



Church of God General Conference

RELOCATION GUIDEBOOK

The Board of Directors'
Recommendation

2025

The background of the slide features a blurred image of people seated at a table, likely at a conference. In the foreground, a large, open Bible is visible, resting on a stand. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark grey rectangular area.

CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE

MISSION STATEMENT

Partnering with churches & ministries
in spreading Biblical truth of the
Kingdom of God and the name of
Jesus Christ

RECOMMENDATION FOR RELOCATION

FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SETH ROSS

After discussing the issue of relocation on and off for the past eight years or more, the Board of Directors unanimously voted at their spring meeting in March 2025, to recommend relocating the conference office and Bible College.

This recommendation will be brought to the delegates for a vote at General Conference this summer. General Conference will meet on August 6-8, 2025, at Maple Grove Community Church in Kokomo, IN.

Many will ask how I feel personally about the recommendation. I am in favor of it. I feel this is the right move at the right time. In 1991, I moved with my parents from Oregon, IL, to Morrow, GA, as we felt God's leading. In 1996, I moved from GA to OH to pastor a church where I felt God was leading. I later got married and began a family there. In 2016, I felt God's leading to move again, and I moved with my young family to GA to work with the General Conference and the Bible College. Every step of the way, I've done my best to follow where I felt God was leading with the purpose of serving Him.

The Church of God has long been a movement that was founded on truth, connected by relationships, and built on faithfulness and a willingness to follow wherever God leads. He led us to establish a Bible College in 1939. He led us to move in 1991, and it seems He is leading us to make a move again.

It is undoubtedly a complex issue with many pros and cons. If we relocate, we will lose some things, but we will gain other things. However, I believe we will gain more than we will lose. Yes, there will be challenges if we move, but we will face challenges even if we stay where we are. It is not a matter of whether we will face challenges, but rather what those challenges will be.

**I FEEL THAT RELOCATING IS IN
THE BEST INTEREST OF THE
COLLEGE AND CONFERENCE
AS WELL AS FOR OUR
CHURCHES, BOTH CURRENT
AND FUTURE.**

The world has undergone significant changes since we relocated to the Atlanta area in 1991. Some of the original reasons to move are no longer relevant today. For example, we desired to be adjacent to an accredited college or university, so our students could participate in dual enrollment. We built our campus adjacent to Clayton State for this reason. Now, with online courses available nearly everywhere, students can enroll in any school, regardless of where the Bible College is located. In fact, we already moved away from Clayton State in 2008. Not only are we no longer adjacent to another college, but we no longer have the type of campus that we envisioned and desired.

What hasn't changed is that Atlanta is far removed from the majority of our churches. One goal of relocating is to strengthen the relationship between the conference and our churches. We need each other. The conference only exists to support and serve the churches at large, coordinating efforts to help churches accomplish larger ministry efforts together. This is why Lord's Harvest International, the Bible College, and Turning Point Ministries exist. We collectively work together.

At the spring meeting, the Board met with a professional strategist to discuss the mission of the General Conference and to craft some goals. In full disclosure, that professional is my brother, Zachary Ross, who has worked for companies such as AT&T, Amazon, and Google. He is currently a Global OKR Coach and Consultant, helping firms write Objectives and Key Results (OKRs). What makes his participation with us so helpful is not just his professional experience, but also his intimate knowledge of the Church of God General Conference. He offered his professional help free of charge, and we are grateful for it. The Board's recommendation stems, in part, from the work they did with Zachary. His work extended beyond the issue of relocation, pointing toward the broader mission of the General Conference.

**IN ADDITION TO
RECOMMENDING RELOCATION,
WE ARE DEVELOPING NEW
PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES
TO SERVE AND STRENGTHEN
OUR EXISTING CHURCHES.**

We're exploring ways to reach new people, enabling us to establish and support new churches and congregations. The opportunities for growth are immeasurable, and to properly capitalize on them, we need deep roots and a firm foundation of existing churches. We make each other stronger, which in turn helps us nurture new people.

