

INDEPENDENT ASSEMBLIES

By-Laws and Policies

Revised September 2023

Whereas our Lord Jesus has said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,” we the members and churches of the Independent Assemblies do associate ourselves together, and pledge ourselves to fulfill this command by giving ourselves to the service of our Lord through the operation of the Spirit, and submitting to His direction, we shall minister the “Good News” of Christ through every avenue made available unto us by God. And our lives shall be spent in this purpose and Holy calling that our Lord may be glorified on that Day that He shall gather His people unto Himself.

We are not a denomination, nor do we have any desire to become one. We are simply a Fellowship of Ministers and Churches brought together by God’s Love and our common beliefs.

INDEPENDENT ASSEMBLIES BY-LAWS

ARTICLE ONE OFFICES

The Principal office of the corporation, hereinafter referred to as the “Corporation”, shall be located at the address set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. The Corporation may have such other offices, either within or without the State of Incorporation, as the Board of Trustees may determine from time to time.

ARTICLE TWO TENETS OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE

The Independent Assemblies is a cooperative fellowship based upon the mutual agreements voluntarily entered into by its membership, but its statement of fundamental truths is as follows:

Section 1 - The Inspired Word of God

The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God to man, the infallible authoritative rule of faith and conduct.

Section 2 - The Trinity

The one true God is revealed in the Scriptures as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Section 3 - The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare:

- a) His virgin Birth,
- b) His sinless life,
- c) His miracles,
- d) His substitutionary and vicarious death on the cross,
- e) His bodily resurrection from the dead,
- f) His being on the right hand of God.

Section 4 - Man's Sinful Nature

Man was created good and upright, but by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred both physical and spiritual death and separation from God.

Section 5 - Man's Redemption

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

- a) Condition to salvation is repentance of sin and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b) Evidence of salvation is the inward direct witness of the Spirit, and the outward evidence is a life of righteousness and holiness.

Section 6 - Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus, they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with him to walk in newness of life.

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements, bread and the fruit of the vine is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ; a memorial of his suffering and death; and a prophecy of His second coming and is enjoined on all believers "till He come".

Section 7 - Baptism in the Holy Ghost

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, and baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and the work of the ministry. This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the new birth. With the baptism in the Holy Ghost comes such experiences as an overflowing fulness of the Spirit, a deepened reverence for God, an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost

Section 8 - Speaking in Tongues

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance. The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of Tongues, but different in purpose and use.

Section 9 - Sanctification

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God. The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord". By the power of the Holy Ghost, we are also to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ

in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of the union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit.

Section 10 - Book of Life

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of the great commission. Each believer born of the Spirit is an integral part of the invisible church, whose name is written in Heaven.

Section 11 - Evangelism and Edification

The divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for a two-fold purpose;

- a) The evangelization of the world.
- b) The edifying of the Body of Christ.

Section 12 - Healing

Divine healing is an integral part of the Gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers.

Section 13 - Resurrection

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church.

Section 14 - Christ's Second Coming

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years. This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel and the establishment of universal peace.

Section 15 - The Final Judgment

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, and beast and false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death. Rev. 19:20; 20:14; 21:8.

Section 16 - Righteousness

“We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

ARTICLE THREE MEMBERSHIP

Section 1- Classification of acting members

There shall be three (3) levels of credentials namely:
1. Exhorter, 2. License, 3. Ordination. Any minister holding one of these levels of credentials with a current membership card and in good standing shall be considered a member of Independent Assemblies.

Section 2 - Voting Membership

Voting membership will consist of all ordained ministers.

ARTICLE FOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1 - Board of Trustees

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to manage and conduct the day to day business and affairs of the corporation.

Section 2 - Regular Meetings

The Board of Trustees shall hold regular meetings every two months, date and place to be set by the Board.

Section 3 - Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the request of any two (2) members of the Board and shall be held at the principal office of the Corporation.

Section 4 - Board Decisions

The act of a majority of the Trustees present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Trustees. However, at least three (3) affirmative votes shall be required before it can be adopted by the Board.

