of Christians, if problems should arise between the pastor and governing body of a church, and/or its congregation, where sin is not a factor on the part of the pastor, the official board (being the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary-treasurer, or their appointed representatives) shall act as mediators in such cases. The final decision of the official board and a majority of the church governing membership of the requesting church, shall be the final action in such matters and binding upon all parties. The churches, their membership, and ministers shall accept this action, and consider the subject closed, so that the church can go forth.
2. Any associate minister of an Associated Brotherhood of Christians church that shall cause a problem to arise for his pastor and church congregation, where sin is not an issue on the pastor's behalf, that associated minister shall be considered a novice by his actions, attempting to usurp the authority of the pastor. The official board of the association, alone with the pastor and congregation loyal to the pastor, will take whatever action necessary to remove that associate minister, and any others causing a problem for that pastor and church body.

3. In the case of a founding pastor: If a pastor is not in sin, any minister attempting to take the leadership of that church; the official board of the association shall stand by the founding pastor. If any member or members should not choose to follow the leadership of the founding pastor, the accepted rule of this association shall be hereafter; that the contentious party shall leave and start their own work, but not within a twenty-mile radius of the established church. Under no circumstances shall the property or funds of the founding pastor or church congregation be taken from the church body or its founding pastor. Be assured, it will take the full action of the official board to implement these orders. No one person could or should wield such power alone. All records of such actions will be kept by the secretary of the association for the protection of all involved.
(Passed 2003 Conference / Revised 2004 Conference)

State Presbyters

State presbyters will be appointed by the official board and approved by the Associated Brotherhood of Christians ministry. Their duties shall be to cooperate faithfully with the general body, and to work faithfully for the up building of the state work in his particular state. He shall sign all applications for license and credentials coming from his state, as long as the applicants meet all requirements of our by-laws, including Resolutions D & H, and the general instructions to our pastors and members. He shall take the oversight of all state conventions and state work. He shall recognize all members of the official board when present. He shall assist in his state and is not to lord over his fellow ministers. He shall act as advisory council to the official board. He shall serve for two years.

Amendment I: The official board shall appoint the state presbyters, except in states where the number of ministers is large enough to hold election. Currently, those states are Arkansas, California, and Mississippi. In those states where there are too few ministers to appoint a state presbyter, the chairman of the association shall act as presbyter for the purpose of signing applications.

Amendment II: The national campground, being Camp Mulberry, shall be under the supervision of the Arkansas state presbyter.

(Revision) A Campground Overseer shall have general oversight/supervision of Camp Mulberry's maintenance/ improvements via authorization from the official board.

Amendment III: All State Presbyters shall have a meeting at the general conference, for the purpose of presenting proposals to the association and to discuss any problems that they encounter.
(1990 Conference)

Youth Department

Youth secretary-director: to receive all monies, mails, and other materials for use in the youth work in general. To have charge of and direct youth programs at all general conferences and any other special called activities of the youth. Church visitation is not required but is commendable when possible to do so. Insofar as possible, our churches will remain open for visits from this official. He shall serve for two years, or as long as life and conduct are conducive to the good of this association. He may resign at will.

Amendment I: The National Youth Director should receive \$100.00 from the youth account for travel expenses. (1989 Conference)

Amendment II: The national youth director should work through the state youth leader to establish fundraising and work projects in order to:

1. Enhance the camp facilities.
2. Develop Projects
3. Establish State Youth Leaders responsibilities for certain Campground projects.
4. State Youth Leader should be responsible for reporting the number of youth from that state to the National Youth Director.
5. Develop State-wide fundraisers.
6. Develop State-wide youth drives to obtain campers.

Resolutions: The leaders of the youth are to bring a report of their camp to the business meeting of the general conference and shall be discussed with the brethren.

(1974 Conference)

Monday evening services of our general conference will be designated as youth service. A committee, consisting of the national youth director and three other brethren, will submit a report from time to time at the general conference business meeting concerning adequate youth camp fees (2000 Conference). Youth camp fees will be \$100.00 per individual. Registration for national youth camp will begin at 2:00pm the third Saturday in June. *(2004 Conference)*

Youth camp workers: With approval of the official board, an annual application process will be implemented through the office of national youth director, for the purpose of establishing guidelines, requirements, and regulations for all youth camp workers; this being in compliance with association by-laws and consistent with current camper's applications. *(2002 Conference)*

Missions Department

Missions secretary: shall promote the missionary spirit for both home and foreign missions among our churches. He will be at liberty to travel on his own, at home or abroad, on behalf of this work. Monies received by him for this work will be earmarked and channeled through the general secretary-treasurer office.