We are developing a publishing department to create content that spreads biblical truth. We will market our materials, both in print and online, to reach people worldwide who are desperately seeking the truth. These efforts are not dependent on relocation, and they can happen simultaneously.

Nobody believes, or is proposing, that relocation alone will solve old problems or be the sole answer to new ones.

**BUT IF WE COMBINE A
WELL-LOCATED CAMPUS WITH
STRATEGIC MINISTRY EFFORTS,
GREAT THINGS CAN BECOME A
REALITY.**

Many have prayed over this issue, and I trust God has communicated His heart. I encourage you to continue praying. Pray for a shared vision and unity of purpose among our churches. Pray for new opportunities and congregations. Pray for new contacts. Pray for our collective wisdom as a movement, that we might be good stewards of the resources and opportunities God will bring our way.

The Board invites your questions and feedback. Their contact info is included in this guidebook.

The goal is to help churches and spread truth. This is one step toward that end.



SETH O. ROSS
Executive Director
Church of God General Conference

BOARD UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDS RELOCATION

The Board of Directors presents to the delegates of the Church of God General Conference, subject to a two-thirds approval of the delegates, the relocation of the Church of God General Conference and the Atlanta Bible College to the west-central Ohio region. The delegates give authority to the Board of Directors to identify and execute the necessary real estate transactions.

EXPLANATION

A discussion about the potential relocation of our current college and conference has been ongoing since 2018. The reasons have been numerous and varied, and interest has fluctuated. Occasional property options have been offered, and several exploratory site visits have been conducted to assess possibilities.

In 2022, the Board of Directors invited the entire Church of God to join together in a day of prayer and fasting to seek God's direction regarding relocation. The Board followed up with as many churches as they could reach to ask what people felt God was communicating. The feedback the Board received did not indicate a necessity to relocate at that time. *"It was concluded that further work needed to be done on vision, planning, and strategy. As part of our recurring responsibilities, the Board will periodically evaluate our location and operations in the context of our mission."*

Our mission states,

**"THE CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE PARTNERS
WITH CHURCHES AND MINISTRIES IN SPREADING
BIBLICAL TRUTH OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE
NAME OF JESUS CHRIST."**

Over the past three years, work has been conducted on vision, planning, and strategy. That work led many to believe that relocation will best position us to fulfill our mission of partnering with churches and ministries more effectively. The objective is to relocate our main office and college more centrally within our Church of God footprint (the Midwest) in order to develop closer relationships with more of our churches, provide a better on-campus student experience, and offer a wider variety of student ministry engagement opportunities.

Reasons for recommending relocation revolve around three main ideas: **a campus, centrality, and proximity.**



A CAMPUS

In 1989, the delegates of the General Conference approved moving our conference operations and Bible College from Oregon, IL, to Morrow, GA, where a college campus was established. The intent of that move was to help revitalize the Church of God. The Progress Journal noted that “many members have expressed concern over the closing of churches, the loss of our young people, the plateaued and declining membership in many churches, and an insufficient number of graduates from Oregon Bible College.” Reasons supporting that move included being physically located adjacent to an accredited college or university and being in a growing metropolitan area for planting churches. Other reasons were related to weather, economic realities, employment opportunities, and the ability to grant a college degree. The college and conference relocated to Morrow, GA, building a traditional campus.

In 2007, the Board moved to “develop the ABC and GC campus in a new location, in keeping with the Vision Statement.” Other decisions were made “concerning the future development of the ABC campus.” It was decided to sell the Morrow campus with the intent of building two new campuses – one to the south, and one on the northside of Atlanta for our Korean Extension. Many subsequent communications and decisions were made in pursuit of building a new campus.

Due to various factors, the south campus never materialized as envisioned.

While we have done well with what we have, and in many ways, the Church of God has made significant progress, we still lack a campus, which was initially a central focus. The General Conference is now in its best financial position in over two decades, and opportunities abound worldwide as the internet has fueled the spread of good theology.