Section 5 - Vacancies, Additions, and Removals

Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Trustees and any directorship to be filled by reason of an increase in the number of officers of the corporation, shall be filled by a three-fifths (3/5) majority vote of the Board of Trustees. Officers of the corporation shall be removed by a three-fifths (3/5) majority vote of the Board of Trustees. A minimum of three (3) affirmative votes shall be required to pass any action of the Board.

Section 6 - Quorum and Notice

A Quorum shall exist if a majority of the trustees are present at any meeting. Notice of the annual, regular or any special meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be given by either written or oral notice to each Trustee. The attendance of a Trustee at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a Trustee attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. The business to be transacted at the meeting need not be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting, unless specifically required by law or by these bylaws.

Section 7 - Compensation

Trustees shall not receive compensation for services as members of the Board, but may receive compensation for other services performed for the corporation.

Section 8 - Number, Term and Qualifications

The number of Trustees shall be no less than five (5) and shall have no maximum number. The term of membership shall be for continuous *four year periods, unless removed. The Board of Trustees shall elect its members at the biennial meeting for all subsequent years unless modified by the Board of Trustees.

*If a board member does not complete his 4 year term due to illness, death, resignation, etc. then the board could appoint a candidate to fill the unexpired term and their appointment must be ratified by the entire council at the next biennial meeting. **This section was amended at the biennial meeting of May 6, 1997*

Section 9 - Committees of Elders

The Board of Trustees, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Trustees in office, may appoint a committee or committees as deemed necessary. These committees shall be under the authority of the Board.

ARTICLE FIVE OFFICERS

Section 1 - President

The Corporation finds its headship under the Lord Jesus Christ and in its President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation. He shall be a continuing member of the Board of Trustees. He shall have general management of the business of the Corporation and have general supervision of the other officers. He shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and see that all orders and resolutions of the Board are carried into effect, subject, however to the right of the board to delegate to any other officer or officers of the Corporation any specific powers, other than those that may be conferred only upon the president. He shall execute in the name of the corporation all deeds, bonds, mortgages, contracts and other documents authorized by the Board of Trustees. He shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees, and shall have the general powers and duties of supervision and management usually vested in the office of president of a corporation.

Section 2 - Vice President

The Vice-President shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the

president in case of his temporary absence from the office of the Corporation, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be granted or imposed by the Board of Trustees.

Section 3 - *General Secretary

The secretary shall attend all sessions of the Board held at the office of the Corporation and act as clerk thereof and record all votes and the minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose. He shall perform like duties for the executive and standing committees when required. He shall give, or cause to be given, notice of meetings of the Board of Trustees when notice is required to be given under these Bylaws or by any resolution of the Board. He shall have custody of the seal to be used on all authorized documents requiring a seal. He shall keep the membership rolls of the Corporation, and in general perform the duties usually incident to the office of secretary, and such further duties as shall from time to time be prescribed by the Board of Trustees or the President.

Section 4 - *Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep full and accurate account of the receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Corporation, and shall deposit all moneys and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the Corporation in such banks and depositories as may be designated by the Board of Trustees, but shall not be personally liable for the safekeeping of any funds or securities so deposited pursuant to the order of the Board.

He shall disburse the funds of the Corporation as may be ordered by the Board and shall render to the President and Trustees at the regular meeting of the Board, and whenever they may require accounts of all transactions as treasurer and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Trustees or by the President.

*Note: The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined under one office.

Section 5 - Delegating Powers to Other Officers

In case of the absence of any officer of the Corporation, or for any other reason that may seem sufficient to the Board, the Board of Trustees may delegate his duties and powers for the time being to any other officer.

Section 6 - Election and Term of Office

*The Board of Trustees shall be elected by the Council at the Biennial Business Meeting to serve a term of four years. The respective board positions shall be determined by the newly elected board at a convenient time soon after the biennial meeting of the Council. New offices may be created and filled at any meeting of the Council. Each officer shall hold office until his successor has been duly elected and qualified. ** This section was amended at the biennial meeting of May 6, 2003*

Section 7 - Removal

Any officer elected or appointed by the Board of Trustees may be removed by the Board of Trustees whenever in its judgment, the best interests of the Corporation would be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the officer so removed.

Section 8 - Vacancies

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, may be filled by the Board of Trustees for the unexpired portion of the term.

