

CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION

WE BELIEVE:

That God's purpose concerning man finds fulfillment in a priority reason-for-being:

1. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world
2. To be a corporate body in which man may worship God
3. To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son, and
4. To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world.

The Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God shall represent, as nearly as possible, the Body of Christ as described in the New Testament. It shall recognize the principles inherent in the Body as also inherent in this Fellowship, particularly the principles of unity, cooperation, and equality. It recognizes that these principles will enable it to achieve its priority reason for being as an agency of God for evangelizing the world, as a corporate body in which man may worship God, as a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son, and to be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world.

That the District exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason-for-being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, which enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs, adding a necessary dimension to worshipful relationship with God, and enabling them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

Therefore, we recognize ourselves to be a cooperative fellowship of Pentecostal, Spirit-baptized saints from local Pentecostal assemblies in the District of like precious faith, whose purpose is not to deprive them of their scriptural and local rights and privileges, but to recognize and promote scriptural methods and order for worship, unity, fellowship, work, and business for God so that results of our efforts may be conserved and assemblies established and developed along the line of our distinctive testimony; and, to disapprove unscriptural doctrines and polity, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13).

ARTICLE I. NAME

The corporate name of this body shall be the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God, (hereinafter also referred to as "the District").

The term District Council refers to the sessions of the corporation.

ARTICLE II. JURISDICTION

The District shall geographically have jurisdiction over the work of the Assemblies of God within the territory covered by the state of Louisiana.

ARTICLE III. NATURE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Section 1. Nature

The District is a cooperative fellowship based on mutual agreements voluntarily entered into by its members.

Section 2. Relationship to General Council

The District is an integral part of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri. Therefore, the principles of voluntary unity and cooperative fellowship as set forth in the Constitution of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, adopted at Springfield, Missouri, September 16-22, 1927, are the principles which shall govern the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 3. Relationship to Other Districts

The District shall have a cooperative working relationship with other districts in matters of mutual concern.

Section 4. Relationship to Geographic Areas and Geographic Regions

The District shall pursue and promote its activities within its jurisdiction by means of the various geographic Areas and geographic regions it shall from time to time establish.

Section 5. Relationship to Ethnic/Language Fellowships

An ethnic/language group of churches and ministers may be recognized as a Fellowship by the District Board in accordance with the Bylaws of the District. These Fellowships shall exist for the purposes of exchanging information, facilitating evangelism, and establishing churches within the various groups. Although functioning as a Fellowship, the ethnic/language churches and ministers shall remain affiliated with, cooperate with, and submit to the leadership of the District in matters of discipline concerning members of the Fellowship. An Ethnic/Language Fellowship shall consist of a group of ethnic or language-specific churches from across the District, whose members are a majority of that particular group. The number of churches needed to constitute a Fellowship shall be equal to the total number of churches in the smallest geographical Area, or no less than three churches.

Section 6. Relationship to Local Assemblies

The District shall recognize all true Pentecostal believers associating themselves in local bodies as assemblies, if such local assemblies accept their full share of responsibility for the maintenance of scriptural order in the local body, provided that such local assemblies voluntarily agree to be part of this cooperative fellowship in accordance with all the terms of this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV. PREROGATIVES

The prerogatives of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God shall be:

- a. To encourage and promote the evangelization of the world.
- b. To encourage and promote the worship of God.
- c. To encourage and promote the edification of believers.
- d. To provide a basis of fellowship among Christians of like precious faith.
- e. To respond to human need with ministries of compassion.
- f. To supervise all the activities of the Assemblies of God in its prescribed jurisdiction in accordance with the rights conferred by this Constitution and Bylaws.
- g. To establish such divisions, departments and institutions as may be necessary for the propagation of the gospel and the work of this Pentecostal fellowship.

- h.** To establish churches and provide for their development.
- i.** To examine and present candidates to The General Council of the Assemblies of God who qualify as certified ministers, licensed ministers, or ordained ministers in accordance with the Bylaws of the General Council of The Assemblies of God.
- j.** To approve scriptural teachings and practices, and to disapprove unscriptural teachings and practices as set forth in this document.
- k.** To elect its own officers and committees, to arrange for its own meetings, and to govern itself.
- l.** Without limiting the general authority granted the District by law, but incidental to, or in connection therewith, it shall have the right to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of such property real or chattel, movable or immovable, corporeal or incorporeal, as may be needed for the prosecution of its work.

ARTICLE V. STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing, 1 Corinthians 1:10; Acts 2:42). The phraseology employed in this statement is not inspired nor contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to a full-gospel ministry. No claim is made that it contains all biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines.

1. The Scriptures Inspired

The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct (2 Timothy 3:15-17, 1 Thessalonians. 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. The One True God

The one true God has revealed himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22).

THE ADORABLE GODHEAD

(a) Terms Defined

The terms trinity and persons, as related to the godhead, while not found in the Scriptures, are words in harmony with Scripture. Thereby we may convey to others our immediate understanding of the doctrine of Christ respecting the Being of God, as distinguished from "gods many and lords many." We therefore may speak with propriety of the Lord our God, who is One Lord, as a Trinity or as one Being of three persons, and still be absolutely scriptural (examples, Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16, 17).

(b) Distinction and Relationship in the Godhead

Christ taught a distinction of persons in the godhead which He expressed in specific terms of relationship, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but that this distinction and relationship, as to its mode, is inscrutable and incomprehensible because it is unexplained. (Luke 1:35; 1 Corinthians 1:24; Matthew 11:25-27; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 John 1: 3, 4).

(c) Unity of the One Being of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Accordingly, therefore, there is that in the Father which constitutes Him the Father and not the Son; there is that in the Son which constitutes Him the Son and not the Father; and there is that in the Holy Spirit which constitutes Him the Holy Spirit and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore, the Father is the Begetter; the

Son is the Begotten; and the Holy Spirit is the One proceeding from the Father and the Son. Therefore, because these three persons in the godhead are in a state of unity, there is but one Lord God Almighty and His name one (John 1:18; 15:26; 17:11, 21; Zechariah 14:9).

(d) Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are never identical as to person; nor confused as to relation; nor divided in respect to the godhead; nor opposed as to cooperation. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son as to relationship. The Son is with the Father and the Father is with the Son, as to fellowship. The Father is not from the Son, but the Son is from the Father, as to authority. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son proceeding, as to nature, relationship, cooperation, and authority. Hence, no person in the godhead either exists, works separately, or independently of the others (John 5:17-30, 32, 37; 8:17, 18).

(e) The Title, Lord Jesus Christ

The appellation Lord Jesus Christ is a proper name. It is never applied in the New Testament either to the Father or to the Holy Spirit. It therefore belongs exclusively to the Son of God (Romans 1:1-3, 7; 2 John 3).

(f) The Lord Jesus Christ, God with Us

The Lord Jesus Christ, as to His divine and eternal nature, is the proper and only Begotten of the Father, but as to His human nature, He is the proper Son of Man. He is, therefore, acknowledged to be both God and man; who because He is God and man, is "Immanuel," God with us. (Matthew 1:23; 1 John 4:2, 10, 14; Revelation 1:13, 17).

(g) The Title, Son of God

Since the name Immanuel embraces both God and man, in the one person, our Lord Jesus Christ, it follows that the title Son of God describes His proper deity, and the title Son of Man, His proper humanity. Therefore, the title Son of God belongs to the order of eternity, and the title Son of Man to the order of time (Matthew 1:21-23; 2 John 3; 1 John 3:8; Hebrews 7:3; 1:1-13).

(h) Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ

Wherefore, it is a transgression of the Doctrine of Christ to say that Jesus Christ derived the title Son of God solely from the fact of the Incarnation, or because of His relation to the economy of redemption. Therefore, to deny that the Father is a real and eternal Father, and that the Son is a real and eternal Son, is a denial of the distinction and relationship in the Being of God; a denial of the Father and the Son; and a displacement of the truth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. (2 John 9; John 1:1, 2, 14, 18, 29, 49; 1 John 2:22, 23; 4:1-5; Hebrews 12:2).