In 2024, the Board formed two study committees. One was tasked with recommending a model that can best train people for ministry. The other was tasked with recommending a location where the conference and college can best serve our churches and fulfill our mission.

The Ministry Training Model Committee concluded that the best model was a college model in a campus setting that offers online options and uses both classroom and hands-on experiences.

The Location Study Committee focused on determining a location that would allow the General Conference to best fulfill the mission God has given us. They were unable to reach a consensus, so they presented the pros and cons of several locations to the Board for their consideration.

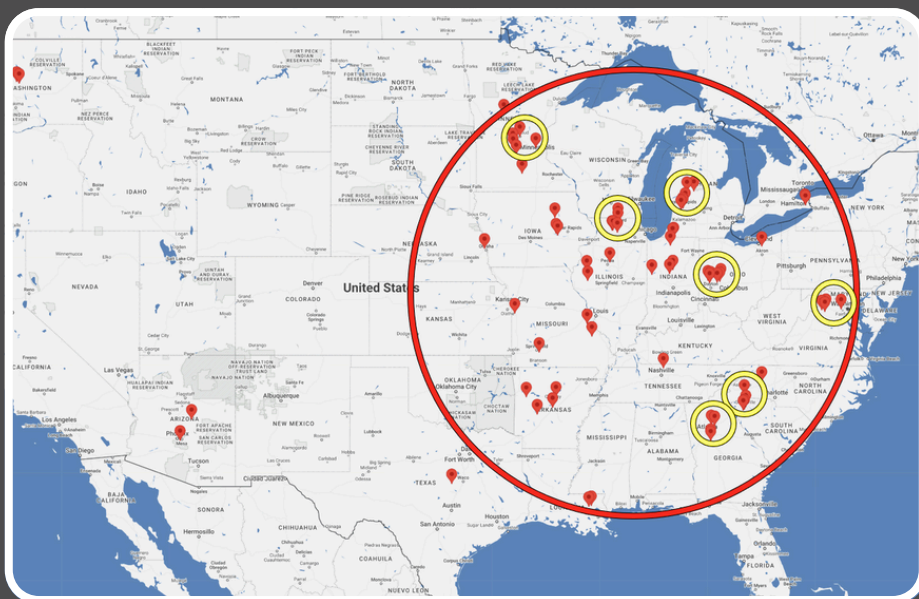
PROXIMITY

If we build a campus, the question arises: Where should it be located? To best serve our churches and foster closer relationships with them, it is wise to be located near as many churches as possible.

This is especially important for Bible College students to have the opportunity to experience ministry in multiple congregations. Observing and participating in more than one church provides broader exposure to the kinds of churches they may engage with after college. Being within an hour of multiple pastors provides a great opportunity for mentorship. Since not every church operates in the same way, being close to multiple churches gives students the opportunity to observe how churches can function with different leadership structures.

There are several areas around the country where we have clusters of churches, but only a few are in the Midwest. **For this reason, the Board unanimously recommends west-central Ohio, targeting the Huber Heights-Tipp City-Troy region.**

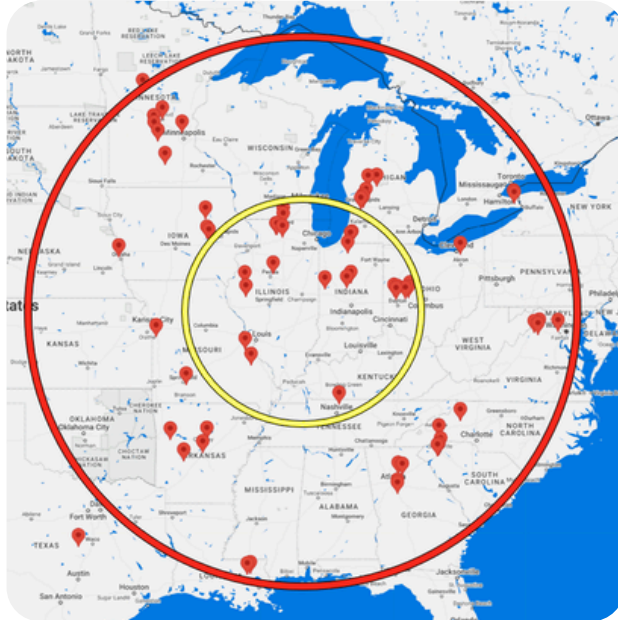
One significant change should be noted. The state of Georgia allows us to grant a non-accredited Bachelor of Theology. Moving out of Georgia eliminates that possibility. The state of Ohio will allow us to grant graduates a diploma in lieu of a Bachelor's degree, as was the case in Oregon, IL. This change will not impact those who previously earned degrees from Atlanta Bible College.



