

## **PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING DOCTRINAL AND PROPHECY PAPERS** **United Church of God, *an International Association***

### **Preamble:**

The United Church of God welcomes the submission of doctrinal and prophecy papers from the ministry and the membership. The Church appreciates the interest by ministers and members to further advance our understanding of the Word of God. The following process has been established in order to provide an orderly review of papers submitted dealing with doctrinal and prophecy topics. This process does not address papers that propose a change to the fundamental beliefs.

### **Process:**

1. The paper is presented to the local pastor. (Pastors should submit their papers to their regional pastor.<sup>1</sup>) It must be provided in electronic form. If the paper advocates a change in doctrine or a different interpretation of a prophetic passage, the paper should clearly state:
  - The traditional teaching of the Church.
  - Where the traditional teaching is wrong or lacking.
  - What the correct teaching should be and why this is a more accurate understanding.
2. The local pastor (or regional pastor, in the case of papers submitted by pastors) will discuss the paper with the individual presenting it. The following actions may be taken:
  - If the pastor (or regional pastor, if applicable) believes the paper to be in error, he will explain the error(s) to the individual submitting the paper. The paper will go no further, unless the individual wishes to appeal the decision.
  - The individual will be informed that he/she has the right to appeal the decision and submit his/her paper to the next level if he/she believes the decision to be incorrect.
  - The pastor (or regional pastor, if applicable) will forward to the Doctrine Committee of the Council of Elders a copy of the paper submitted along with a summary of the reasons the paper was rejected.
  - If the pastor (or regional pastor, if applicable) believes the paper has merit or that it should be considered, or if he believes he is unable to adequately address the issues, he will forward the paper along with his input to the Doctrine Committee of the Council of Elders.
3. The Doctrine Committee of the Council of Elders will review, at its discretion, doctrinal and prophecy papers submitted and address them or remand them to the Doctrinal Advisory Committee or Prophecy Advisory committee. The Doctrine Committee of the Council of

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<sup>1</sup> Or international equivalent, throughout.

Elders will oversee these two committees, whose members will be approved by majority vote of the Council of Elders.

4. These committees will review all papers submitted to them. The following action may be taken by the committees:
  - If the Doctrinal or Prophecy Advisory Committee by majority vote believes the paper has merit or should be considered, it will submit the paper along with its comments, edits, or a rewritten paper, to the Doctrine Committee of the Council of Elders for its review. Majority and minority opinions (if any) of the advisory committees will be included in these submissions.
  - If the Doctrinal or Prophecy Advisory Committee by majority vote does not believe the paper has merit or should be considered, it will be rejected and returned to the Doctrine Committee with reason(s) stated for the rejection. Majority and minority opinions (if any) of the advisory committees will be included. The author of the paper will be informed that he/she may appeal the decision to the Doctrine Committee of the Council of Elders.
5. The Doctrine Committee of the Council of Elders will review all papers returned to it by the Advisory Committees. The Doctrine Committee may take the following actions:
  - If more than one member of the Doctrine Committee believes the paper has merit, it will be submitted to the full Council of Elders for review.
  - If one or no members of the Doctrine Committee believe the paper has merit, it will be rejected. This decision will be final and there will be no appeal. The result will be reported to the Council of Elders.
  - The Doctrine Committee or its members may choose to edit papers sent by the Advisory Committees or write their own in support of or against these papers and positions taken in them, with such responses handled in accordance with the two bulleted points immediately above.
6. If the Council of Elders believes that a paper submitted to it has merit and approves by a two-thirds (2/3) ballot of the full Council, it will recommend the paper to be sent to the ministry. Some papers may be of interest only to the ministry. Other papers may be of interest to the membership as a whole. The Council of Elders will determine to whom the paper(s) should be sent and set any restrictions it deems appropriate in terms of how the contents of the paper are to be published, preached or otherwise disseminated.
7. If the Council of Elders receives and approves by a two-thirds (2/3) ballot of the full Council a paper that would alter the current doctrine outside of the fundamental beliefs, it must be presented to the General Conference of Elders for consideration. The General Conference of Elders will be provided with 90 days to study the paper and ask questions prior to being asked for a ballot. The paper must be approved by the General Conference of Elders, as prescribed by the governing documents of the Church.