(i) Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord

The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, having by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels and principalities and powers having been made subject unto Him. And having been made both Lord and Christ, He sent the Holy Spirit that we, in the name of Jesus, might bow our knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father until the end, when the Son shall become subject to the Father that God may be all in all (Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Acts 2:32-36; Romans 14: 11; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

(j) Equal Honor to the Father and to the Son

Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgment unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on earth to bow the knee, but it is an unspeakable joy in the Holy Spirit to ascribe unto the Son all the attributes of deity, and to give Him all the honor and the glory contained in all the names and title of the godhead

except those which express relationship (see paragraphs b, c, and d), and thus honor the Son even as we honor the Father (John 5:22-23; 1 Peter 1:8; Revelation 5:6-14; Philippians 2:8, 9; Revelation 7:9, 10; 4:8-11).

3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

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

- a. His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31, 35).
- b. His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
- c. His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- d. His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- e. His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:4).
- f. His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1: 9, 11; 2: 33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).

4. The Fall of Man

Man was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26, 27: 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).

5. The Salvation of Man

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

a. Conditions to Salvation.

Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7).

b. The Evidences of Salvation.

The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).

6. The Ordinances of the Church

a. Baptism in Water.

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 (Matthew 28: 19; Mark 16: 16; Acts 10:47,48; Romans 6:4).

b. Holy Communion

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 (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till He come!"

7. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit 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 service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified

consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

8. The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

9. Sanctification

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Romans 12:1,2; 1Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). Scriptures teach a life of “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). By the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to obey the command: “Be ye holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15, 16).

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 that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:1-11, 13; Romans 8:1, 2, 13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12, 13; 1 Peter 1:5).

10. The Church and Its Mission

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her Great Commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23).

Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshiped by man, to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, and to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world, the priority reason for being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is:

- a. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8 Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 15:15,16).
- b. To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- c. To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:12).
- d. To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world (Psalm 112:9; Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason for being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience:

- a. Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Hebrews 2:3, 4).
- b. Adds a necessary dimension to a worshipful relationship with God (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 Corinthians 12-14).
- c. Enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the Body of Christ and care for the poor and needy of the world (Galatians 5:22-26; Matthew 25:37-40; Galatians 6:10; 1 Corinthians 14:12; Ephesians 4:11,12; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Colossians 1:29).

11. The Ministry

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the fourfold purpose of leading the Church in: (1) evangelization of the world (Mark 16: 15-20), (2) worship of God (John 4:23, 24), (3)

building a Body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4: 11,16), and (4) meeting human need with ministries of love and compassion (Psalm 112:9; Galatians 2:10, 6:10, James 1:27).

12. Divine 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 (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:16, 17; James 5:14-16).

13. The Blessed Hope

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 (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13: 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52).

14. The Millennial Reign of Christ

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 (Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:27, 30; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezekiel 37:21, 22; Zephaniah 3:19, 20; Romans 11:26, 27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalm 72:3-8; Micah 4:3, 4).

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, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

16. The New Heavens and the New Earth

“We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21, 22).

ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Ministers

The membership of the Louisiana District shall include all credentialed ministers of the Assemblies of God who have permanent residence within the District.

Section 2. Affiliated Assemblies

The membership of the Louisiana District shall include all General Council and District Council affiliated assemblies and all persons who are members of Louisiana churches affiliated with the District or with The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 3. Voting Constituency.

The voting membership of the District shall consist of all credentialed ministers who meet the qualifications of the Bylaws of the District and the duly elected or appointed delegates of the sovereign, affiliated assemblies.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

Section 1. Executive Board

The Executive Board shall consist of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, a secretary/treasurer, and regional executive presbyters.

Section 2. Administrative Officers

The administrative officers shall consist of all members of the Executive Board employed full time by the Louisiana District.

Section 3. Board of Executives and Presbyters

The Board of Executives and Presbyters (hereinafter also referred to as the District Board) is comprised of the following members: the superintendent, assistant superintendent, secretary/treasurer, the general presbyters, the regional executive presbyters, the area presbyters, the ethnic/language fellowship presbyters, and the non-voting honorary presbyters.

Section 4. Regional Executive Presbyters

Each region shall be represented on the District Board by a regional presbyter in accordance with the provision of the Bylaws.

Section 5. Area Presbyters

Each Geographic Area shall be represented on the District Board by an Area presbyter in accordance with the provision of the Bylaws.

Section 6. Ethnic/Language Fellowship Presbyters

Each duly recognized Ethnic/Language Fellowship shall be represented on the District Board by a presbyter in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws of the District.

Section 7. General Presbyters

The District shall be represented on the General Presbytery of The General Council of the Assemblies of God by three members. The General Presbytery shall be the official policy-making body of the Assemblies of God when the General Council is not in session.

Section 8. Nominee for General Council Executive Presbyter

The District Council shall nominate two ministers from its members to be presented to The General Council of the Assemblies of God as nominees from the District to serve on the Executive Presbytery of The General Council of The Assemblies of God.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

The District Council shall meet at least annually, in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX. LOCAL ASSEMBLIES

Section 1. Local Assemblies

Local assemblies shall consist of all true believers who accept the Statement of Fundamental Truths of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and who associate themselves by a standard of membership in local bodies as assemblies. The membership standard may be determined either by a local assembly itself, or by agreement with the District.

Section 2. Classification

- a. General Council Affiliated Church.** A General Council affiliated assembly is one that has a voting membership of at least 20 persons and has applied for and received a Certificate of Affiliation from The General Council of The Assemblies of God.
- b. District Council Affiliated Assembly.** A District Council affiliated assembly is one that has applied for and received notification of affiliation from the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God. These assemblies shall be encouraged to proceed to the status of sovereign General Council affiliated assembly.
- c. Parent Affiliated Assembly.** A parent affiliated assembly is one that is under the supervision of a parenting church in accordance with the parenting church's constitution and bylaws.
- d. Cooperating Assembly.** A cooperating assembly is one that subscribes to the Statement of Fundamental Truths of The General Council of The Assemblies of God and enters into a cooperative relationship with the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 3. Right of Self-Government

Each sovereign, local assembly has the right of self-government under Jesus Christ, its living Head, and shall have the power to choose or call its pastor, elect its official board, and transact all other business pertaining to its life as a local unit. It shall have the right to administer discipline to its members according to the Scriptures, the law, and its governing corporate documents. It shall have the right to acquire and hold title to property, either through trustees or in its corporate name as a self-governing unit.

The fact that a local assembly is affiliated with the District or The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall in no wise destroy its rights as above stated or interfere with its sovereignty, so long as it shall exist as a viable local assembly. The local assembly shall recognize that the District or The General Council of the Assemblies of God has the right to approve scriptural doctrine and practices and to disapprove unscriptural doctrine or practices and the authority to withdraw its certificate of membership, and to restrain the use of the name "Assemblies of God" if deemed necessary.

Section 4. Relationship to the District and General Councils

Sovereign District Council affiliated assemblies may send delegates to the Area, Regional, and District Councils. General Council affiliated assemblies may send delegates to the Area, Regional, District and General Councils.

Section 5. Right of Appeal

When in need of counsel or advice, the local assembly may appeal to the Executive Board for help. A General Council affiliated assembly may appeal from a decision by the Executive Board to the Executive Presbytery of The General Council of The Assemblies of God when there is a question whether or not the assembly has received proper help from the District. When exceptions are taken to the decisions of the Executive Presbytery, either by the local assembly or by the District Presbytery, appeal may be made to the General Presbytery.

Section 6. Financial Support of the Assemblies of God

All local assemblies are encouraged to send regular offerings to the Louisiana District Council and The General Council of the Assemblies of God Total Giving Plan.

ARTICLE X. DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event this District shall be dissolved, then all property, real or chattel, movable or immovable, corporeal and incorporeal, and all assets remaining after satisfying debts and obligations, shall revert to the parent body,

The General Council of the Assemblies of God, a Missouri not-for-profit corporation, with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri. The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall have full authority to sell such property and to use the proceeds derived there from for the extension of the work of the Assemblies of God.

In the event of cessation of this District, its Board of Trustees (or Directors) shall transfer all properties and any remaining assets, in accordance with the foregoing provisions, within one year of the date of such cessation. If such transfer is not made within the time prescribed above, or if the aforesaid General Council shall be unable or unwilling to accept the aforesaid transfer, then disposition thereof shall be made by the court of the parish in which the District headquarters office is located, provided that in such case proceeds of the dissolution shall be distributed to one or more nonprofit organizations which are organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes similar to those of the Assemblies of God and which are exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Constitutional Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at any regular or special meeting of the District Council, provided the proposed amendment has been first submitted to the Resolutions Committee in accordance with the Bylaws and mailed to each member of the District at least thirty (30) days prior to the time of the meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes cast shall be necessary for adoption.