(Revision) Our current policy, as has been for several years, allows each department (youth, missions, ladies auxiliary, etc) to establish and maintain their own bank account for their respective business transactions. Each department head in the association is required to submit an annual report to the general secretary, no later than July 1st of each year; in order that a full accounting can be compiled and presented at our general conference business meeting. The missions secretary shall serve for two years, or as long as life and conduct are conducive to the good of this association. He may resign at will.

Addendum: Whenever deemed necessary, with the approval of the Official Board, legitimate trips to various countries may be made by the Missions Secretary or his designate for the purpose of required assistance, representative advisability, and verifiable accountability. These trips may be subsidized through various sources, one option being undesignated funds in the missions department. *(2002 Conference)*

Amendment: On July 22nd, 1991, a missions board was established as an assistant to the missions secretary; that board being the official board of the association, the ambassador, and one appointed by the official board. The purpose of said board is to examine missionary applications, in order to prevent any problems that might arise in foreign lands.

Declarations: Missionary Day will be held on Tuesday of our general conference. *(1992 Conference)*

Whenever possible, a Missionary will speak during the Tuesday evening service of our General Conference.

(2000 Conference)

Resolution: The annual license fee for missionaries will be \$50.00 and \$25.00 for their spouse. At their request, this fee can be secured from their designated funds in the missions account by the missions secretary. If missionaries are affiliated with other associations or if changes occur in location or outreach, the missions secretary and board should be notified. An annual license renewal request by nationals should be sent to the missions secretary, and upon notification, their fellowship card will be sent to them without charge. This applies to missionaries who are active in foreign fields, and not to those sponsoring missions who live in the U.S.

(2001 Conference)

RESOLUTIONS

- A. Resolved, that the official board of the association be the trustees of the campground.
(1961 Conference)
- B. Resolved, that the headquarters of the associated brotherhood of Christians be the campground in Hot Springs, Arkansas.
(1964 Conference)
- C. Resolved, that *Our Herald* be our official organ, and that each affiliated minister, worker, and church shall stand behind it with their prayers, offerings, and articles in order to make it a blessing for the cause of Christ and all its readers.
- D. Resolved, that we as a body, believe that judgment begins at the house of God. Credentials or license will not be issued to any minister who has been divorced or remarried, or who is married to a divorcee since he has received the holy ghost, unless he can definitely prove fornication (as defined by scripture) as the cause of separation, and evidence thereof to be submitted to the official board.
- E. Resolved, that since there is no general church standard among our ministers regarding the performance of marriage ceremonies, we recommend that our ministers do not perform marriages between divorced couples, unless he is familiar with the evidence as per Resolution D.
- F. Resolved, that any minister or worker who has been affiliated with this brotherhood but has allowed his fellowship card to lapse for a period of one year, will be reinstated only by filing a new application. All annual fellowship cards not renewed by March 1st of the new year, will automatically be canceled, such cancellation being necessary in order to comply with certain federal and state laws. Any minister who has not renewed by March 1st, will not be allowed to attend the business meeting. Those ministers who have not renewed, must fill out a new application to be reinstated. Only those ministers who hold a certificate of ordination or ministerial license will be permitted to vote or to attend the business meetings of the association.
(Revision) Our current policy, as has been for several years, is to allow any licensed minister to attend our business meetings, but only those who hold ordained or regular ministers license with the association will be permitted to vote. To receive full credentials, one must have carried a ministerial license for at least two years with the association, or the equivalent with another group.
(1970 Conference)
- G. Resolved, that the grace period for license renewal for all ministers, workers, and churches be revoked. The date of renewal must be on or before December 31st of each year, as was originally set forth by the by-laws of the association.
(1999 Conference)
- H. Resolved, that full credentials (ordained ministers) be granted only to those who are actively engaged in the ministry (others to receive license or workers license). Explanation: There are some ministers who hold employment other than that of the ministry.

This will not impair them from holding full credentials, provided they preach regularly. Those who only preach occasionally with no regular appointments, should not expect full credentials.

