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Assyrian Church of the East Youth Association

Assyrian Church of the East Youth Association Constitution and By-Laws for the United States Chapters

(Revised: April 2016)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NEC – National Executive Committee
ACEYA – Assyrian Church of the East Youth Association
LCYAB – Local Chapter Youth Advisory Board

PREAMBLE

1. Mission Statement

Following the apostolic exhortation of St. Paul, the mission of the holy Church's Youth Association is to mold our youth into the image of Christ by being in the world 'but not of the world': "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable and perfect will of God*" (Romans 12:2). The Youth Association's ultimate goal is to instill in each and every one of our youth the desire to please the Lord in our faith, words, deeds and actions.

2. Vision Statement

- a. To foster a sound knowledge and understanding of the holy Apostolic Tradition and the teachings of the Assyrian Church of the East and of the Holy Scriptures in the Youth of our Church.
- b. To develop within the Youth the proper and necessary Christian life built upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God become Man for us, drawing them to the Holy Mother Church, to live their lives in a manner worthy of the Gospel, thus becoming Christ-like individuals, the true light of the world and salt of the earth.
- c. To encourage and enhance the consistent active role of each individual within the divers liturgical and non-liturgical services of their parish, therefore serving the Body of Christ according to their vocation as baptized members of the one Body.
- d. To provide opportunities where the youth leaders can initiate, coordinate and direct: religious, social, educational and humanitarian programs designed to foster our Christian faith and to teach the youth to practice *teshmeshta* (diakonia/ministry) of the Church and one another.
- e. To encourage and enhance each individual to be a living testimony of the Christian life in conformity with the Sacred Scriptures, within their respective family, community and country.
- f. To equip each individual to confess, uphold and defend their Christian faith according to the sacred doctrines and Apostolic Tradition of the holy Church, our mother and gatherer.
- g. To encourage the youth to preserve our mother tongue, the Aramaic language which was spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, and which allows for the purest and clearest reading of the Sacred Scriptures, and is integral to accessing the rich body of theological writings handed down by the Fathers of the Assyrian Church of the East, which comprise our particular identity and traditions.

3. Motto

The motto of the ACEYA will be: *“And let no man despise thy youth; but be an example to the believers in word, conduct, love, faith and purity”* (I Timothy 4:12).

ARTICLE I

A. NAME

The name of the organization shall be: *THE HOLY APOSTOLIC CATHOLIC ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST - YOUTH ASSOCIATION* (= ACEYA).

B. FOUNDATION

This document has been inspired by and pays tribute to the original Youth Association Constitution, established in 1982 by the late Catholicos-Patriarch His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV (patriarch, 1976-2015), upon his arrival to the United States, whence he founded the modern youth movement in the Assyrian Church of the East, and passionately continued to support and nurture the movement with great care until his passing on March 26, 2015.

C. OFFICIAL TEXT

The official languages of this constitution are Assyrian and English, however, the language utilized for adjudication will be the English language.

ARTICLE II

A. PATRON SAINT

1. The Patron Saint of the ACEYA is the late Catholicos-Patriarch His Holiness Mar Benyamin Shimun XXI (1887-1918), who dedicated his life as a youth to the perfect will of God, being consecrated to the Holy See of the Patriarchate of the Assyrian Church of the East at the age of 16, and received the crown of martyrdom at the age of 33.

2. The Youth Members of each parish shall be active participants in the annual observance of the Patron Saint's Commemoration, which falls on the Sunday preceding the First Sunday of the Great Fast, by attending a designated Spiritual Service/program and the Eucharistic Liturgy (*Qurbana Qaddisha*).

ARTICLE III

A. EMBLEM AND SEAL

1. The national Emblem and official Logo of each chapter shall be a circular image with the Cross (Church of the East) of our Lord in the center. The title 'Assyrian Church of the East Youth Association' in Assyrian and English is to read around the circular image. The image approved and adopted is the following:



2. The symbolism of the ACEYA Emblem shall be:
 - a. The circle represents completion and perfection. The holy faith of the Assyrian Church of the East has always guided our people along the path given by Christ. We too, are to live the life in Christ, striving after Him.
 - b. The Cross represents the subjection of the faith of our holy Church—Jesus Christ—and stands as a reminder of God's ultimate love for the world. The specific Cross known as the 'Nestorian Cross,' testifies to the fruitful missionary activities of the Holy Fathers of our Church. The red flame (the image of which is the divided tongue of fire which rested on the head of the Twelve Apostles) indicates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost, and the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit.