Section 2. Bylaw Amendments

If any duly passed amendment to the Constitution or Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God is in conflict with the Louisiana District Constitution or Bylaws, the district secretary/treasurer shall make such changes as are necessary to bring the District Constitution or Bylaws into compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws of The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. PARLIAMENTARY ORDER

Section 1. Rules of Order

- a. All business of the District shall be conducted in keeping with the spirit of Christian love and fellowship. The work of the District Council shall be governed by parliamentary procedure as set forth in the current edition of "Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised," with the exception of any special rules in the District Bylaws.
- b. Special Rules. A person cannot speak for or against an issue, then immediately "move the previous question."

Section 2. Order of Business

The District Board shall determine the regular order of business of the District Council. The schedule of services and agenda of business shall be available at the registration desk.

Section 3. Resolutions

- a. All resolutions for presentation to the District Council which do not originate in the District Board, the annual regional or Area business meeting as called for by the district superintendent, or a District Council committee, except for emergency measures, shall be presented to the district secretary's office at least 100 days prior to a District Council. The District secretary/treasurer shall forward all resolutions to the Resolutions Committee. The Resolutions Committee shall meet at the earliest possible date after the 100-day deadline to process and prepare the resolutions in printed form to be mailed to ministerial and church constituents. Copies of these resolutions shall be forwarded to the ministerial and church constituency at least 30 days prior to the convening of the District Council. Old business from the previous District Council and reports submitted by committees which would pertain to resolutions to be considered should be included in this mailing. Each resolution shall be signed by the author, who shall have the privilege of being the first to speak on its behalf. All resolutions presented for consideration shall become the property of the District and, if deemed an appropriate resolution, shall be presented by the Resolutions Committee. Printed copies of all resolutions shall be presented to the District Council. No motions or resolutions shall be allowed from the floor except those germane to business under discussion which has been properly introduced to the Council by the District Board or a District Committee, except for emergency motions. A two-thirds vote of the Council shall be required to introduce resolutions or motions of an emergency nature.
- b. Exceptions to the 100-day rule are as follows:
 1. Resolutions originating from the District Board.
 2. Resolutions originating from a district committee.
 3. Resolutions originating from a regional or Area business meeting.
- c. The Resolutions Committee shall:
 1. By a two-thirds vote determine the appropriateness of a resolution using the criteria of possible conflict with the corporate charter, constitution and/or bylaws, or substance that is absurd in nature.
 2. Notify the sponsor if the resolution is deemed inappropriate and advise him or her of the right to present the resolution to the District Council for their determination of its appropriateness.
 3. Put resolutions in proper form and eliminate duplication.
- d. All resolutions and committee reports that have to do with financial appropriations shall first be submitted to the District Board for its consideration before being placed before the District Council.
- e. Resolutions presented for consideration at a District Council should include a placement statement. Resolutions without a placement statement should be included in the minutes of the District Council and will be in effect only until the next annual District Council.

Section 4. Reports and Committees

Copies of the district reports and committee reports shall be mailed to all ministers for reading and study at least thirty (30) days prior to the District Council. The reports shall include significant statistics and trends in the District concerning: finances, church growth, evangelism, including the number of churches and overall average attendance, and other important information. In the event the information from The General Council of the Assemblies of God is not available prior to the District Council convening, that information will be made available to ministers upon their request as soon as it is received.

There shall be no reading of the reports. A brief summary of the reports may be given and time shall be allotted for discussion and questions regarding the reports.

ARTICLE II. OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. Officers

- a. Executive officers.** The executive officers of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God (hereinafter also referred to as the District) and the elected general presbyters shall be elected at its annual meeting in accordance with procedures herein provided.
 1. The terms of office for all administrative officers elected by the District Council shall be for four (4) years beginning sixty (60) days following their election. The administrative officers shall be elected on an alternating basis with two years between their respective elections.
 2. The regional executive presbyters shall be elected for a term of four (4) years at the regional business meeting.
 3. Unless specifically permitted by these Bylaws, no person shall hold more than one elected district office. All qualified, ordained, ministers who are members of the District shall be eligible for nomination to any district office. If an incumbent in one office is elected to another office, one of the offices shall be relinquished, except as provided for in (a) and (b) of this section.
 4. Should a special election be needed to fill the unexpired term of an executive officer, the term of the election shall be for at least one-half the specified term. If the election is to complete less than one-half of the specified term, then the election shall be for that uncompleted term and the next full term. In the event that any of these elected offices shall become vacant more than six (6) months before the annual District Council, a special election shall be called by the District Board within sixty (60) days. If the office of district superintendent should become vacant, the assistant district superintendent shall not automatically succeed the office.
 5. No elected district official shall serve on any District minister's board of directors.
- b. General Presbyters.** The District shall be represented on the General Presbytery of The General Council of the Assemblies of God by three of its members. The district superintendent and assistant district superintendent shall serve by virtue of their offices. The other shall be elected by the District Council for a two (2) year term. At least one of the general presbyters shall be an ordained pastor of an Assemblies of God church located in the District.
- c. Regional Executive Presbyters.** Each region shall elect an executive presbyter for a term of four (4) years at their regional business meeting. If the office of the regional executive presbyter should become vacant during the time between annual regional, business meetings, the District Board shall call a special business meeting of the region for the purpose of electing a regional executive presbyter. If the new regional executive presbyter is elected with less than one year to complete the term of office, the election shall be to complete the current term and another four (4) year term.
- d. Area Presbyters.** Each Geographic Area shall elect a presbyter for a two (2) year term at their regional business meeting. If the office of the presbyter should become vacant during the time between annual regional, business meetings, the regional presbyter shall call a special business meeting of the Area to

elect a presbyter. If the new presbyter is elected with less than one year to complete the current term of office, the election shall be to complete the current term and another two (2) year term.

- e. **Ethnic/Language Fellowship Presbyters.** Each duly recognized Ethnic/Language Fellowship shall elect a presbyter for a four (4) year term at its annual business meeting. The Fellowship presbyter shall be ratified by the District Board at the first scheduled board meeting following the election of the Ethnic/Language Fellowship Presbyter. The term of office shall begin immediately upon election and ratification by the District Board.

Section 2. Qualifications

- a. **Executive officers.** The executive officers shall be chosen from the membership of the District. They shall be ordained ministers, credentialed by The General Council of the Assemblies of God, who have been members of the District for at least twelve (12) months preceding the time of election. They shall have adhered to the financial policy of the District in regards to tithes and dues as stated in these Bylaws.
 - 1. The superintendent shall be a person of mature experience and sound judgment, who possesses recognized executive and business ability.
 - 2. The assistant district superintendent shall have like qualifications as the superintendent and shall be elected for a four (4) year term.
 - 3. The secretary/treasurer shall be a person of integrity, capable of recording the minutes of all meetings of the District Board and the District Council, and capable of presenting and explaining all financial reports for the District.
 - 4. The regional executive presbyters shall have resided in the region for which they are elected to serve for at least one (1) year. They shall be person(s) who have exhibited spiritual maturity, sound judgment, and administrative ability. There shall be one regional executive presbyter elected from each region of the district.
- b. **Presbyters.** All presbyters shall be ordained by The General Council of the Assemblies God and shall be persons of mature experience and ability and whose lives and ministries are above reproach. They shall be examples in following the district financial policy by paying their tithes and dues as described in these Bylaws.

