



**EMPOWERED**  
July 27-31, 2026 • Orlando, Florida

# GATODAY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY TODAY



**TUESDAY | JULY 28, 2026**

## Tuesday Events

### Delegate Registration Hours

**Tuesday, July 28** – 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

**Wednesday, July 29** – 8:00 – 5:00 pm

**Thursday, July 30** – 8:00 – 5:00 pm

**Friday, July 31** – 10:00 – 1:00 pm

### International Teen Talent – Art/Creative Writing

#### Check-in & Gallery

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Location: OCCC 414C

### International Teen Talent – Bible Quizzing

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: OCCC 414AB

### International Teen Talent – Bible Teaching/

#### Multi-Media

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: OCCC 414D

### International Teen Talent – Drama

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: Valencia Ballroom A

### International Teen Talent – Music

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: Chapin Theatre

### World Missions Kids Club Experience

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.; 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: OCCC 204ABC

### Alma's Closet

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location: OCCC 314-315

### Children's Church (Ages 3-6 Potty Trained)

Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 PM

Location: OCCC 206ABC

### Kid's Church (Ages 7-12)

Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Location: OCCC 205ABC

## Agenda to Address Key Issues

*By Art Rhodes*

As the Church of God gathers in Orlando, Florida, for the 80th International General Assembly, we do so in a world marked by rapid change and complex challenges. The agenda for this historic assembly reflects both our enduring mission and our commitment to adapt faithfully to new realities.

As the “statement of purpose” for the General Council’s agenda clearly points out, we are in a time of cultural, technological, and geopolitical upheaval. However, the Church of God must remain steadfast in our resolve to carry out the Great Commission. The statement of purpose goes on to remind us that our strength is not our own, but comes from the Holy Spirit, equipping us to reach the lost, serve the suffering, and proclaim the Gospel with clarity and love. Our time together will

not only be a celebration of our past and our heritage, but a call to equip the next generation for global ministry.

For the first time in recent memory, the General Council agenda items are separated into specific categories, including items such as governance, discipline and restoration, rank and procedure, and ordinances. It is expected that this layout will allow the General Council to address items that are similar in nature before moving on to other issues.

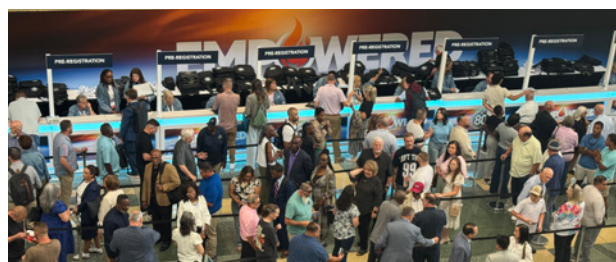
The General Council agenda opens with a renewed commitment to the Global Harvest. From a measure referred to a special committee by the previous General Council, the statement affirms that all people are created in God’s image, and that salvation through

*—continued on page 7*

## Behind-the-Scenes: Registration: It Takes a Team Effort

*By Cameron Fisher*

When delegates arrive this year at GA26 one of the first orders of business is to find the registration area at the convention center, and pick up your badge and packet of materials for the week. No matter when you check-in, the registration process has been designed to be smooth and accessible.



What one might not realize is that pick up is the culmination of months of meetings, design, preparation, and yes, maybe a bit of “blood, sweat, and tears.” The theme – *Empowered* – was ultimately chosen by General Overseer Gary Lewis. It started with

*—continued on page 9*

## Maxwell Highlights LEAD Event

*By David White*

Dr. John Maxwell has done it all over the course of his 79 years. He’s written 90-plus books, pastored a multi-campus megachurch, and spoken over 14,000 times to Christian church and corporate leaders in countless nations. But, one thing the renown inspirational speaker never did figure out was how to win a game of Trivial Pursuit.

“I always lost,” Dr. Maxwell said during the LEAD Conference Monday. “If there were

10 people playing, I finished 10th. You know why? Trivia is trivial.”

Stop chasing the trivial in ministry and life, he told the convention room full of pastors and leaders and focus on the things that matter most. That was the central point of Dr. Maxwell’s message on the eve of the 80th International General Assembly.