ARTICLE SIX MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATION

Section 1 - Application Committee

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible to examine the background of a membership applicant in the following areas:

- a) Morality, Domesticity, Character, Spiritual responsibility and maturity.
- b) Ministerial experience and training.
- c) Christian ethical standard exhibition and demonstration.

Section 2 - Ecclesiastical Qualifications

Applicants shall be duly Ordained Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and must present evidence of the same.

Section 3 - Application

Application for membership shall be on the form provided by the Board of Trustees. An applicant's application shall be accepted upon satisfactory completion of requirements set forth in the Membership Guidelines.

Section 4 - Renewal of Membership

Membership shall be renewed annually upon completion of verification forms submitted to the Corporation and receipt of all applicable fees and paper work.

Section 5 - Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated for:

- a) Failure to apply for renewal of membership.
- b) Violation of Code of Ethics.
- c) Violation of standards and regulations of the Corporation.

- d) Violation of requirements set forth in the Membership Guidelines.

ARTICLE SEVEN CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS, AND FUNDS

Section 1 - Contracts

The Board of Trustees may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation, in addition to the officers so authorized by the Bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or may be confined to specific instances.

Section 2 - Checks, Drafts, or Orders

All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation, and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Trustees. In the absence of such determination by the Board of Trustees, such instruments may be signed by either the Treasurer or the President of the Corporation.

Section 3 - Deposits

All funds of the Corporation shall be deposit from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Trustees may select.

ARTICLE EIGHT BOOKS AND RECORDS

The Corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its members, Board of Trustees, committees having and exercising any of the authority of the Board of Trustees, and any other committee, and shall keep at the principal office a record giving the names and addresses of the Board of Trustees members entitled to vote. All books and records of the Corporation may be inspected at any reasonable time.

ARTICLE NINE FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall end on December 31.

ARTICLE TEN DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the Board of Trustees shall, after the

payment of all the liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all of the assets of the Corporation exclusively for the purposes of the Corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall qualify as an exempt Corporation or organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, (or by the corresponding section of any future Revenue Code of the United States of America) or by a corporation, contributions of which are deductible under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 2986, as amended or the corresponding section of any future United States Revenue Law.

ARTICLE ELEVEN SEAL

The Board of Trustees shall provide a corporate seal.

ARTICLE TWELVE AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed and new Bylaws may be recommended by a three-fifths (3/5) majority vote of the Board of Trustees at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees. At least fourteen (14) days written advance notice of said meeting shall be given to each member of the Board of Trustees. The recommended altered, amended, or repealed Bylaws will then be given to the Independent Assemblies Membership with an advance written notice then (10) days prior to the meeting to be put on the agenda to be voted on by the membership.

AMENDMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS

The following resolution was adopted at the biennial business meeting of May 3, 2005:

Be resolved that the appointments of both the President and the Director of World Missions must be approved by a majority vote of the general council at the biennial meeting. If for any reason, either of these offices becomes vacant in midterm, a suitable successor may be appointed by the board of trustees and must be approved by the general council at the next biennial meeting.

The following resolution was adopted at the biennial business meeting of July 22, 2015:

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

GENERAL POLICIES OF THE INDEPENDENT ASSEMBLIES

These policies are updated to October, 2005 and supercede any previous policies of the Board of Trustees of the Independent Assemblies.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST A MINISTER

To help the Executive Board deal with problems arising between preachers, the following policy has been established:

(1 Tim 5:19 KJV) Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

This admonition of the apostle Paul is quoted from Deuteronomy 19:15, and is applicable to any situation where an accusation is brought against anyone in a position of leadership, especially one who has ministerial credentials.

Using these Scriptures as our guide, the Board of Trustees will take action only if the ensuing procedure is followed:

1. Charges against a minister must be substantiated.
2. The specifics such as time, date, place, and any others involved must be spelled out in the charges.
3. The witness(es) must sign the charges and be willing to testify openly to a committee of ministers appointed by the Board of Trustees.

Should the Board, in its official capacity, be requested to call a minister before them concerning clarification of some action taken, or the lack of a certain action taken, or for discipline or removal from fellowship, the following steps shall be followed:

1. The specific time, date, place and any other pertinent information must be made available to assist in the Board's inquiry.
2. All decisions will be made with a three-fifths (3/5) approval of the Board.