Section 3. Nominations and Elections

- a. All nominations for Administrative Officers shall be made via the Screening Committee. The Screening Committee shall meet as early as possible prior to the District Council in which an election is scheduled for an administrative officer to screen the nominees for qualifications and willingness to serve. The Screening Committee shall present all nominations who meet the qualifications for the office as stated in the Bylaws and who are willing to serve. No incumbent may serve on the Screening Committee for the year in which his/her office is scheduled for election.
- b. The Screening Committee shall meet prior to any election for a paid District position to screen the nominees for qualifications and willingness to serve according to the District Operations Manual. No paid, elected District Official may serve on this committee when his/her office is up for election.
- c. All elections shall be by secret ballot. A two-thirds (2/3) vote cast shall be necessary to constitute an election on the first three (3) electoral ballots. After the second electoral ballot only the three (3) nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be retained. After the third electoral ballot the two (2) nominees having the highest number of votes shall be retained. On the fourth electoral ballot, the nominee receiving a majority vote shall be declared elected.
- d. For all regional and Area elections, the names of all fully qualified ministers shall be provided by the District secretary's office to the voters at the meeting. Explanation for the exclusion of a minister's name will be given if so requested by the person(s) whose name was removed.

e. The District Board of Executives and Presbyters may present two or more ordained nominees for the Non-Resident Executive Presbyter under age 40, the Female Non-Resident Executive Presbyter with no age requirement and the African/American Executive Presbyter with no age requirement. The District Council may nominate others for these nominee positions with all persons subject to qualification in accordance with the General Council By-Laws.

Section 4. Removal from Office

a. If a minister who has been elected or appointed to serve in any official capacity fails to support the district office with tithes for a period of three (3) months and refuses to comply after being notified in writing by the district secretary/treasurer, the minister shall be ordered and required by the district superintendent to resign from the office.

b. The District Board shall have the authority to request resignation from an individual in an elected office who persistently fails or is unable to perform the duties of the office as specified by the District Constitution or Bylaws. If the individual refuses to resign, the District Board shall have the authority to request a special election to determine if the individual shall complete the term. If the election sustains the request to resign, the office shall be declared vacant and subject to normal election procedures at the same meeting.

c. The qualifications necessary for election or appointment to district positions must be maintained throughout the term of office or the office will be declared vacant by the District Board.

Section 5. Voting Constituency

a. The voting constituency for District Council shall consist of:

1. Ordained, licensed and certified ministers present whose current Fellowship Certificates have been verified by the District secretary's office.
2. One duly elected or appointed delegate from each sovereign, affiliated assembly who has presented to the Roster Committee written authorization from the assembly or its pastor.
3. District Department Directors. Non-credentialed department directors are considered district delegates.
4. Certified Ministers shall be allowed to vote at District Council immediately upon receipt of their Certified Ministers credentials.

b. The voting constituency for Area business meetings shall consist of ordained, licensed, and certified ministers present whose current Fellowship Certificates have been verified by the District secretary's office along with duly elected or appointed delegates from each church located in the Area who have presented to the registrar written authorization from the assembly or its pastor.

ARTICLE III. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. District Superintendent

The duties of the district superintendent shall include the following:

- a. Have spiritual oversight and give such direction to the District as needed without affecting the autonomy of the local church.
- b. Promote new church evangelism, and effective evangelism and church growth within existing churches, as a means of fulfilling the Great Commission within the District.
- c. Preside at all meetings of the District Council.
- d. Be in charge of the district office complex, supervising the functions of that office throughout the year.
- e. Be the presiding officer at all meetings of the District Board.
- f. Administer discipline concerning credentialed ministers of the District in accordance with these Bylaws and the policies of the District Board.
- g. Conduct an annual Area business meeting in each region of the District.

- h. Along with the District Board, make all decisions concerning the operation of the campground.
- i. Supervise all of the various departments and divisions of the District.
- j. Along with the secretary/treasurer, account for and be responsible to the District Council in the disbursement of all funds of the District.
- k. Serve as a general presbyter by virtue of his office.
- l. Perform any other functions usual and customary as presiding officer or such as may be directed by the District Council or the District Board.
- m. Shall be an ex officio member of all District Committees.

Section 2. Assistant District Superintendent

The duties of the assistant district superintendent shall include the following:

- a. Assist the district superintendent.
- b. Preside at meetings of the District Board and the Executive Board in the absence of the superintendent.
- c. Serve as a general presbyter by virtue of election as assistant district superintendent.
- d. Perform any other functions usual and customary for the office under the supervision of the superintendent, or such as may be directed by the District Council, the District Board, or the Executive Board.

Section 3. District Secretary/Treasurer

The duties of the secretary/treasurer shall include the following:

- a. Keep a true record of the proceedings of the District Council, District Board, and Executive Board.
- b. Be custodian of the corporate seal of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God.
- c. Sign all applications for credentials and annual credential renewal forms.
- d. Make available within ninety (90) days of the end of each District Council a yearbook of the Louisiana District Council including the Constitution and Bylaws, the District Council minutes, a ministerial directory, and a church directory. Printed copies of these documents will be available upon request to members of the District.
- e. Prepare and send forms for each sovereign, affiliated assembly to designate a church delegate to the Area business meeting and the District Council.
- f. Provide copies of the resolutions to be considered at the District Council in accordance with these Bylaws.
- g. Serve as custodian of all funds of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God and keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements according to generally accepted accounting principles.
- h. Provide budgets and financial reports as periodically requested by the District Council, the District Board, or the Executive Board and present a financial report to each District Council.
- i. Provide oversight of the preparation of an annual audit or review of financial records of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God by an independent auditor, prepared in conformity with generally accepted auditing principles.
- j. Provide the District Council meeting, or as soon as possible thereafter, a summary of statistics regarding the number of churches, overall attendance in Sunday School and morning worship, water baptisms, Holy Spirit baptisms, and any other important matters of which the District needs to be informed.
- k. Perform any other functions as are customary for the office of the district secretary/treasurer or such as may be directed by the District Council, the District Board, or the Executive Board.

Section 4. Regional Executive Presbyters

The duties of the regional executive presbyters shall include the following:

- a. Serve on the Executive Board and the District Board.
- b. Assist the superintendent with district business as directed by the District Council, the District Board, or the Superintendent.

- c. In the absence of the superintendent and the assistant district superintendent, one of the Regional Executive Presbyters may be appointed by the District Board to serve as Chairman of the District meetings.
- d. Serve as chairperson of the Regional Committee.
- e. Perform any other functions as may be directed by the District Council, the District Board, or the Executive Board.

Section 5. Executive Board

The duties of the Executive Board shall include the following:

- a. Provide counsel and assistance to the district superintendent.
- b. Interpret and incorporate policies adopted by the District Council and the District Board between District Council and District Board meetings.
- c. Supervise district finances in accordance with the policies of the District Council and District Board. They shall secure authorization from the District Council or District Board before purchasing or selling properties, borrowing funds, signing mortgages, or conducting any other matters of a legal nature.
- d. Perform any other functions or duties assigned to them by the District Board to assist in the general operations of the District Council.

Section 6. Board of Executives and Presbyters

The duties of the Board of Executives and Presbyters shall include the following:

- a. Serve as the Board of Directors of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., domiciled in Rapides Parish. The district superintendent is the president of the corporation, the assistant district superintendent is the vice-president, the secretary/treasurer is the secretary/treasurer, and all other members of the District Board are known as the Directors.
- b. Oversee the activities and business of the District between sessions of the District Council.
- c. Buy, take, lease, or otherwise acquire, own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of real property, personal and mixed, tangible and intangible of whatsoever kind; to borrow monies as deemed necessary; and to enter into contracts; all as may seem expedient and proper in the furtherance of the work of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God.
- d. Determine and review annually salaries and benefits of all district employees. Board members shall not participate in discussions or actions regarding their own remuneration or that of a family member.
- e. Consider for ratification actions taken by the Executive Board.
- f. Perform any other functions usual or customary of the office.

Section 7. Area Presbyter

The duties of the Area presbyter shall include the following:

- a. Serve as chairman of the Area Committee and supervise and coordinate the work of the Area in which the presbyter is elected.
- b. Transmit information regarding any charge submitted against a minister in the Area to the district superintendent.
- c. Take the initiative in settling all difficulties which may arise in the Area.
- d. Work with the district departmental directors to promote the departments in the Area.
- e. Serve on the Regional Committee.
- f. Perform any other functions usual or customary of the office.

Section 8. Ethnic/Language Fellowship Presbyter

The duties of the ethnic/language fellowship presbyter shall include the following:

- a. Represent the Ethnic/Language Fellowship at the meetings of the District Board.
- b. Establish a communications network for the members of the Ethnic/Language Fellowship.