*—continued on page 3*





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# PK Hangout



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# Maxwell Highlights LEAD Event

—continued from page 1

“No one has ever built a great church because they know trivia,” Dr. Maxwell continued. “Your goal is not to be the trivia champion of your community. Your job is not to know everything. Your job is to find out what you are gifted and called to do, and to stay in that lane the rest of your life.”

For the next three hours, Dr. Maxwell and Dr. Dave Martin took turns at the roundtable encouraging and challenging Church of God leaders to constantly grow as leaders. Such was the vision of General Overseer Dr. Gary Lewis when he planned out this biennial training session that serves as the unofficial start of General Assembly.

With a General Assembly of “WE ARE ... Empowered,” Dr. Maxwell empowered pastors with the knowledge of his “did” – the things he accomplished throughout his life to grow into the leader who stood center stage inside the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida.

Dr. Maxwell, author of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* and a New York Times best-selling author, focused on prioritizing what matters most. “In leadership, you want to



discover and only do the everyday essentials. The average leader manages tasks, but the excellent leader manages priorities.”

Dr. Maxwell returned for a second session to speak on making failure a process in your life, and not a liability. He echoed the words of Dr. Martin, who walked the audience through the process of continued and sustained leadership growth: growing as a leader is hard work, but the rewards are worth it.

One point that grew knowing nods? Refuse to let fear make your decisions.

“Every breakthrough in my life came after a decision that scared me,” said Dr. Martin, a pastor, author and success coach. “Starting something, leaving something, hiring someone, letting someone go. The hardest (times) required a decision that was not comfortable.”

“Comfort has never produced greatness.” Perhaps not, but the fruit of Monday’s LEAD Conference is bound to produce greatness with so many pastors newly empowered to tackle their mountains.

In concluding comments, Dr. Lewis said, “I really feel like this was a divine moment.” ♦

## GA26.org/CONNECT: All Things GA26!



There is a virtual location for everything a delegate needs when it comes to the 80th International General Assembly: [GA26.org/connect](http://GA26.org/connect).

This site is designed exclusively for GA26 and available by scanning the QR code on the delegate and ordained bishop’s manual, and on the back of every delegate badge. It is also on signs in strategic locations of the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC).

The online site is designed to be mobile-friendly, so everyone has instant access to the latest information. The menu includes the schedule, OCCC information, the official agenda, instructions on voting procedures, exhibit hall vendor listing, the latest news (including issues of *GAToday*), and much more. Forgot your offering? There is even an option for giving online. Another feature for the General Council is an Ordained Bishop “look-up” for easy research of ministerial numbers for voting.

The easiest way to explore GA26 Connect is to simply scan this code.



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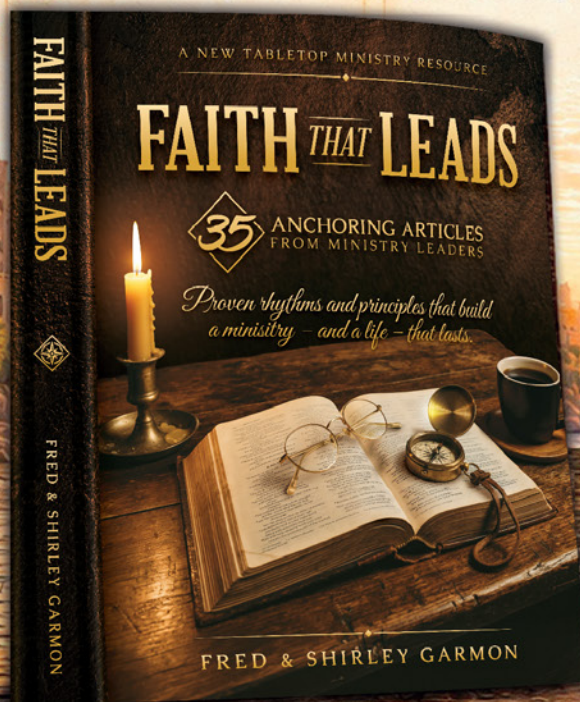


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## Agenda to Address ... —continued from page 1

Christ is available to all, regardless of gender, nationality, race, color, or creed. Further, the Global Harvest initiative emphasizes expanding our church's and our missional footprint, especially into areas with unreached people groups. The goal is to have a holistic approach to evangelism, discipleship, leadership training, and compassionate care for those in need.