- I. Resolved, that all credentials and licenses must be signed by the pastor and sanctioned by the state presbyters.
(1981 Conference)
- J. Resolved, that the annual fee for full credentials shall be \$100.00; regular license shall be \$55.00 - and workers license shall be \$45.00. Such sum shall accompany all applications when submitted to the general secretary. These fees shall include a subscription to the official publication.
(2004 Conference)
- K. Resolved, that the general secretary send a written notice to all affiliated ministers and licensed workers no later than thirty days prior to the expiration date of their annual fellowship cards; that date presently being December 31st.
- L. Resolved, that in case of request for military deferment: only those who are actively engaged in the ministry, or who are in training for the ministry, will be considered.
- M. Resolved, that each minister send in 10% of their tithes from their personal income (or some other method of regular support) to the general funds. The purpose of these monies is to assist in every endeavor of this association, including the publication of *Our Herald*. All said monies should be sent to the general secretary- treasurer, whose address appears in *Our Herald*. Monies may also be sent direct to the editor of *Our Herald*, but should be properly earmarked as donations, tithes diverted from general funds, or subscriptions, so that auditing of financial records can be easily and properly done. Addendum: Those who hold workers license are exempt from giving the required 1% tithe/offering, although, they are required to comply with Resolution F, G, and J.
(2004 Conference)
- N. Resolved, that each affiliated church set in operation a social welfare system for the purpose of teaching and instructing the under-privileged. Also, for the financial assistance of the poor, for the support of widows (who are widows indeed - I Timothy 5:3-16), and to every good work found to be profitable for the Church. Such committees should consist of persons who are sufficiently qualified by Christian integrity, housekeeping traits, control of their own children (control doesn't mean conversion), benevolent tendencies, and who are given to wisdom and much courtesy among all peoples.
- O. Resolved, that every pastor who so desires, have the privilege of maintaining a membership roll for the purpose of keeping in touch with members of his church, to assist in settling matters that may require the action of the members, and to assist the pastor in handling any matter where members are involved. Such membership DOES NOT make us a member of, or affect our membership with the Lord, who keeps our record and name in the Lamb's Book of Life. Such membership roll should be in harmony with the association's articles of faith regarding holy living, and the general principles for which this brotherhood stands. This does not mean that those who may not see clearly to embrace all the doctrinal points of this brotherhood will be barred from membership in our affiliated churches, so long as their life is holy and their conduct consistent with the Word of God, and who work for fellowship and unity among God's people.
- P. Resolved, that the legal board of this association (chairman, vice-chairman, secretary-treasurer) meet for a pre-conference business session no later than 7:30pm the day before the annual conference shall begin, and that said board shall remain at the conference until final adjournment, or until all business sessions are declared closed, unless hindered by sickness or some other providential circumstance. Failure to conform to this requirement will disqualify any of these officials from their position.
- Q. Resolved, that the election (or confirmation) of all officials of this association be held the last day of our annual conference business sessions.
(Revision) Resolved that the time of the General Conference be changed from the last full week of June to the last full week of July. (1989 Conference) Resolved, that the time of the General Conference be conducted from the last Sunday thru Wednesday of July. All Business to be conducted on Monday during the Conference. (1993 Conference)