- c. Provide opportunities for members of the Ethnic/Language Fellowship to meet together to encourage and edify one another.

ARTICLE IV. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Committees

- a. Committees by virtue of election. Members of the following committees shall serve by virtue of election to office.
 - 1. *The District Council Credentials Committee.* The District Council Credentials Committee shall be the District Board.
 - 2. *The Area Credentials Committee.* The Area Credentials Committee shall be the Area Committee along with any executive officer of the District in attendance at the meeting. The Area Credentials Committee shall work in cooperation with the District Council Credentials Committee.
 - 3. *The Regional Committee.* The Regional Committee shall consist of the Regional Executive Presbyter and each of the Area presbyters in the Region.
 - 4. *The Area Committee.* The Area Committee shall consist of the presbyter, the assistant presbyter, and the Area secretary/treasurer. The Area Committee shall be elected at the annual Area business meeting on the odd numbered years. All three members must be ordained by The General Council of the Assemblies of God.
- b. Appointed committees.
 - 1. Constitution and Bylaws Committee
 - 2. Ministerial Relations Committee

Section 2. Other Committees

Other committees may be appointed when necessary by the district superintendent and ratified by the District Board. These committees shall serve for the term of appointment, until their purpose has been accomplished or until the conclusion of the annual District Council for which they were appointed.

Section 3. Nominee Screening Committee

The Nominee Screening Committee, also referred to as the Screening Committee, shall consist of (1) the Regional Executive Presbyters, (2) one other District Board member and (3) one ordained minister from each region of the District. The members of the Screening Committee shall be appointed by the District Board of Executives and Presbyters who shall also select one member of the committee to serve as the chairperson.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Meetings

- a. There shall be a District Council held annually with time and place to be determined by the District Board. Time and place of the meeting shall be published not later than one month prior to the meeting.
- b. There shall be an annual business meeting for each geographic Area of the District to be held at its respective regional business meeting prior to the District Council. The date and location of those meetings will be determined by the executive officers in consultation with the Area presbyters.
- c. There shall be an annual business meeting of each Ethnic/Language Fellowship prior to the District Council with the date and location to be determined by the executive officers in consultation with the Fellowship presbyter.
- d. There shall be regular District Board meetings as called by the district superintendent.

- e. The time and place for meetings of the District Board shall be determined by the district superintendent, subject to approval of the District Board. All members shall be duly notified of the meetings by the district secretary/treasurer.

All departmental leaders shall be given the opportunity to participate in all District Board meetings in which their departmental matters are being discussed provided they are available and that their own salaries or remuneration are not under discussion. Departmental leaders shall be notified of board meetings and shall be given the privilege of requesting inclusion on the meeting agenda for the purpose of addressing the District Board.

Section 2. Special Meetings

- a. Special meetings may be called to meet any emergency that may arise within the District. Such call shall be issued by the district secretary/treasurer after the emergency has been fully considered and passed upon by a majority vote of the District Board.
- b. The right of initiative in the matter of calling a special meeting shall be granted to any ordained minister of the District. A statement setting forth the reason for the special meeting and signed by not less than twenty percent of the ordained ministers of the District may be considered sufficient reason for such a call. Said statement is to be filed with the district superintendent, who shall cause the call to be issued, setting the time and place for the meeting.
- c. A special meeting of the District Board may be called by a written request signed by one third of its members. All members shall be duly notified of such a meeting.
- d. Special meetings shall be called to fill the vacancies of elected personnel in accordance with procedures provided in these Bylaws.

Section 3. Communications Media Meetings

The Executive Board, the District Board, and any other committee may conduct meetings using any communications equipment, provided all participants are given a reasonable opportunity to communicate their considerations in the matter to other participants. Such conferences may be called by the district superintendent, the assistant district superintendent, the district secretary/treasurer, or a committee chairman with authorization from one of the executive officers. Minutes shall be taken of all such conferences and any actions taken. Such conferences shall be considered official and binding. Notation shall be made in the minutes taken that the conference was conducted through communications equipment and all persons participating in the conference and the authorizing officer shall be identified in the minutes.

Section 4. Quorum

- a. A quorum for any purpose shall be a majority of those eligible to vote in any District Board, or Executive Board meeting.
- b. For purposes of the District Council meeting only, the total eligible to vote shall mean those voting members who register at any District Council. If members withdraw or refuse to vote at any time during District Council, the remaining members may continue to do business until final adjournment of that District Council.

ARTICLE VI. ASSEMBLIES

Section 1. Qualifications for Affiliation

Qualifications for a church to affiliate with the Assemblies of God shall include:

- a. Acceptance of the Statement of Fundamental Truths of The General Council of The Assemblies of God;
- b. A scriptural standard of membership determined by the local assembly in agreement with the District

Council;

- c. Adoption of Articles of Incorporation and a constitution or bylaws compatible with models recommended by the District Council, or District approved governance models that provide for adequate accountability, amenability, and safeguards so that a pastor and/or governing body cannot directly or indirectly exert dictatorial control over a church.
The District shall assist, recommend, and serve the local assemblies in the adoption of Articles of Incorporation and a constitution and bylaws but shall not require adherence to any specific format or government. No particular corporate structure will be rejected unless it violates scriptural principles.
- d. An affiliated assembly may request assistance and guidance from the District in securing proper religious non-profit corporation status from the state, with particular attention given to the reversionary clause.

Section 2. Procedure for Affiliation

Local congregations can be affiliated with the Assemblies of God by one of two classifications based on the active voting membership of the assembly. The procedure for affiliation is the same for both classifications.

- a. The assembly shall have matured to a point where a sufficient number of qualified persons are available for the offices called for in its constitution and bylaws.
- b. The church desiring affiliation shall forward its request to the District office. The district secretary/treasurer shall provide an approved application form and procedural instructions.
- c. If the active voting membership of the congregation is less than 20 persons, the application for affiliation will be as a District Council affiliated assembly. If the active voting membership is 20 persons or more, the application may be as a General Council affiliated assembly.
- d. It shall be the responsibility of the District Board to determine when an assembly has reached a state of growth, stability, and maturity qualifying it for affiliation with The General Council of the Assemblies of God.
- e. An existing, mature church that desires to affiliate with The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall apply to the District Office for guidance and assistance.
- f. Upon approval by the District Board, the application for affiliation shall be forwarded to the general secretary of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Recognition of affiliation shall occur upon receipt by the assembly of an official Certificate of Affiliation issued by the general secretary. In the event an application for affiliation is declined by the district presbytery, appeal may be made by the church to the General Council Executive Presbytery whose decision shall be final.
- g. The meeting in which an assembly is set in order shall be presided over by an officer of the District.

Section 3. Guidelines for Minimal Membership for General Council Affiliated Assemblies

If an existing General Council affiliated church is no longer able to meet the criteria for affiliation as set forth in these Bylaws, it shall seek the assistance of the district officers for help in maintaining the minimal requirement for General Council affiliation. The District may use any means prescribed by these Bylaws to assist the church in returning to a position of strength. If the minimal requirements have not been attained, the church shall revert to District affiliated status until the minimal requirements for General Council affiliation have been attained.

Section 4. Reversion of General Council Affiliated Assembly to District Affiliated Status

When an annual questionnaire for a General Council affiliated church reflects that its active voting membership has dropped below 20, the church shall be notified, at the discretion of the district officers, that unless the membership is increased to the minimum requirement of 20 active voting members within one (1) year, the church shall revert to District affiliated status.

When such action is taken, the District Office shall notify the general secretary of the General Council and the local church. The church shall remain in a District affiliated status until sufficient growth and maturity has been demonstrated to re-qualify for General Council affiliation. An application for the same shall be filed with the district secretary and approved by the District Board.