In addressing the ordinances of the church, a key clarification is proposed regarding the Lord's Supper and feet washing. The Church of God has long welcomed all believers in Christ to participate in communion. The agenda item seeks to officially codify this inclusive practice, ensuring consistency and unity across our global movement.

A proposal concerning the governance of the church would require all general elected officials to resign from other appointments within the Church of God and devote themselves fully to the office to which they are elected. As written, this measure would provide for a transitional period of up to 180 days if a person is elected by the General Assembly. Further, as drafted, the provision would not become effective until 2028.

Under the heading of general offices and boards, the process for filling the position of Secretary General if a member of the executive committee resigns is streamlined, allowing the next two highest vote recipients, regardless of other offices held, to be considered in the case of a vacancy. A proposal is also on the agenda to reinstate the

Youth and Discipleship boards in each state/regional office. And finally under this heading, there is a proposal that would mandate that all officers appointed or elected to international boards of the church must be a member of the Church of God in good standing.

In dealing with ministerial credentials and reporting, the long-standing position of the "Exhorter" ministerial rank would be renamed "Licensed Minister" under the proposal before the General Council. In addition, under the new rank of Licensed Minister, there would be multiple opportunities to seek specialization in ministry, including in areas of youth, music, chaplaincy, etc. One provision of this measure would require all Licensed Ministers to renew their ministerial credentials every two years, beginning January 1, 2027, as well as participate in a continuing education process. These requirements, based upon the proposed measure, would not apply to ministers who are currently designated as Ordained Ministers or as Ordained Bishops. However, as current Exhorters, the requirements would continue with those ministers as they advance in ministry. There is also a measure that would bring ministerial reporting into the digital age, mostly eliminating paper reporting to the state/regional office and the International office.

Three statements, rather than resolutions, are proposed to clearly state the church's position on some pressing ethical and political issues. A statement against human trafficking affirms the church's biblical mandate to oppose all forms of exploitation and encourages the church to educate its congregations and provide support to survivors of human trafficking. Another statement, on the ethical use of artificial intelligence, encourages the responsible use of AI as a tool, but never as a substitute for spiritual discernment or ministerial calling. The statement goes on to condemn the misuse of artificial intelligence for immoral or unlawful purposes. A third statement on immigration reaffirms a 2012 General Assembly resolution on this hot political topic. The measure seeks to offer a compassionate, but just approach to immigration, rooted in Scripture and advocating for dignity, family unity, and fair legal processes for those dealing with immigration situations.

Four separate items deal with the discipline and restoration of ministers. The first item clarifies when a minister can participate in "limited ministry" during the restoration process. Another provision allows not only the state/regional Overseer to participate in the restoration process but also includes the state/regional council in that process. Clarification on dates, notices, and times for an ecclesiastical trial are set out in a third provision offered to the General Council. A final provision in this section seeks to clarify who is eligible to participate in an ecclesiastical trial and how such is to be carried out.

Under a section entitled "state governance," non-credentialed women are made eligible to participate in and serve on the state/regional Women's Ministries Board. A second agenda item under the section would require that before a pastor is appointed to a local church, the state/regional Overseer must provide the prospective pastor with a financial report on the church prior to his or her acceptance of the appointment.

The General Council agenda concludes with three major doctrinal statements that are submitted for approval. The statements include one on the nature, identity, and mission of the church, one on the priesthood of all believers, and a final statement on developing and maintaining a biblical worldview. As the agenda points out, these statements are intended to serve as a guide on how Church of God ministers and laity should form biblically faithful positions in the midst of a changing world.