- R. Resolved, that at least one offering be received during the general conference, and that said offering be pro-rated between the official board, missions secretary, youth director, assistant youth director, and the editor of *Our Herald* according to their miles of travel.
(*Revision*) Resolved, that the official board and other association officials receive a monthly compensation. From time to time, adjustments can be made as deemed necessary, via a vote at the general conference business meeting.
(2003 Conference)
- S. Resolved, that in the event of the dissolution of a branch of an affiliated church, the property of the church will not ensue to the benefit of any private person but shall pass to the supervision of the official board for the use of the association at large. The trustees holding the property for the dissolved church shall sell or dispose of the same only on the order and under the direction of the appointed agent of the official board and turn the funds and any assets to such agent. This amendment is binding upon all branch and affiliated churches who are being exempt from federal income tax through the association.
- T. Resolved, that the Associated Brotherhood of Christians sign a letter of intent and become an affiliate member of the Apostolic World Christian Fellowship (A.W.C.F.)
(1971 Conference)
- U. Resolved, that the association chairman or his designate be sent to the annual A.W.C.F. conference.
(1979 Conference)
- V. Resolved, that a promotional arm of the association be established in order to advance the association in a more efficient ministry, promulgate the gospel of Jesus Christ, and promote fellowship between ourselves and other Christian groups. A Secretary shall be elected at the general conference, and requirements are the same as all other offices of this association as to conduct and duties. Funds for the support of this office shall come from an increase in ministers and workers license fees from the general fund. Therefore, all promotional expenditures, including that which is covered under resolution u shall be the responsibility of this office.
(1981 Conference)
- W. Resolved that Rev. Billy Shoulders be appointed Chairman-Emeritus of the association. In the event the presiding chairman is unable to attend the A.W.C.F. conference, he may represent the association and be extended the \$250.00 from the promotional arm secretary that is given to the chairman to offset travel expenses to the conference.
(2000 Conference)
- X. Resolved, that the Office of Ambassador be established for the purpose of representing the association with other Christian/ministerial groups. Rev. Kirby Tiller was appointed and will fill this position as long as life and conduct are conducive to the good of the association. The fellowship card issued to this officer shall be at no cost. Subsequent appointments to this position will receive the same benefits.
(1989 Conference).
(*Revision*) Resolved, that Rev Billy Shoulders be appointed the new Ambassador of the Association, due to the health problems of Rev. Kirby Tiller. (2000 Conference)
- Y. Resolved, that a ladies auxiliary be established at the national level. Requirements for their officers would be the same as the official board of the association. The chairwoman must have been involved with the association for at least five years, Vice-Chairwoman at least three years, and the Secretary-Treasurer at least three years. They shall serve for two years. The ladies meeting will be held at the same day and time as the general conference business meeting.
(1989 Conference)
Addendum: Resolved, that we incorporate women ministers and speakers into our general conference format. (2004 Conference)
- Z. Resolved, that a department of education be established for the purpose of publishing our own Sunday school material, etc. The secretary of this department shall serve for two years and may resign at will.
(2001 Conference)
- AA. Resolved, that our official association emblem/ logo be revised to include the words *Lighting the World in The 21st Century* along with the flame of fire above the handshake. (2001 Conference)

BB. Resolved, that a Department of Evangelism be established in order to:

1. Effectively promote evangelism and reach the lost
2. Effectively assist evangelists in areas of training, communication, and scheduling
3. Effectively promote a spirit of cooperation between evangelists and pastors for the spiritual wellbeing, growth, and development of our churches.

This department shall consist of a director, two assistant directors, and the national youth director will serve as its advisor. They shall serve for two years and may resign at will.

(2003 Conference)

CC. Resolved, that the selection of general conference speakers be at the discretion of the official board. All Affiliated Ministers are requested to submit their recommendations.

(2004 Conference)

DD. Resolved, that a board of elders be established for the purpose of teaching and mentoring young ministers, and giving assistance to pastors, the departments of education, youth, and evangelism, and the official board upon request. The renewal of this board of elders will be by the official board of the association, and not subject to general conference election procedures. Qualifications shall be as follows:

1. At least fifty years of age with at least 10 years of Ministry experience
2. Must demonstrate a spirit of cooperation
3. Their tenure would be for two years, or as long as conduct permits, as with any other office of the association.

(2004 Conference)

EE. Resolved, that an Ethics Committee be established to serve as an advisory board to the official board, for the purpose of achieving a biblical resolution in matters of ministerial misconduct. The Committee shall consist of the association vice chairman, the ambassador at large, the state presbyter from which state the misconduct originated, and one other minister. All actions and recommendations of this committee shall be submitted in writing to the general secretary of the association to be placed in file, such records becoming the property of the association. If action is not agreeable by all parties, an appeal can be made at the general conference business meeting.

(2005 Conference)

FF. Resolved, that no officer will be allowed to hold two offices simultaneously. The cancellation of a former position would be automatic upon assuming a new position.

(2005 Conference)

GG. No change in this constitution shall be made at any time, which shall alter our purpose in establishing and maintaining a Christian brotherhood and not an organization.

None of the changes have affected the Doctrine of the Associated Brotherhood of Christians.

The most recent changes to the Articles of Faith include:

Resolution GG

Voted in 2008: The church dues have increased to \$300.00 per year and still due on December 31st of each year.

Amending Resolution J

Voted in 2008: The minister dues have increased for worker's License to \$100.00 per year. The licensed minister dues are \$250.00 per year. The credential licenses are \$300.00 per year.

Amending Resolution G

Voted in 2010: The minister's dues are now due on March 31st of each year.

Resolution M was made voluntary and not mandatory in 2008. Those Ministers that have been with the Associated Brotherhood of Christians for 30 years and have attained the age of 80 should be issued license free for the remainder of their earthly life.

(2013 Conference)