Section 5. Prerogatives and Privileges

- a. Right of self-government (sovereign rights).** An affiliated assembly has the right of self-government under Jesus Christ, its living Head, and shall have the power to choose or call its pastor, elect its official board, and transact all other business pertaining to its life as a local unit. It shall have the right to administer discipline to its members according to the Scriptures and its constitution or bylaws. It shall have the right to acquire and hold title to property, either through trustees or in its corporate name as a self-governing unit.
- b. Right of appeal.** When in need of counsel or advice, the pastor, board or church body of an affiliated assembly may, by petition, appeal to the district executive officers for help. A General Council affiliated assembly may appeal from a decision by the district executive officers to the Executive Presbytery of the General Council when there is a question whether or not the assembly has received proper help from the District. When exceptions are taken to the decisions of the Executive Presbytery, either by the General Council affiliated assembly or by the District Presbytery, appeal may be made to the General Presbytery.
- c. Representation.** A District Council affiliated assembly has the right of one officially appointed and registered delegate at the District Council and Area business meetings. In addition, a General Council affiliated assembly has the right to one officially appointed and registered delegate at the General Council.
- d. Available ministries.** An affiliated assembly has the right to request the assistance of the District Board or any of its members in filling a pastoral vacancy and to benefit from other approved ministries.
- e. Other benefits.** An affiliated assembly has the right to benefit from approved General Council institutions such as colleges, divisional and departmental ministries, and publications.

Section 6. Responsibilities

The fact an assembly is affiliated with the Assemblies of God shall in no way destroy its rights or interfere with its sovereignty. There are, however, certain responsibilities to the Fellowship that should be recognized.

- a. Adherence to General Council principles and doctrine.** It shall be the duty of local assemblies to support by every means possible the basic principles upon which the Fellowship is founded, including that of "voluntary cooperation," and strict adherence to the Statement of Fundamental Truths.
- b. Maintenance of Scriptural order and conduct.** Local assemblies shall accept their full share of responsibility for the maintenance of Scriptural order in the local body, and uphold a Scriptural standard of conduct.
- c. Safeguarding the assemblies**
 - 1.** All pastors, workers, and leaders of assemblies should make proper investigation regarding persons who seek to gain entrance to teach, minister, or pastor. Use of the platform should be denied until spiritual integrity and reliability have been determined. It is recommended that Assemblies of God churches use Assemblies of God ministers since the use of non-Assemblies of God ministers may bring confusion and problems detrimental to the Fellowship. The advice and counsel of the District Board may be sought in all such matters of importance to the assembly.
 - 2.** No dismissed minister may be allowed to pastor or have recognized ministry in an Assemblies of God church. Any church persisting in retaining a dismissed minister may place its Certificate of Affiliation in jeopardy. Pastors and district officials should maintain a reciprocal exchange of information relative to dismissed ministers known to be persons seeking ministry in our assemblies.

3. It is recommended that all local assemblies include in its bylaws a requirement that any prospective pastor be credentialed by the General Council of the Assemblies of God and be in good standing with the General Council and the District Council of which he is a member.

d. Support

1. It is recognized that for any organization to survive and serve effectively, it must have the moral and financial support of its constituency. Therefore, the entire district program should be supported by the local assembly, and financial support should be according to the policies of the District, which should include at least one offering for the General Fund annually.
2. It is recommended that each church send to the General Council at least one offering for each calendar year toward the support of the administrative offices of the General Council. The amount of this offering shall be as recommended by the General Council Bylaws, Article VI. ASSEMBLIES. Section 2. b. Fellowship Partners Offerings.

Section 7. Relationships between Churches, the District Council, and the General Council

- a. **Nature.** General Council affiliated churches are deemed to be sovereign, autonomous, self-governing, and self-determining bodies which have, by their sovereign, self-determining action in making application for and receiving recognition as a General Council affiliated church, entered into an agreement with the Fellowship to be amenable to the General Council and the District Council in matters of doctrine and polity.
- b. **Relationships.** Cooperative fellowship describes both the relationship that exists between local churches and their relationships with the District Council and the General Council.
- c. **Organizational assistance.** The services of the District Council are available to assist the District and General Council affiliated assembly in dealing with any of its problems, either internal or external, when requested by the pastor or a majority of the official board of the assembly or a petition signed by 20 percent of the voting members. When district officers receive such requests, they shall respond by investigating problems and, if necessary, recommending remedial actions to the responsible district governing entity, (e.g., district presbytery or district executive presbytery). At its discretion, that governing entity may act to bring the church under district supervision and, when necessary, revert it from General Council status to district affiliated status until the governing entity considers the problem resolved.
- d. **Preservation of affiliation.** In the event the termination of affiliation with The General Council of the Assemblies of God is under consideration by an affiliated assembly, the pastor or board shall invite the district officers to participate in a specially called business meeting where such matters will be discussed and voted upon for the express purpose of giving the district officers the opportunity to present the case for continued District and/or General Council affiliation. A decision to disaffiliate shall require a two-thirds vote of the membership, or a more restrictive rule prescribed by the governing documents of the church or district. In the case of a previously existing church which later affiliated with the Fellowship through a vote of its membership, the percentage required to disaffiliate shall not exceed the percentage required when the church voted to affiliate.

Section 8. New Assemblies

The planting of new churches is a priority goal of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the Louisiana District. Resources at all levels shall be aligned to accomplish this purpose. Initiative for establishing new churches and the oversight of those churches may emanate from local assemblies, fellowship Areas, or the District. In a locality where there is no Assemblies of God church, the minister desiring to begin a new church shall contact the District Church Planting Team Leader and the Area Committee for approval prior to entering into active ministry in the proposed area.

The District Council, District Board, Area committees, or other authorities within the District charged with the responsibility of approving new churches shall not prohibit the planting of new churches unless a compelling reason exists. If it is determined that a compelling reason exists, a minister or local church desiring to plant the church shall have the right to appeal to the District Board or authorities within the District charged with the responsibility of approving new churches, and the decision of the District may be appealed to the General Council Executive Presbytery, whose decision shall be final.

Section 9. New Assemblies Resulting From a Division

- a. Status of assembly. When efforts to maintain unity and harmony in an assembly have failed, and a division results in a new congregation being formed, the district should exercise strong and wise leadership in ascertaining the facts and seek to preserve Assemblies of God adherents for the Fellowship. Within the bounds of ethical principles, sound doctrine, and district policy, the District should seek to retain any meritorious group within the Assemblies of God.
- b. Status of minister. Circumstances in each case will determine whether the minister should be disciplined or denied ministry in either the original church or the dissident group, or even residency in the area where the division occurred. If a minister is guilty of inappropriate conduct resulting in a division, the district presbytery shall deal appropriately with the minister as provided in Article X, Section 3, of the Bylaws.

Section 10. Church transfer procedure

When a church located in the Louisiana District desires to transfer from a language/ethnic district to the Louisiana District or from the Louisiana District to a language/ethnic district, the procedures outlined in the General Council Bylaws Article V. District Councils, Section 6. Language/Ethnic Districts, paragraph e. Church transfer procedure shall be followed.

Section 11. Pentecostal Standard of Leadership

Our district influence can never rise above the Pentecostal standard which we maintain in our assemblies. It is the attitude of the District that a scriptural standard for deacons and other officers in positions of leadership in the local assembly be maintained. We therefore recommend:

- a. Since the New Testament restricts divorced and remarried believers from the church offices of bishop, elder, and deacon, that this standard should be upheld by all assemblies (Titus 1:5-9: 1 Timothy 3:12), except when the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15), except as hereinafter provided. However, it is recommended that opportunities for Christian service for which these believers may be qualified be made available.
- b. That no one who has not been baptized in the Holy Spirit be eligible for an official position in an assembly and then only if he or she possesses the other scriptural qualifications for such office.
- c. That those who buy, sell, or use tobacco or liquor in any form, and those who are fraternally allied with oath-bound secret orders, excepting such labor unions that the General Council has made no ruling against, and those who patronize worldly institutions that would cloud our Christian testimony, should not be placed in any leadership positions nor should they have charge of other public worship.
- d. That no affiliated assembly should elect as delegates to any session of this District Council those who are aligned with such immoral, social, fraternal, or political evils, because such a procedure would be a reflection upon the District as "a body representative" of Pentecostal ideals.
- e. That modesty is the true characteristic of femininity, and therefore, modest apparel is designated as becoming to godly women (1 Timothy 2:9, 10). Therefore, our ministry should maintain a standard of teaching in harmony with those Scriptural ideals among our people, and our assemblies should refrain from placing women who ignore these ideals in any place of prominence in the assembly.

Section 12. Church Government and Guidelines

The New Testament sets forth the General Assembly and the Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven (Hebrews 12:23), as a Kingdom whose King and Head is now in heaven. The sacred duties of such a government have been duly entrusted into well qualified hands with full instructions and regulations set forth authorizing them to maintain Scriptural standards and doctrine, to promote Christ's Kingdom, to rescue lost souls, and to fully occupy until our King shall return in glory.