There is no question that the Ordained Bishops of the Church of God will have plenty of opportunity to set a blueprint for the future of our movement. Besides the items that are brought to the General Council through the agenda, the Church of God *Minutes* allow additional motions to be offered during the General Council session. Those motions must be presented "in a legible format (print or digital) not later than 2 p.m. of the second day of the International General Council." If you have an item that you would like to see brought before the General Council, it must be submitted by no later than 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 29, at the motions booth on the floor of the General Council.

As we gather in Orlando for this 80th session of the General Council, we need to do so with prayerful anticipation and confidence that for such a time as this, the Church of God is truly empowered to go into every nation, every community, and every heart that needs the hope of Christ. The prayer is that the General Council agenda will pave the way for new opportunities for the Church of God to reach a lost and dying world and to completely fulfill the Great Commission. ♦

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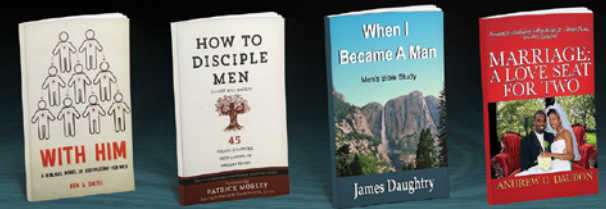
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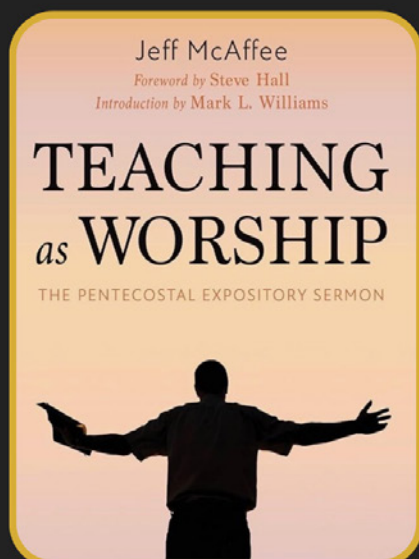
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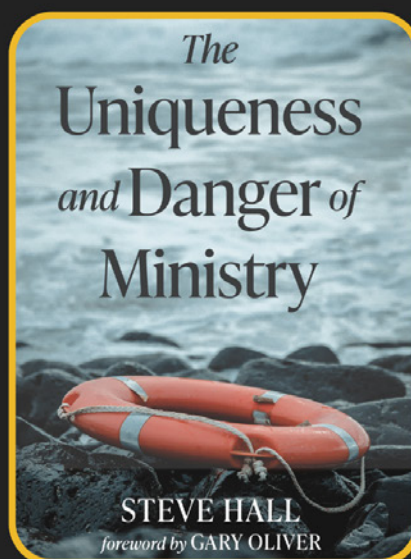
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## Behind-the-Scenes: Registration: It Takes a Team Effort

*Continued from page 1*

an extensive thought process, multiple design concepts, and decisions on what items will be stamped with the theme. This year, with the advent of the signature 80th time the Assembly has convened, there are two logo designs.

Registered delegates receive a zippered briefcase emblazoned with the 80th logo. In it will be the all-important manual with the agenda and schedule, a special historical magazine, the first issue of *General Assembly TODAY*, a sample *Evangel*, assorted flyers from church departments and sponsors. Ordained bishops will receive the latest book by Sammy Rodriguez, featured speaker at the Tuesday night opening service. The magazine and *GAToday* were months in design and preparation and were delivered “hot-off-the-press” in time to be included with registration. In addition, General Overseer Lewis has prepared individually themed bags that will be distributed to ordained bishops beginning Tuesday morning. Items there also represent a carefully thought



*International Offices employees participate in “Serve Day,” on July 9 to stuff over 6,000 delegate and Ordained Bishop packets.*

implementation process that took months to solidify. When all items finally arrived an army of volunteers from local Cleveland churches and a “Day of Service” from International Offices employees, worked shifts to assemble the thousands of packets between July 6-9.

Besides materials, the registration process itself culminates nearly a year of processes, that includes web design, online forms, financial

programs, and daily management. On site this week, over 50 volunteers will assist in the registration experience.