AREAS WITH 4+ CHURCHES WITHIN 60 MILES

OH (6 churches, 362 people)
SC (6 churches, 331 people)
IL/WI (5 churches, 182 people)
MI (6 churches, 165 people)
MN (5 churches, 115 people)
VA (4 churches, 108 people)
GA (4 churches, 89 people)

CENTRALITY



Being located near the center of the Church of God is important for fostering closer relationships with churches.

Obviously, conference staff can visit churches from anywhere, but traveling from the Atlanta area makes most trips at least a day's drive or requires a flight. Living closer to more churches allows for shorter drives and, therefore, makes more visits possible, which is the intention.

Using the intersection of Interstates 70 & 75 as a reference point, we would be:

- Within a 60-mile drive of 6 Churches of God representing 362 people
- Within a 4-hour drive of 13 Churches of God representing 560 people
- Within an 8-hour drive of 42 Churches of God representing 1618 people

For comparison, McDonough, GA is:

- Within a 60-mile drive of 4 Churches of God representing 89 people
- Within a 4-hour drive of 10 Churches of God representing 420 people
- Within an 8-hour drive of 12 Churches of God representing 518 people

LIST OF CHURCHES WITH CENTRALITY

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Beloit, WI | 9. South Bend, IN | 17. Pleasant Hill, OH |
| 2. Oregon, IL | 10. Plymouth, IN | 18. Troy, OH |
| 3. E. Oregon, IL | 11. Kokomo, IN | 19. Tipp City, OH |
| 4. Flagg Center, IL | 12. Michigantown, IN | 20. Lawrenceville, OH |
| 5. Ripley, IL | 13. Hedrick, IN | 21. Springfield, OH |
| 6. Macomb, IL | 14. Farmington, MO | 22. Urbana, OH |
| 7. E. Peoria, IL | 15. Morse Mill, MO | |
| 8. Granger, IN | 16. White House, TN | |

SUMMARY

Benefits of the proposed relocation to west-central Ohio include:

We can develop closer relationships with more of our churches.

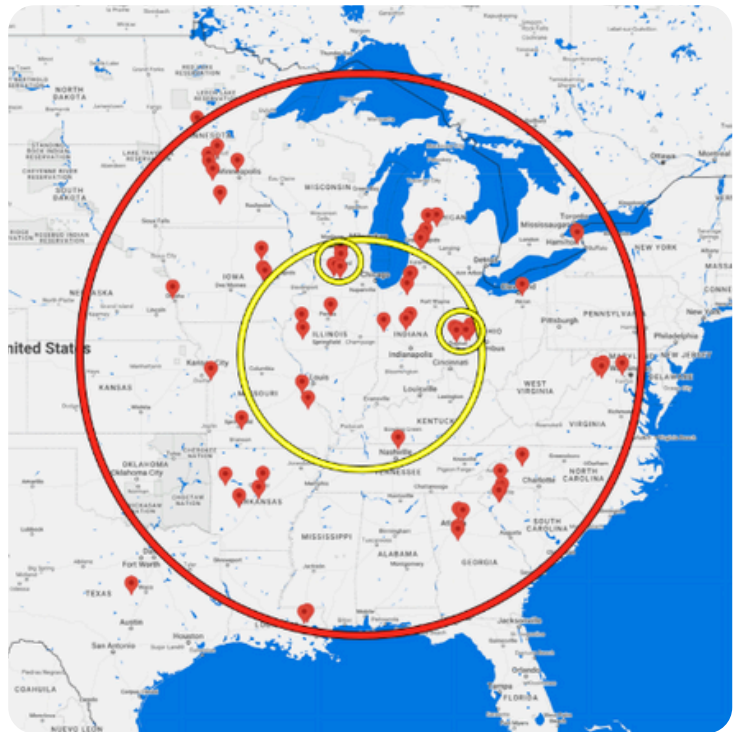
We can offer a more enriching on-campus student experience.