3. The common and corporate seal of the ACEYA shall be round with the official Emblem and the name of the organization.
4. Any member in good standing in a chartered chapter shall be entitled to wear the emblem or other insignia as may be adopted by the ACEYA national conferences.
5. The name, emblem or insignia of the ACEYA shall not be used as a trade name, trademark or for any purpose other than that authorized by the National Executive NEC.

ARTICLE IV

A. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The National Executive Committee (= NEC) shall consist of Prelate(s), Clergy and youth representatives.
2. The focal purpose of the NEC shall be to lead, unite, support and guide the Assyrian Church of the East Youth Association in the United States.
3. The function of the NEC is to act as the central governing body for the Assyrian Church of the East Youth Association in the US. The NEC shall also organize and provide for the annual National Youth Conference.
4. The NEC has the authority to constitute any sub-committee(s) it deems necessary for the advancement of the mission or work of the ACEYA, such as (but not limited to) a steering committee for the National Youth Conference etc.
5. The NEC shall meet at least twice annually:
 - a. At the beginning of the calendar year.
 - c. During the annual National Youth Conference (inclusive of youth representatives from the various ACEYA chapters).

B. NEC OFFICERS

1. The NEC shall consist of the following officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Board of Directors. These officers will consist of two or more clergymen and nine (9) youth members.
2. A clergyman shall always preside over the NEC as President. The President shall always be appointed solely by the three diocesan bishops of the United States.
3. The President shall exercise oversight of all spiritual, religious, cultural and social activities of this organization. He shall be responsible for all matters of faith and good order within the organization.
4. The President shall appoint the Vice-President (who also shall be a clergyman), Secretary and the Treasurer, from all United States Diocese. The following officers shall be duly elected by the Chapter committees at a closed meeting during the convocation of the National Youth Conference: Secretary, the Board of Directors, which shall consist of (9) persons, three from each of the three dioceses in the United States.

C. YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES

1. Each diocese shall be represented by three active members in the NEC 'Board of Directors.'
 - a. The three diocesan representatives shall be chosen by the vote of the ACEYA Chapter committees within the diocese.
 - b. The elected members of the NEC shall already be serving or have served on their local ACEYA Chapter committee.

D. TERM OF OFFICE

Exclusive of the President, the term of the NEC members shall serve their office for a period of three (3) years, with no term limits.

E. VOTING

1. Exclusive of the President, each officer and youth representative shall have the privilege of one (1) vote during the NEC meetings. The President shall exercise his right in the event of a tie.

2. There are three valid ways of voting, which shall be recorded by the Secretary: by show of hands, by written ballot (closed or open), or by roll call.

ARTICLE V

A. BRIEF OUTLINE OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES FOR THE NEC

1. Article V in no way intends to be an exhaustive manual of parliamentary procedures. Rather, it is intended to give the NEC members the most essential facts to be considered in conducting a meeting according to accepted usage and custom. The parliamentary authority for all matters of procedures not specifically covered by the Constitution and By-Laws of the ACEYA shall be "Robert's Rules of Order."

2. Proper attitudes can be formed if attention is focused upon the following three guiding considerations:

- a. Rules of procedures aim to keep the meetings cooperative-minded, not crowned-minded.
- b. They insure the registering of one decision and one action at any one time.
- c. They aim to harmonize the majority rule with minority rights, and to preserve unity within the organization.

3. It shall also be remembered that to have successful meetings, they shall be conducted in a dignified and business-like manner. The following meeting decorum shall be observed:

1. Quorum:

A quorum of the membership to conduct regular business shall be deemed simple majority of the total active members (i.e. 50% + 1).