The goal of the Board of Trustees is not for separation nor for destructive purposes, but whenever possible, for the complete restoration of any minister associated with the Independent Assemblies.

DIVORCE AND GRANTING CREDENTIALS

We take a compassionate position on divorce and remarriage among our ministers. However, in view of the frightening increase of divorce in our land, keeping in mind the sanctity of marriage in the mind of God, and the clear teachings of the Scriptures on this subject, we have established a policy of guidelines to help us in our decisions in granting credentials.

1. Divorce occurring prior to one's new birth is not a consideration. Since divorce and remarriage is not an unpardonable sin, it is obviously forgiven by our Lord at the time of conversion.

2. Divorce occurring after one's conversion must be considered in the light of the circumstances at that time. The innocent party will of course be blameless. The guilty party must establish conclusively that there has been true repentance and a reasonable time period must have elapsed to prove that the repentance is genuine.

3. We believe that the request of anyone seeking credentials on any level, who has had a second divorce since conversion should be denied. The forgiveness of God is not in question here, but a minister of the Gospel must be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (1 Tim. 4:12)

CHURCHES IN HOMES

The I.R.S. recognizes a religious assembly as a church only after said assembly conforms and adheres to the requirements set forth by the I.R.S. to qualify a religious assembly as a church.

The I.R.S. does not recognize a religious gathering in the home of an individual as a church. A church must meet on a regular basis in a structure other than a private home and must be open to the public.

RECEIVING CHURCHES INTO FELLOWSHIP

1. This fellowship has made provision for independent churches of "similar" character and of the same religious belief to file an application for membership.
 - A. Member churches must be incorporated within the state where they maintain their assembly.
 - B. Churches seeking acceptance into the Independent Assemblies must agree with the Statement of Faith and the Bylaws as well as the governmental policies of this fellowship.
 - C. Churches applying for fellowship must pass a resolution to do so by at least a 2/3

majority vote of their official governing body. The primary leader of the church and at least two board members must sign the official document provided by the Secretary of the Independent Assemblies confirming the 2/3 vote of the people, or if the church is governed by a board, the majority of said board will confirm.

2. Any church applying for membership must be recognized and operating as a church, having a pastor and trustees, deacons, elders, or other persons serving as board members. Prayer groups, Bible study groups or home fellowship meetings do not qualify as churches. To retain tax exempt status as a church, there must be at least one church service each week in a building open to the public.
3. The church making application for fellowship will become a member church or fellowship church after the application has been approved by three-fifths (3/5) of the Board of Trustees of the Independent Assemblies, and after the president's office receives a copy of the church's bylaws, a copy of the certificate of incorporation, their EIN number, and the required annual fee.
 - A. All "member churches" are under the umbrella protection of the I.R.S., and are recognized as non-profit religious and charitable churches with tax exempt status under 501 (c) (3). All "fellowship" churches are covered by their own tax exemption 501 (c) (3).
 - B. The Independent Assemblies has no control over the property of member churches or fellowship churches unless said church property has been deeded to the fellowship.
4. In the event that a church may someday wish to disassociate with the Independent Assemblies, they shall inform the Independent Assemblies Board by a letter signed by the pastor and at least two (2) board members.
5. In the possible event that a member church should become immoral, doctrinally unsound, or seem to bring reproach upon or otherwise be troublesome to the Independent Assemblies, a three-fifths (3/5) majority vote of the Board of Trustees can revoke member status from the local fellowship.

This will only be done after every effort in love, counsel and warning has been exhausted.

RECEIVING NOT-FOR-PROFIT MINISTRIES

Not-for-Profit Ministries can be included in the 501 (c) (3) covering of the Independent Assemblies after the application has been approved by three-fifths (3/5) of the Board of Trustees and after the president's office receives a copy of the ministry's bylaws, a copy of the certificate of incorporation, a copy of their EIN number, and the required annual fee. The presiding officer of the corporation must also carry credentials in good standing with the Independent Assemblies.