We can offer a wider variety of student ministry engagements.

Relocation alone won't solve every problem faced by the Church of God. We face challenges that extend beyond the location of an office or college. Developing new initiatives and partnerships, planting new churches, and cultivating more leaders must all be ongoing regardless.

There are two areas that have four or more churches within 60 miles and are also centrally located: Northern IL and West Central OH.

The Board recommends that the General Conference and Bible College relocate to West Central, OH.



The Board welcomes your questions and thoughts. Please email them using the addresses below.

The entire Board: board-members-only@googlegroups.com

Joe Myers (Chair): joemyers51@gmail.com

J.J. Fletcher (Vice Chair): jfletch86@gmail.com

Jon Welch (Secretary): jtwelchmo@yahoo.com

Shane Martin (Treasurer): smartin@elements.org

Bob Alcumbrack: robertalcumbrack@gmail.com

Alan Cain: thelcog@gmail.com

Talon Paul: kingdomgospel138@gmail.com

We are committed to helping churches and spreading truth. Together, we can accomplish much in the name of Jesus Christ and the coming kingdom of God.

RELOCATION: CAMPUS

WHAT DO WE NEED?

In light of our past experience, current needs, and our future hopes and dreams, we believe a new campus should encompass 10-12 acres of land, featuring an administrative and classroom building, a student housing facility, and a maintenance garage. Although no architectural renderings have been created, an administrative building with the necessary offices, library, classrooms, chapel, etc., will be approximately 10,000 sq. ft. A residential building for our students needs to be approximately 8,000 sq. ft., and a simple 20x20 maintenance garage should suffice. That is a total of 18,400 sq. ft. to construct.

Most construction projects currently plan for \$150 per square foot. However, our Maple Grove church in Kokomo recently constructed a new fellowship hall with significant volunteer labor for approximately \$100 per square foot. The Church of God has a history of pitching in, helping one another, and enjoying the shared accomplishment of building both buildings and community together. For planning purposes, we will share costs at both the high and low ends of the spectrum.

Then there is the issue of land. We require 10-12 acres for our new campus, and there are suitable properties available for sale. We believe we will be able to find what we need for between \$350,000 and \$500,000. For planning purposes, we will conservatively project at the high end of our price range.

RELOCATION: FINANCES

HOW WILL WE FUND IT?

Two primary scenarios have been considered. Both include selling property. The key difference is the Avalon building (referred to as Avalon) and the use of debt. Neither scenario is being determined at the General Conference annual meeting. There have been questions about each of these possibilities, so it is important to show the impact of both.

SCENARIO 1: SELL AND INVEST

In this scenario, we would sell all the properties to fund the construction of a new campus. This means losing the revenue surplus currently generated by Avalon and used by the General Fund, which is approximately \$50,000 per year. The plan is to build for less than we sell for and invest the unused portion of the sale to generate income for ministry that is lost from selling Avalon. The student houses generate some income, however, the new student houses will also generate additional income. Thus, they offset each other. This is a debt-free option.

SCENARIO 2: KEEP AND LEASE

In this scenario, we would sell the houses and lots but keep Avalon. We would lease the entire building to increase annual revenue and fund ministry. This plan would require taking on debt to build a campus and using Avalon as collateral. It also means functioning as a long-distance landlord.