Registration is just one aspect of preparation for the General Assembly. Production, schedules, exhibits, hotels, events, and communications could each merit a “behind-the-scenes” focus. ♦

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### BOOK SIGNING

**Wednesday, July 29th**  
Laken Golden 1-2 PM  
Rachel Barker 1-2 PM  
Dawn Lipsey 2-3 PM

### 2025-2026 New Releases

**Thursday, July 30th**  
Rhonda K. Holland 2-3 PM  
Location: Women's Discipleship  
Booth Exhibit Hall

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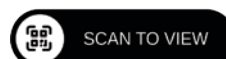


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# ALUMNI & FRIENDS Reception

**Wednesday Evening,  
July 29 @ 9:30 - 11pm  
Room 311**

**Join us for a connection &  
information time.**

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## World Missions Presents Partnership Awards at Monday Night Gala

*Church Awards and Recognitions (State/region, church, pastor)*

### Category 1 – 50 in Membership

Winner Virginia/Deerfield. . . . . Merle Dodson  
Runner-Up Mississippi/Leaf . . . . . James Rosier

### Category 51 – 100 in Membership

Winner Florida- Tampa/Mary Esther. . . . . Willard Dockery, Jr.  
Runner-Up W. North Carolina/Hendersonville . . . . . Steven Morrison

### Category 101 – 200 in Membership

Winner E. North Carolina/Smithfield . . . . . Jerry Waters  
Runner-Up W. North Carolina/Breakthrough Community . . . . . Phillip Powers

### Category 201 – 300 in Membership

Winner Tennessee/Bristol-Grace Point . . . . . Todd Tilghman  
Runner-Up South Carolina/Grace Covenant. . . . . Edgar Foster

### Category 301 – 400 in Membership

Winner Florida-Tampa/Restoration . . . . . John Morgan  
Runner-Up W. North Carolina/Prentiss. . . . . Jason Thomas Justus

### Category 401 – 500 in Membership

Winner Florida-Tampa/Williston. . . . . Wesley Smith, Jr.  
Runner-Up Florida- Tampa/The Anchor . . . . . Dwight Allen

### Category 501 – 750 in Membership

Winner Texas/Dallas-Metro . . . . . Satish Kumar  
Runner-Up W. North Carolina/Landmark. . . . . Philip Pearson

### Category 751 – 1000 in Membership

Winner Florida- Tampa/Gainesville. . . . . Edward Chrisopulos  
Runner-Up W. North Carolina/Kannapolis . . . . . Dr. Gregory Sloop

### Category 1001 – 1,500 in Membership

Winner Tennessee/The Crossing . . . . . Chadrick Harris  
Runner-Up Tennessee/South Cleveland. . . . . Edwin Lipsey

### Category 1,501 – 2,500 in Membership

Winner Tennessee/Restoration International Outreach . . . . . Christi Prater  
Runner- Up Tennessee/Westmore. . . . . Kelvin Page

### Category 2,501 – UP in Membership

Winner South Carolina/Praise Cathedral . . . . . Jerry Madden  
Runner-Up W. North Carolina/Charlotte-Central . . . . . H. Loran Livingston

## STATE AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

### Category C

Winner Hawaii . . . . . J. Rob Taylor  
Runner-Up Rocky Mountain Region. . . . . David Smith

### Category B

Winner North Central Region. . . . . Mark Cary  
Runner-Up N. New England . . . . . Dennis Page

### Category A

Winner New Jersey. . . . . Raymond Burch  
Runner-Up Alaska . . . . . Jeffery McGirt

### Category AA

Winner California/Nevada . . . . . James Wright  
Runner-Up Illinois . . . . . Mike White

### Category AAA

Winner Pennsylvania . . . . . J. Shea Hughes  
Runner-Up Mississippi . . . . . Tommy Powell

### Category 4 Star

Winner W. North Carolina. . . . . Kip Box  
Runner-Up E. North Carolina . . . . . Melvin Shuler

### Category 5 Star

Winner Tennessee . . . . . Timothy Hill  
Runner-Up South Carolina . . . . . Toby Morgan

### Category 6 Star

Winner Florida-Tampa . . . . . Stanley Holder  
Runner-Up N. Georgia . . . . . Terry Hart