2. Order of Business:

The President who is chairing shall call the meeting to order. Then, he shall signal for all to stand and leads the NEC in prayer, followed by a specific Scripture reading and commentary on the passage. He shall then conduct the meeting according to the suggested order of business as prescribed previously as follows:

- a. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, while allowing for any additions and/or corrections. If there are no additions and/or corrections suggested, they stand approved as read. If there are corrections, the President shall formally direct the Secretary to make the noted corrections unless there is an objection, in which case a formal vote is cast as to the wording if necessary. If the minutes are approved and an error is noted later, a vote is required for their amendment at a later time and at a proper meeting.
- b. A 'Financial Report' shall be presented by the Treasurer.
- c. In regards to the 'Committee Report,' the President shall call upon the chairperson of the (sub) committee to present a report; then, a motion to accept or adopt the report must be made and seconded. After this is done, the report shall be open for discussion and amendments as a regular order of business. The report must then be moved (motion made) and voted upon.
- d. 'Old Business' remaining from the previous meeting(s).
- e. 'New Business'
- f. Motion to adjourn the meeting, to be seconded but not required to be discussed.
- g. The meeting shall conclude with prayer.
- h. A member of the committee has been absent from meetings three consecutive times, he/she will be required to submit their resignation from the committee.

3. Motions:

When making a motion, one must always raise the hand and wait until recognized by the Chair. A motion must be seconded by another member of the NEC, discussed and voted upon. If there is a motion on the floor, no other motion can be entertained, except its own amendment. In this case, another motion must be made, the object of which is to change and modify a previous motion; the amendment must be seconded and is then to be discussed. If an amendment is carried, the question then is put as amended and must be voted upon as a whole. If the amendment is lost, the motion is put as originally stated.

4. Minutes:

The minutes are a record of the NEC meetings, and should be a history for future use. Every motion, whether lost or carried, shall be recorded. Resolutions, if adopted, shall be copied in full. A vote by ballot shall be recorded showing the number of votes on each side. The minutes must not criticize either favorably or unfavorably.

5. Reports:

The Treasurer's report (i.e. 'Financial Report') should contain a full record of all funds received and all funds expended since the previous meeting, and a statement of balance on hand. Committees shall be asked to report at each meeting. The reports shall include an accounting of all activities and request of appropriations if the committee needs money for its activities/work, as well as anything else that the Committee wishes the membership to discuss or to know about.

ARTICLE VI

A. LOCAL CHAPTERS

1. The ACEYA Chapter is constituted by a valid local chapter, which is in good standing.
2. If the local ACEYA Chapter deems it necessary to have an age distinction within its local chapter, they shall then have two (2) local chapters of youth, namely: 'Juniors' (ages: 14 – 17 years) and 'Seniors' (ages: 18 – 30 years). The chapters shall be chartered by the NEC and shall comply with the ACEYA Constitution and By-Laws. It shall not use any name except that designated in its charter which shall include the letters ACEYA in the chapter name.

3. The officers of the chartered chapter shall be comprised of the spiritual overseer, who is the priest of the local parish, in addition to the following: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and other officers as required. These constitute the 'Youth Committee' of the local chapter. The officers shall be members in good standing. Their duties and obligations shall be defined by parliamentary law and duly approved local By-Laws.
4. The Secretary of the chartered chapter shall send to the NEC Secretary the names, addresses and birth dates of its members and the names of the appointed officers, in addition to any and all national dues or fees which are to be sent to the NEC Treasurer.
5. The chapter's regulations of its affairs shall not be in conflict with the National Constitution and By-Laws. The chapter shall have the right to organize its own activities, functioning under its own management, provided such activities do not conflict with those of the NEC.
6. The office of the local chapter shall be within the confines of the local parish church premises only, with no exception. In the event the local chapter is a mission, then the office shall be located in a place designated by the priest responsible for the mission and the mission's local chapter officers.
7. All meetings of the chapter shall be conducted according to the accepted parliamentary procedures as prescribed in the ACEYA Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE VII

A. CHARTERING OF CHAPTERS

1. Local chapters shall be organized and chartered where there are youth of the Assyrian Church of the East, whether in a parish or mission, and who desire to establish a chapter for the preservation of the faith and heritage of the Assyrian Church of the East, and who can ensure the carrying out of the principles, ideas and regulations of the ACEYA. This

shall be done only with the approval and supervision of the proper ecclesiastical authority, i.e. local presiding prelate, or parish priest.