- a. **Governance.** All churches shall comply with their governing documents, such as articles of incorporation and constitution and bylaws as a matter of integrity and honesty. It is recommended that these documents include procedures for membership, a description of the governing model of the church, including officers and their qualifications, duties, and election. The governing documents may be amended in accordance with their internal provisions, but they may not be suspended except by District intervention. Any action by an official board or the assembly which violates these governing documents may be declared void by the District Executive Board. If the District intervenes in a church (in accord with these Bylaws), the District Bylaws shall constitute a governing document.
- b. **District Recommendations.** Upon request of the local assembly, the District may provide one of more governing models that are acceptable to the District and which do not violate scriptural principles or the corporate laws of the state of Louisiana.

Section 13. Intervention of District in a Local Assembly

- a. **Circumstances which may require intervention.** While the right of a local assembly to self-government is a basic General Council principle, it is also recognized that the assembly has a responsibility to the District Council and General Council, and both have a responsibility to the assembly. Some of the circumstances which may require intervention by the District are as follows:
 1. Division resulting in disruption.
 2. Assumption of dictatorial authority by the pastor or board.
 3. Prolonged absence of pastoral leadership.
 4. Deviation or departure from Assemblies of God principles and practices.
 5. Attempt to disaffiliate from Assemblies of God Fellowship.
 6. Failure to follow the church's governing documents, such as articles of incorporation and constitution and bylaws.
 7. By virtue of the membership of an assembly falling below 12.
- b. **District intervention.** District intervention may occur in various forms including but not limited to District Oversight of the church. District Oversight may include but not be limited to the following:
 1. Removal of the pastor, the members of the official board, and the trustees of the church from office.
 2. The District Superintendent shall, when necessary, in consultation with the Executive Board of the District and the Presbyter of the Area in which the church is located, appoint a pastor who shall serve until the church is returned to sovereign status.
 3. The District Executive Board along with the Area Presbyter shall, when necessary, appoint a Church Board that shall serve until the church is returned to sovereign status.
 4. No contractual agreements such as borrowing money, buying, selling, renting or leasing property, real or chattel, shall be made without the approval of the DLT.
 5. The pastor shall submit monthly reports to the District Executive Board as directed by the District Operations Manual.
- c. **District Oversight.** District Oversight shall adhere to the procedures written in the District Operations Manual.

Section 14. Discipline of Assemblies

Since the approval of an assembly is the prerogative of the District and General Councils, and is indicated by the issuance of appropriate certificates of affiliation, the District has the right to request a meeting with the assembly if for some valid reason its status is in question. The General Council of the Assemblies of God has the right to withdraw its Certificate of Affiliation if deemed necessary.

Section 15. Annual Report and Offerings from Assemblies

- a. Annual Church Ministries Report.** Each church of the Assemblies of God is requested to keep a current record of its membership and to report this information annually, on forms provided, to the office of the District Council secretary and the General Council secretary.
- b. Offerings from Assemblies.** In order to support and develop the work and ministries of the Assemblies of God at home and abroad, all its churches are encouraged to send offerings at regular intervals.
 - 1. District Council Support.**
 - i. General Fund.** The District asks that every church send at least one offering for the district general fund annually.
 - ii. Departmental Support.** The District requests that all local assemblies send regular offerings to support the work of the various ministry departments of the District.
 - iii.** The District requests that each local assembly contribute an amount equal to two-percent (2%) of its annual income for support of the Church Planting & Development Teams.
 - 2. General Council Support.** Local assemblies are expected to support the General Council in accordance with its bylaws.
 - 3. Support of Missions.** Local assemblies are expected to have an interest in the missionary enterprise, and to plan for regular contributions to the support of both World and U.S. missions.

Section 16. Churches with Non-Assemblies of God Pastors

District officials shall strongly discourage consideration of non-Assemblies of God ministers as senior pastor by our churches. Guidelines concerning churches with non-Assemblies of God Pastors shall include the following:

- 1.** Churches should require non-credentialed pastors to actively seek credentials with the Assemblies of God. Application for credentials must be made within one year of election.
- 2.** Any Assemblies of God church having a non-Assemblies of God pastor shall be required to support the District financially in accordance with its policy on minister's tithes and to cooperate with Assemblies of God policies and programs.
- 3.** Assemblies of God churches which have non-Assemblies of God pastors shall be reviewed annually by their Area Committee to insure its compliance with District policy.
- 4.** The Area Committee shall make an annual recommendation to the District Board regarding continued affiliation with the Assemblies of God.
- 5.** The District Board shall make the final determination and notify the church of its decision.

Section 17. Parent Affiliated Churches

Provision shall be made by the district council for parent affiliated assemblies which shall be under the supervision of a parenting church in accordance with the parenting church's constitution and bylaws.

Section 18. Cooperating Assemblies

- a. Cooperating Assembly status.** The District Council may grant for a 4-year term the status of Cooperating Assembly to churches that subscribe to the Statement of Fundamental Truths of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and enter into a cooperative relationship with the District Council and The General Council of the Assemblies of God before officially affiliating with the District Council and the General Council.
- b. Renewal of status.** Cooperating Assembly status can be renewable by the request of the local church

congregation at the discretion of the District Council in cooperation with the General Council Executive Presbytery.

ARTICLE VII. MINISTRY

Section 1. Ministry Described

Christ's gifts to the Church include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11), exhorters, administrators, leaders, and helpers (Romans 12:7, 8). We understand God's call to these ministry gifts is totally within His sovereign discretion without regard to gender, race, disability, or national origin.

Three classifications of ministry are recognized and transferable among all Assemblies of God districts: the ordained minister, the licensed minister, and the certified minister.

All ordained, licensed, and certified ministers holding current ministerial credentials are authorized to perform the ordinances and ceremonies (sacerdotal functions) of the church, and those holding a local church credential as provided below.

A fourth classification of ministry, a local church credential, may be provided by a local General Council affiliated church under basic guidelines adopted by the General Presbytery and such additional guidelines adopted by the District Council. The local church credential shall be non-transferable (limited to the issuing local church) and shall be limited to 2 years, unless the credential is solely required for active and ongoing local ministry in a prison, hospital, or institution (renewable by the local church for an additional 2 years). A person holding a local church credential can perform the ordinances and ceremonies (sacerdotal functions) of the church if authorized in writing by the senior pastor of the local church issuing the credential.

Section 2. Basic Qualifications

The following qualifications pertain to all applicants for ministerial recognition:

- a. **Salvation.** Testimony to having experienced the new birth (John 3:5).
- b. **Baptism in the Holy Spirit.** Testimony to having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues according to Acts 2:4. The Spirit-filled life will enable a minister to fulfill the fourfold mission of the church.
- c. **Evidence of call.** Clear evidence of a divine call to the ministry, evidenced by a personal conviction, confirmed by the work of the Spirit and the testimony of fellow ministers.
- d. **Christian character.** A blameless Christian life and a good report of those who are without (Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:7).
- e. **Doctrinal position.** A thorough understanding of, and agreement with our doctrinal position as contained in the Statement of Fundamental Truths.
- f. **Assemblies of God polity.** A satisfactory working knowledge of the principles, practices, and purposes of the Fellowship through a study of the General Council and District Council Constitutions and Bylaws
- g. **Voluntary cooperation and commitment to the Fellowship.** An active loyalty to our constitutional agreements, a cooperative spirit, and a readiness to seek and receive the counsel of older mature Christians and those in positions of authority. By voluntary it is meant that, upon learning the principles, doctrines, and practices of the Assemblies of God, and by seeing the benefits to be derived from being associated with such an organization, persons of their own free choice decide to become members, thus subscribing to all that for which the organization stands. For the minister cooperation means to the best of one's ability, complying with all decisions setting forth and defining duties and responsibilities incumbent upon members of the organization. It includes active participation and respect for the will of the majority expressed through constitutional processes. Hence, for the minister, voluntary cooperation means that when the minister decides to become a cooperating member of the Assemblies of God, this cooperation and participation there by becomes obligatory and not optional.
- h. **Basic education requirements.** No specific level of formal academic achievement (diploma or

degree) shall be a requirement for credentials; credential applicants shall meet the following criteria:

1. All applicants are required to be interviewed by the District Council Credentials Committee and, in preparation for the interview, pass a standard exam approved by the General Presbytery whereby they demonstrate knowledge of the Bible, Assemblies of God doctrines, and ministerial practices; and either
2. Successfully complete equivalent training to that indicated in paragraph (3) below, preferably, in an endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary school; or in a seminary, college, Bible college, or school approved by the District Council Credentials Committee consistent with criteria established by the General Council Credentials Committee; or
3. Successfully complete courses, prescribed by the General Presbytery, offered in correspondence through Global University of the Assemblies of God, or pass the final examinations in the prescribed courses; or
4. Be recommended by the District Council Credentials Committee as qualifying for credentials through self- study and ministerial experience. Such candidates shall have a proven and fruitful ministry of substantial duration.