## LARGEST CATEGORY AWARDS

### Largest Church Contribution

Winner W. North Carolina/Charlotte-Central . . . . . H. Loran Livingston  
Runner-Up Restoration International Outreach . . . . . Christi Prater

### Largest Group Contribution

Winner Tennessee . . . . . Tim Hill  
Runner-Up W. North Carolina. . . . . Kip Box

### Largest Per Capita-Church

Winner E. North Carolina/Smithfield . . . . . Jerry Waters  
Runner-Up Tennessee/Grace Point . . . . . Todd Tilghman





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# La agenda abordará asuntos clave

Por Art Rhodes

Mientras la Iglesia de Dios se reúne en Orlando, Florida, para celebrar su 80.ª Asamblea General Internacional, lo hace en un mundo marcado por cambios acelerados y desafíos cada vez más complejos. La agenda de esta histórica Asamblea refleja tanto nuestra misión inquebrantable como nuestro compromiso de adaptarnos fielmente a las nuevas realidades.

Como lo señala la «declaración de propósito» de la agenda del Concilio General, vivimos un tiempo de profundas transformaciones culturales, tecnológicas y geopolíticas. Sin embargo, la Iglesia de Dios debe permanecer firme en su determinación de cumplir la Gran Comisión. La declaración recuerda que nuestra fortaleza proviene del Espíritu Santo, quien nos capacita para alcanzar a los perdidos, servir a quienes sufren y proclamar el evangelio con claridad y amor. El tiempo que estaremos juntos será una celebración de nuestro legado y un llamado a equipar a la próxima generación para el ministerio global.

Por primera vez en la historia reciente, los asuntos de la agenda se han organizado en categorías específicas: gobierno, disciplina y restauración, rango y procedimiento, y ordenanzas, con el propósito de abordar primero los temas de naturaleza similar.

La agenda inicia con un compromiso renovado con la Cosecha Global. La declaración afirma que todas las personas han sido creadas a imagen de Dios y que la salvación por medio de Cristo está disponible para todos, sin distinción de sexo, nacionalidad, raza, color o credo. Asimismo, hace énfasis en ampliar la presencia de la Iglesia y la labor misionera, especialmente hacia pueblos no alcanzados, mediante un enfoque integral que abarque la evangelización, el discipulado, la capacitación de líderes y la atención compasiva a los necesitados.

En cuanto a las ordenanzas de la Iglesia, se propone una aclaración respecto a la Santa Cena y el lavatorio de los pies. Desde hace muchos años, la Iglesia de Dios ha dado la bienvenida a todos los creyentes en Cristo para participar de la comunión. La propuesta busca establecer oficialmente esta práctica inclusiva, garantizando la coherencia y la unidad en todo el movimiento global.

Otra propuesta requeriría que todos los oficiales generales electos renuncien a cualquier otro nombramiento dentro de la Iglesia de Dios y dediquen plenamente su servicio al cargo para el cual fueron elegidos. Quienes sean elegidos dispondrán de un período de transición de hasta ciento ochenta días y la disposición entrará en vigor en 2028.

En la sección sobre oficinas y juntas generales, se simplifica el procedimiento para cubrir la vacante del cargo de secretario general cuando un miembro del Comité Ejecutivo renuncie, permitiendo considerar a los dos siguientes candidatos con mayor número de votos. También se propone restablecer las juntas del Ministerio de Juventud y Discipulado en cada oficina estatal o regional. Finalmente, se propone requerir que todos los integrantes de las juntas internacionales sean miembros activos de la Iglesia de Dios en plena comunión.

En el área de credenciales ministeriales, se propone cambiar la categoría de «Exhortador» por «Ministro(a) Licenciado(a)», con oportunidades de especialización en ministerio juvenil, música, capellanía y otras áreas. Los Ministros Licenciados deberán renovar sus credenciales cada dos años, a partir del 1 de enero de 2027, y participar en un proceso de educación continua. Estos requisitos no se aplicarían a los Ministros Ordenados ni a los Obispos Ordenados, mientras que quienes actualmente son Exhortadores continuarán sujetos a ellos. También se propone modernizar el sistema de informes ministeriales mediante plataformas digitales y eliminar en gran medida los informes impresos.

