

Assemblies of God reaffirm tongues-speaking and advocate compassion: At the biennial General Council

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The Assemblies of God reaffirmed its doctrine of speaking in tongues during its biennial General Council meeting and declared—on a second try—that showing God’s compassion for the world is their “fourth reason for being.”

Speaking in tongues is the sole doctrine that separates members of the largest predominantly white Pentecostal denomination from other evangelicals, said Juleen Turnage, the longtime spokes person for the church body, whose meeting in Orlando, Florida, ended August 7.

The resolution notes that the validity of speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, has “come under certain scrutiny” and asks that members continue to require that credentialed ministers have experienced glossolalia and that they “actively preach and teach this doctrine as well.” Assemblies leaders have been concerned that the practice of tongues-speaking is in decline and that some clergy had not experienced the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

The resolution on the “fourth reason for being,” which was rejected and then brought back for a second vote, adds ministering with compassion to three other key Assemblies goals—evangelizing the world, worshiping God and enhancing the spiritual growth of believers.

Some members voiced worries that adding the fourth principle might prompt a deemphasis on evangelism and cause a drift into “social do-goodism.” But Turnage said that thousands of Assemblies of God churches are already involved in compassion ministries, such as providing food and clothing to the needy.

After General Superintendent George O. Wood, who was reelected to the top executive post, spoke from the floor of the convention and urged its passage, the compassion resolution was adopted. *—Religion News Service*