FORECASTING BUDGETARY NEEDS

There are two key expenses to consider. First, we anticipate that a new campus will incur approximately \$70,000 in annual operating expenses. Second, the General Fund annually uses the \$50,000 surplus from Avalon’s lease income. The General Fund will continue to need that revenue, whether it comes from future Avalon leases or investments resulting from the sale of Avalon. This means we have a standing annual need of \$120,000 (\$70,000 facility + \$50,000 budgeted to the General Fund) to be covered by either investments or tenant income. This expense is deducted at the end of each scenario's calculation to show a realistic net impact on the General Fund.

ASSETS

The General Conference currently owns three student houses, three vacant lots, and a four-story office building that houses the General Conference offices and college. In April 2025, a market-based valuation of all the properties was made, and it was determined that the properties held the following values at the time of the assessment.

House 1:	\$285,000
House 2:	\$285,000
House 3:	\$260,000
3 Vacant Lots:	\$40,000 each
Avalon:	\$3,600,000
TOTAL	\$4,550,000

The Rex Cain Foundation has offered up to \$500,000 toward relocation expenses, which brings total assets to \$5,050,000.

FINANCIALS: SELL AND INVEST

*When calculating expected returns on invested money after construction is completed, we conservatively used 7% based on the lifetime average of the stock market.

ASSETS

Rex Cain Foundation	\$500,000
Sell houses & lots	\$950,000
<u>Sell Avalon</u>	<u>\$3,600,000</u>
TOTAL	\$5,050,000

Construction @ \$100/sq ft	\$1,840,000
Land	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$2,340,000

Left to invest	\$2,710,000
Annual R.O.I. @7%	\$189,700

COST ESTIMATES

Construction @ \$150/sq. ft	\$2,760,000
Land	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$3,260,000

Left to invest	\$1,790,000
Annual R.O.I. @7%	\$125,300

NET annual impact on General Fund (minus \$50K for ministry, \$70K operating expenses)

build @\$150/sq ft	\$5,300
build @\$100/sq ft	\$69,700

FINANCIALS: KEEP AND LEASE

*Calculations have been made to forecast expected income for a fully leased Avalon building. These figures do NOT include necessary build outs of the current space used by the General Conference/Bible College to create new office space.

*Loan estimates are based on 25 years at 6.5% interest. These terms are commonly used by the commercial loan industry.

FUTURE AVALON ANNUAL REVENUE

Future Lease Revenue	\$408,400
- Minus Management Cost	-\$41,000
- Minus Avalon expenses	-\$180,000
Annual NET Income	\$187,400

Amount to Finance (Debt)	\$1,810,000
Annual Debt Service	\$148,000

Construction @ \$100/sq ft	\$1,840,000
Land	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$2,340,000

ASSETS

Rex Cain Foundation	\$500,000
<u>Sell houses & lots</u>	<u>\$950,000</u>
TOTAL	\$1,450,000

Amount to Finance (Debt)	\$890,000
Annual Debt Service	\$73,000

COST ESTIMATES

Construction @ \$150/sq ft	\$2,760,000
Land	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$3,260,000

NET annual impact on General Fund (minus \$50K for ministry, \$70K operating expenses)

build @\$150/sq ft	-\$80,600
build @\$100/sq ft	-\$5,600

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. DIDN'T THE BOARD SAY "NO" TO RELOCATION IN 2022?

- A.** In November of 2022 the Board did consider relocation and decided, "After consultation with stakeholders (pastors & church leaders) the feedback the Board received did not indicate a necessity to relocate at this time." However, they also communicated, "As part of our recurring responsibilities, the Board will periodically evaluate our location and operations in context of our mission."

Q. WHAT'S THE EXPECTED TIMELINE FOR RELOCATION?

- A.** If approved, the search for land would begin in earnest. We expect it might take up to 6 months or more to secure property that meets our needs and another 12 months for construction. That could mean completion in the winter/spring of 2027. The offices could physically move that summer with classes beginning in the new location in the fall of 2027.