PASTORS WHO DO NOT HAVE CREDENTIALS WITH INDEPENDENT ASSEMBLIES

It is our policy that all churches under our I.R.S. coverage must have pastors bearing credentials with Independent Assemblies. If a church secures a pastor who does not have credentials with our fellowship, he/she must complete a minister's credential application and go through the proper channels to receive fellowship credentials.

This will serve to give our office a record of all ministers pastoring churches for which we are responsible to the government.

A time period of not more than 90 days will be given for the pastor to obtain I.A. credentials. Any non-compliance with this requirement may cause the fellowship status of the church to be revoked, effecting the loss of I.R.S. tax exemption.

We do not insist that the pastor drop the credentials held with another group through the years.

GRANTING MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS

All new applicants must be recommended by an Ordained Minister in good standing with the Independent Assemblies, whose signature must appear on the application. A Pastor who is not affiliated with the IA may still sign the Ministerial Credential Application as a recommendation, but it must also be endorsed by a minister who is ORDAINED with the IA, who is in good standing and who will attest to the credibility and integrity of the recommending pastor.

Our purpose for granting credentials is threefold:

1. So that we may know them which labor among us according to 1Thessalonians 5:12.
2. To certify and confirm our confidence in the character and calling of the ministers in our fellowship.
3. To qualify our ministers in a legal sense to comply with the requirements of the law.

It is our policy not to grant any level of credential to any applicant however qualified if it seems obvious that the applicant wants credentials only and has no intention of working in fellowship with the Independent Assemblies. In rare or unusual cases exceptions are sometimes made and an exhorters license or ministers license may be granted but not ordination status.

Please note the statement on the application for ministerial credentials, concerning the use of intoxicating liquors, narcotics, hallucinogens or tobacco.

Our policy is designed to prevent anyone who has any of these habits from receiving ministerial credentials on any level from our fellowship. This policy is given to further clarify our stand on this matter.

We believe that no victorious, overcoming Christian can be bound with any of the habits

mentioned above. We also believe that a person seeking ministerial recognition or credentials on any level should be living a victorious, consecrated, overcoming life on a level above the average Christian. Therefore, we make this statement of policy:

“No person who uses intoxicating liquor, narcotics, hallucinogens - any kind of mind altering drug, or tobacco, shall be issued any level of ministerial credential with the Independent Assemblies Fellowship.

No person involved in a common-law relationship or living an alternate life style including homosexuality or lesbianism shall be issued any level of ministerial credentials with the Independent Assemblies Fellowship.”

Senior Ministers - All members 65 years of age and older, having membership in the Independent Assemblies for at least two (2) years shall receive complimentary fellowship cards at each annual renewal. As of Jan 1, 2001 the complimentary cards to Senior members age 65 and older will be limited to Ordination level only.

Granting of Missionary Card Exemption: -Beginning Jan 1, 2001 the policy of exemption for I.A. Missionaries will be amended. Those who became I.A. Missionaries before Jan1, 2001 will continue to have their credential fees exempted. Missionaries coming into the fellowship on or after Jan. 1, 2001 will be assessed the same credential fees as other ministers.

LEVELS OF CREDENTIALS

The Independent Assemblies has designated three levels of credentials with an annual membership fee. These are: Exhorter, License, Ordination.

1. All applicants for credentials on any level must be approved by the Board of Trustees of the Independent Assemblies.
2. Any applicant approved for Exhorter or License credentials will be prayed over and inducted into fellowship by the recommending pastor or other ordained Independent Assemblies minister in a local setting or at a district fellowship meeting.

After the application has been approved by the Board of Trustees and the proper fee has been received in the office, the credential certificate will be sent to the pastor or other ordained minister to be conferred upon the applicant.

3. There will be three annual services designated for ordination; one in the Spring, one in the Autumn and at the annual ministers conference. Applicants for ordination must attend one of these services. Exceptions are made for those candidates living far away from the home office. Other Exceptions will be made only by approval of the Board of Trustees.

ADVANCEMENT OF CREDENTIALS

A new application must be submitted for each advancement.