2. Upon submission of the petition for chartering a new chapter, the NEC President or his delegate shall instruct the members about the principles and ideals of the ACEYA, and explain to them the National Constitution and By-Laws.
3. Upon completion of the organization of the chapter and approval by the NEC, the official charter shall be issued to the particular chapter of the ACEYA signed by the NEC President and Secretary under the seal of the organization, provided the chapter has complied with the following conditions:
 - a. Election of officers and completion of the organization of the chapter.
 - b. Payment of any and all Charter fees and the National dues of its members.
 - c. Maintaining the standards, principles, practices and ideals of the ACEYA.
 - d. If the chapter adopts the local By-Laws, they shall conform to the National Constitution and By-Laws and shall be approved by the ACEYA NEC.
4. The ACEYA NEC may create a chapter, naming it 'Chapter-at-Large,' for the purpose of giving people in those parishes and towns where there are no chartered chapters the privilege of formally belonging to the ACEYA, abiding by its ideals and enjoying the rights and privileges of its members, after consulting with the proper local bishop. It shall consist of the following:
 - a. Officers: The ACEYA NEC shall appoint an interim committee for the purpose of establishing the Chapter-at-Large according to the Constitution and By-Laws of the national ACEYA. If for any reason the Chapter-at-Large lacks the presence of the spiritual leader (*Responsible Clergyman*), the ACEYA NEC shall appoint an appropriate member of the clergy to act as the spiritual leader, only after obtaining the permission of the local ecclesiastical authority.

ARTICLE VIII

A. REGULATIONS OF CHAPTERS

1. Each ACEYA Chapter shall pay to the NEC Treasury an annual membership fee of \$250.00 USD, due by January 31st.
2. Any member chapter which is more than 30 days in debt to the national ACEYA Treasury shall be considered in 'poor standing.' Before the ACEYA NEC shall proceed with any punitive measures, all attempts to reconcile the delinquency on the part of the local chapter must be made. A Chapter which is duly censured by the NEC may not participate in the National Youth Conference for as long as their dues are outstanding. A chapter may be reinstated into the National ACEYA upon payment of dues/fees for the current year or any amount past due, or as the NEC deems acceptable.
3. Any member chapter that fails to conform to the Constitution and By-Laws of the National ACEYA, and/or that attempts to disrupt, sow disunity or dissension in the organization, or that fails to conform to the accepted standards of chartered chapters may have its charter suspended or revoked, or may otherwise be disciplined by the two-thirds vote of the ACEYA NEC, provided that a copy of the charges with notice for a hearing thereon shall have been sent by registered mail to the President or Secretary of the chapter in question, 30 days before said hearing.

ARTICLE IX

A. LOCAL CHAPTERS

1. Members of a Local Chapter Youth Committee may consist of the following offices: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Religious Coordinator, Education Coordinator, Sports Coordinator, Social Coordinator and Membership Coordinator. These positions shall be filled by means of elections, if possible. The Parish Priest may intervene if and when required.

2. Any person of good Christian character and community standing, male or female, between the ages of 18-30 whether unmarried or married, and who necessarily is a member of the Assyrian Church of the East, is eligible to join the Local Chapter Youth Committee.
3. All members, before being accepted, shall pledge themselves by promise of fidelity to uphold the Constitution and By-Laws of the national ACEYA and the local chapter.
 - a. The promise shall read as follows: "I, N., solemnly promise and vow to uphold the Constitution and By-Laws of the Assyrian Church of the East Youth Association, as a faithful member of my Youth Association's Chapter. I further promise to uphold the canons, teachings and apostolic traditions of the Assyrian Church of the East, and to be an active participant in my local ACEYA Chapter, by the help of God."
4. Any member moving to another city may transfer his/her membership from his/her former chapter to the new local chapter. A letter of recommendation from the previous chapter is sufficient for membership in the new chapter.
5. General body meetings of the local ACEYA Chapter shall be held quarterly (i.e. four times a year), but not less than twice a year under any circumstance.
6. The Spiritual Overseer (i.e. Parish Priest or the responsible clergy) shall appoint a 'Local Chapter Youth Advisory Board' (LCYAB), which shall be concerned with the affairs of the parish/chapter youth. This board shall advise, assist and support the Spiritual Overseer concerning all youth affairs.
7. The LCYAB shall be comprised of, but not limited to: the Spiritual Overseer (*Priest/the Responsible Clergy*), high school parent, middle school parent, two college graduates, and a deacon of the parish.

*** *THE END* ***