En lugar de resoluciones, se proponen tres declaraciones. La primera, contra la trata de personas, reafirma el mandato bíblico de oponerse a toda forma de explotación y anima a educar a las congregaciones y apoyar a las personas sobrevivientes. La segunda aborda el uso ético de la inteligencia artificial, promoviendo su uso responsable como herramienta útil, pero nunca como sustituto del discernimiento espiritual

ni del llamado ministerial, y condenando su uso con fines inmorales o ilícitos. La tercera trata la inmigración, reafirma la resolución de 2012 y promueve un enfoque compasivo, pero justo, fundamentado en las Escrituras y comprometido con la dignidad humana, la unidad familiar y procesos legales equitativos.

Cuatro puntos abordan la disciplina y restauración de los ministros. Se aclaran las circunstancias en las que un ministro podrá ejercer un ministerio limitado durante su restauración; se amplía la participación en el proceso para incluir al consejo estatal o regional; se precisan fechas, avisos y plazos relacionados con un juicio eclesiástico; y se aclara quiénes podrán participar y la forma en que este deberá llevarse a cabo.

En la sección «Gobierno Estatal/Regional», se propone permitir que las mujeres sin credenciales ministeriales participen e integren la Junta del Ministerio de la Mujer de su estado o región. Además, antes de nombrar a un pastor(a) para una iglesia local, el supervisor estatal o regional deberá entregar al candidato un informe financiero de la congregación antes de que acepte oficialmente el nombramiento.

La agenda concluye con tres declaraciones doctrinales sobre la naturaleza, identidad y misión de la Iglesia; el sacerdocio de todos los creyentes; y el desarrollo y mantenimiento de una cosmovisión bíblica. Estas declaraciones buscan servir como guía para que ministros y miembros asuman posiciones fieles a las Escrituras en medio de un mundo en constante cambio.

Los obispos ordenados tendrán amplias oportunidades para establecer el rumbo futuro del movimiento. Además de los asuntos incluidos en la agenda, las *Minutas* de la Iglesia de Dios permiten presentar mociones adicionales durante las sesiones del Concilio General. Estas deberán entregarse en un formato legible (impreso o digital) a más tardar a las 2:00 p. m. del segundo día del Concilio General Internacional.

Al reunirnos en Orlando para celebrar esta 80.ª sesión del Concilio General, debemos hacerlo con una actitud de oración y con la confianza de que, para un tiempo como este, la Iglesia de Dios ha sido capacitada para llevar el evangelio a toda nación, toda comunidad y todo corazón que necesita la esperanza de Cristo. Nuestra oración es que la agenda del Concilio General abra el camino a nuevas oportunidades para que la Iglesia de Dios alcance a un mundo perdido y cumpla plenamente la Gran Comisión. ♦



MINISTERIOS HISPANOS

# FIESTA LATINOAMERICANA

EN LA 80.ª ASAMBLEA GENERAL INTERNACIONAL

**JUEVES, 30 DE JULIO DE 2026**  
**11:30 a. m. – 1:30 p. m.**

La octogésima Asamblea General Internacional reunirá a delegados y familias de todo el mundo en el Centro de Convenciones de Orange, Orlando, del 27 al 31 de julio de 2026. En el marco de este importante encuentro bienal, la comunidad hispanohablante celebrará el jueves 30 de julio su gran Fiesta Latinoamericana. Tendremos un tiempo de comunión, música y reconocimiento a líderes destacados. Entradas disponibles en las oficinas regionales y en la Oficina de Ministerios Hispanos; asegura tu lugar con anticipación, el cupo es limitado.



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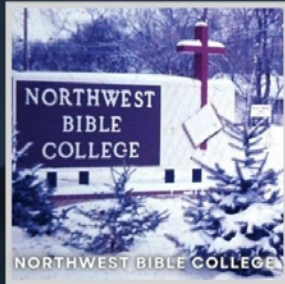




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