- A. Exhorters may apply for license after one year.
- B. Licensees may apply for ordination after an additional two years.
- C. Ordination is the highest order of credential and is intended only for those qualified and proven individuals devoting their lives to ministry of the Gospel, making it their highest priority.
 - 1) Ordination is not granted automatically after holding a license for two years.
 - 2) We will not grant an ordination for the sole purpose of enabling a minister to gain access to a prison or other government facility for ministry. All qualifications and requirements must be met before ordination can be conferred.

ORDINATION SERVICES

It is our intention to make their ordination ceremony one of the most memorable events in the lives of our ministers. The whole service will be geared toward that end. The candidates will sit with their spouses in a designated place near the front. Corsages for women and boutonnieres for men will be provided. Spouses should stand behind the candidates as the charge is given and beside them when hands are laid on them by the presbytery.

Great care should be given in each of the special ordination services to the selection of a seasoned and qualified speaker to deliver the ordination message, after which the President or other member of the Board of Trustees, or another person appointed by the Board will issue the charge.

At the close of the message, the approved candidates will be confirmed by the “laying on of hands” by the presbytery.

REINSTATEMENT

Any minister whose membership has lapsed for non-payment of dues or for any cause other than for disciplinary reasons may be reinstated by following the steps below:

- 1. Complete a new application and write a letter explaining the desire for reinstatement and the reason for the canceled membership and mail them to the office of the President.
- 2. The application and letter will be reviewed by the Board. Reinstatement will require a three-fifths (3/5) affirmative vote.
- 3. In addition to the regular credential fee, there will be a Reinstatement fee of \$10.00.
- 4. When the application is approved by the Board and the fees have been paid, the applicant will be notified and an updated membership card will be mailed.

MINISTERS MAIL LIST

The Independent Assemblies membership list is made available to facilitate fellowship and communication. It is not to be used for the promotion of pyramids, chain letters, fund raising schemes, telemarketing or for personal gain.

Any violation of this policy may result in the loss of membership in the Independent Assemblies Fellowship.

YOUTH DIRECTORS AND YOUTH MEETINGS

It is our view that new and relatively inexperienced Youth Directors could probably benefit greatly from some qualified instruction, concerning rally format, location and dates, offerings and finances as well as responsibilities of both Director and home church.

A complete set of guidelines is always on file in the offices of the President and the Secretary, and will be shared with any newly appointed Youth Director.

CREDENTIALS FOR MINISTERS LIVING FAR AWAY FROM HOME OFFICE

Although it is our normal policy to induct a candidate for membership into the fellowship by the laying on of hands and prayer, an exception can be made if the candidate lives far away from the home office and there are no Independent Assemblies ministers in his area.

When the applicant is approved, all requirements are met, and the proper fees paid, credentials will be mailed.

ORDINATION FOR MINISTERS LIVING FAR AWAY FROM HOME OFFICE

It is our preference that all candidates for ordination attend one of the designated services, in the Spring, Autumn or the annual ministers conference, to be present with the Board of Trustees and have hands laid upon them by the presbytery.

However, we understand that this is not always practical for those living far away from the home office. Therefore the State Overseers may conduct ordination services for them at any time, issuing a charge and laying hands on the candidates.

CREDENTIALS FOR MINISTERS WHO ARE NOT U.S. CITIZENS

Qualified men and women who neither reside in the United States nor are U.S. citizens can be ordained or licensed ministers and recognized by the IA without the privileges of membership in the Independent Assemblies.

MINIMUM AGE FOR CREDENTIALS APPLICANTS

Ministers applying for Exhorter credentials must be seventeen years of age or older.

**The following policy was added to these Policies at a Board of Directors meeting in
Blackwell, OK, October 11, 2021.**

CONCERNING FEDERAL MANDATES FOR GATHERINGS

As medical science continues to expand, there are positive and potentially negative and dangerous tracks that science can take in regard to ethics and the practices that may become common but violate personal and corporate human rights. Human cloning, euthanasia, abortion, mandatory vaccines that have not been tested and proven over several years of observation and other ethical matters become not only a medical but religious concern. Should mandatory efforts be imposed for these, or all medical practices, we allow and support personal religious exemptions for any person who has aligned themselves with the practices and family of Independent Assemblies. As a fellowship of churches, ministers and not-for-profit ministries we support an individual's religious freedom and right to choose based on their beliefs so long as they align with the tenants of faith of this assembly.