Q. HOW WILL RELOCATION IMPACT MY LOCAL CHURCH?

- A.** For many churches, a relocation will allow our annual summer conference (called General Conference) to meet closer. Over the 35 years since moving to Atlanta, summer conferences are not well-attended when they meet in Georgia. Since 1987, whenever General Conference met in Georgia, the average attendance has been 171. When General Conference has not met in Georgia, the average attendance has been 249. In fact, every year Conference met in Georgia, attendance dropped from the year before. In that same time period, Conference attendance decreased from one year to the next 18 times, and 11 of those times were when Conference met in Georgia.

Q. ARE RELOCATION AND BUILDINGS HOW DONORS EXPECTED THEIR MONEY TO BE SPENT?

- A.** If it is decided to fund relocation through the sale of existing properties, then yes. The original donors gave money to purchase the Avalon building, vacant lots, and to build student houses. The sale of the existing properties would fund the construction of the new properties, so the original donor intent is maintained. It's similar to a family selling a house in one state to purchase one in another state.

If it is decided to fund relocation in another way, donors would be invited to participate with a full understanding of where their donations would be spent.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

CONTINUED

Q. COULDN'T THE MONEY SPENT ON RELOCATION BE SPENT ON MINISTRY INSTEAD?

- A.** No. The money is currently locked up in property (fixed assets). It's not available to be spent on ministry services (though the buildings certainly do facilitate ministry). Selling the buildings to fund ministries would leave us without offices and a college.

Q. ISN'T THIS A BACKWARDS MOVE OR A RETREAT TO COMFORT?

- A.** This relocation is an effort to capitalize on the strengths of the Church of God which center around relationships, shared community, and engagement with each other. It is an effort to strengthen existing churches so new churches can have a stronger network to join. Efforts to begin new churches are ongoing and will continue whether or not relocation takes place.

Q. DO OUR MINISTRIES HINGE ON A MOVE?

- A.** No. Our ministries are ongoing and growing. They will continue to operate and develop whether we move or not. A move is not a "make or break" situation.

Q. IF WE MOVE, WHAT WILL WE DO DIFFERENTLY TO REVITALIZE OUR CHURCHES THAT WE AREN'T DOING NOW?

- A.** The move will not directly impact the revitalization of churches, because revitalizing factors are locally generated and implemented by congregations. Any support the General Conference can offer to churches can be delivered from either Georgia or Ohio. For many churches, having the Conference offices and staff closer may allow travel to be easier and cheaper, but church health efforts can be accomplished with a move or not. The Board consistently seeks ways to provide assistance to our churches.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

CONTINUED

Q. WHAT ARE WE DOING TO ADDRESS THE CHURCH OF GOD'S DECLINING MEMBERSHIP, CHURCHES, AND GIVING? HOW ARE WE FACING THE CULTURAL HEADWINDS THAT CHALLENGE CHRISTIANITY AS A WHOLE?

- A.** We continue to look for new ways to broadcast the hope of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. We are expanding efforts to publish content both online and in print, to market our materials both inside and outside the Church of God, and to develop new and creative online content to reach a much broader audience with foundational truths of the Abrahamic Faith. These efforts are not contingent on a relocation. They will continue to be developed regardless of the relocation vote.

Q. HOW WILL RELOCATION IMPACT OR CHANGE OUR CURRENT GENERAL CONFERENCE MINISTRIES?

- A.** Our current General Conference ministries will remain in place and be ongoing. We will continue to grow and expand ministries according to plans already in place. There is no reason to pause or stop ministry efforts until a relocation is complete.

Q. WHAT IMPACT WILL A RELOCATION HAVE ON OUR STAFF?

- A.** Some staff will relocate, and others will not. Some are close to retirement and are unlikely to move. Others have ongoing family commitments that will prevent relocation. Some new staff will be hired after a relocation takes place.

Q. WILL A RELOCATION INCLUDE TAKING ON DEBT?

- A.** Not necessarily. If we keep the Avalon building, then yes, debt will be required. If we sell our properties, relocation can happen without long-term debt. There could be a scenario, if the Avalon building does not sell quickly, that funds could be borrowed against the value of the Avalon building. That debt would be secured by the asset of real property. Upon the sale of the Avalon building, that debt would be paid off.

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