Requests from the District for such a candidate shall be presented to the General Council Credentials Committee and may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

- i. **Mandatory screening.** All applicants for ministerial credentials shall be screened through a designated screening agency established by the Executive Presbytery. Said screening shall be done by the District prior to the submission of the application to the office of the general secretary.
- j. **Marriage status.** We disapprove of any married persons holding ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God if either marriage partner has a former spouse living, unless the divorce occurred prior to his or her conversion or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15), except as hereinafter provided.
- k. **Ecclesiastical annulments and marriage dissolutions.** The Executive Presbytery of the General Council shall have the authority to determine whether an applicant qualifies for an ecclesiastical annulment. In such cases there must be clear and satisfactory evidence of deception, fraud, or other conditions which have a profound impact preventing the creation of a valid marriage union, unknown at the time of marriage by the applicant. The Executive Presbytery shall have the authority to determine whether an applicant qualifies regarding a former marriage when the termination of that marriage is consistent with the scriptural position of the Fellowship relating to the granting or holding of ministerial credentials; or if a former marriage ended prior to conversion. In those cases, involving pre-conversion divorce they shall be decided on an individual basis just as those that deal with ecclesiastical annulments. Appeals from the decisions of the Executive Presbytery may be made to the General Presbytery.
- l. **Eligibility of women.** The Scriptures plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word (Joel 2:29; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5). Women who meet the qualifications for ministerial credentials are eligible for whatever grade of credentials their qualifications warrant and have the right to administer the ordinances of the church and are eligible to serve in all levels of church ministry, and/or District Council and General Council leadership.
- m. **Ministers from other organizations.** If a minister from another reputable body desires to affiliate with the Assemblies of God, the credentials committees of both the General Council and the District Council are under no obligation to accept the applicant's previous ministerial status, but will judge each candidate on his or her own merits as to the level of credentials to be granted. Such applicants shall be required to:
 1. Conform to Assemblies of God criteria for recognition.
 2. Complete an application for ministerial recognition.
 3. Submit a letter of recommendation from a neighboring Assemblies of God minister or the Area

presbyter for the applicant's area.

4. Submit a recommendation from the body with which the minister was formerly affiliated. If such is not available, letters of recommendation should be sought from three reputable ordained ministers who are familiar with the applicant's ministry, two of whom should be with the applicant's former credentialing body.
5. Pass the credential examination.
6. Complete such courses as may be prescribed by the General Presbytery for ministers transferring from other credentialing bodies.
7. Meet with the District Council Credentials Committee for an oral interview.
8. Be recommended by the District Council Credentials Committee for action by the General Council Credentials Committee.
9. All previously ordained ministers so approved shall receive recognition as ordained Assemblies of God ministers with the laying on of hands by the District Presbytery. All other applicants so approved shall receive the appropriate level of credential recognition.
10. Ministers who receive Assemblies of God credentials shall relinquish their ministerial credentials with any other credentialing organization, unless an exception is granted by the General Council Credentials Committee upon recommendation of the District Council Credentials Committee for good cause shown and a clear understanding of the priority of the Assemblies of God credential.

Section 3. Specific Qualifications

- a. **Residency requirements of applicants.** Applicants for all credentials must be residents of or hold credentials in the District and appear before the District Council Credentials Committee.
- b. **Local church credential.** A local church credential shall be administered by the local church pursuant to basic guidelines adopted by the General Presbytery and such additional guidelines as may be adopted by the District Council. It shall be nontransferable (limited to the issuing local church).
 1. Recognition shall be given to those members of local assemblies, who feel a desire to do special work for God, under the direct supervision of the pastor.
 2. Such persons shall have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 3. The pastor and Official Board shall examine and favorably pass upon all persons who are granted such recognition.
 4. The District shall provide a "CHRISTIAN MINISTER'S CARD" which shall be issued at the discretion of the local pastor. This card shall read as follows:

"CHRISTIAN MINISTER'S CARD." This is to certify that (name) is recognized as a Christian Minister of (church), a church affiliated with the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God.

Signed _____, Pastor.

There shall be an annual renewal date on the card: December 31, 20__.

c. **Certified minister.**

1. **General requirements.** They shall show promise of usefulness in the gospel work. They shall devote full or part time to Christian ministry and, at the discretion of the district credentials committee, may remain under the supervision of a pastor or a ministry coach or mentor. They shall show evidence of a divine call and be actively engaged in some aspect of ministry and proclamation of the gospel, except in case of ill health or advanced age.
2. **Pastoral requirements.** In the event a certified minister is serving in a position as the pastor, he or she shall be expected to advance to the ministry license level within 2 years of acceptance of the pastorate. This shall not apply to any minister who has reached the age of 65 or older, or whose certificate has

been issued on a provisional basis. Any exceptions shall be at the discretion of the district credentials committee.

3. Exception for provisional issuance. A Certificate of Ministry may be issued on a provisional basis to a person who has not met all the credentialing requirements but who is deemed by the district credentials committee to be essential to the continuity of a church or a ministry. The reason for such a provisional issuance must be ministry driven, and the justification for its use is terminated when the minister ceases to be involved in the ministry for which it was initially granted unless the minister accepts another qualifying assignment. Other limitations are:
 - i. The ministry certificate on a provisional basis will be issued for 1 year and shall not be renewed more than two times.
 - ii. A person who has been granted the Certificate of Ministry on a provisional basis must meet the qualifications for a ministry certificate within a 3-year period.
- d. **Licensed minister.** Qualifications for license shall include clear evidence of a divine call, character and preparation suitable for that calling, practical ministry experience, and an evident purpose to devote one's life in service to the proclamation of the gospel.
- e. **Ordained minister.** Qualifications for ordination are outlined in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9). In addition:
 1. Applicants must be 23 years of age or older.
 2. They must have met all the requirements of the District in making application and in completing the prescribed application form.
 3. No person may be ordained to the ministry until he or she has shown evidence of a divine call and has held a ministry license and has been actively engaged in ministry and proclamation of the gospel for at least 2 full consecutive years immediately prior thereto.
 4. Residency requirements of applicants. Applicants must be residents of the District and appear before the District Council Credentials Committee. Any applicant for ordination who may have been licensed in another district may not be approved until such licensed minister shall have been a member of the District at least 1 year. Applicants who have not been a member of the District for 2 full consecutive years must meet the requirements and secure the endorsement of the officers of the district in which they were previously licensed, as well as the Louisiana District.
 5. Exceptions to requirements. The General Council Credentials Committee, upon request by the District Council Credentials Committee and where exceptional circumstances exist, may waive the requirements for an applicant holding a ministry license for 2 full consecutive years or being a member of the District in which he or she is seeking ordination for at least 1 year.
 6. In order to maintain active status, ordained ministers shall be engaged in viable ministry and proclamation of the gospel except for cases of disability, retirement, or other valid circumstances as determined by the general secretary.

Section 4. Procedures for Ministerial Recognition

The District Council Credentials Committee shall have the authority to examine, approve, and recommend candidates to the General Council Credentials Committee who qualify as certified ministers, licensed ministers, and ordained ministers. These procedures are found in the District Operations Manual. Final approval and issuance of the ministerial credential shall be made by the General Council Credentials Committee. All ordination services, with the laying on of hands, shall take place under the auspices of the District Council.

Section 5. Official List

- a. **Active ministers.** The official list of all Louisiana District credential holders shall be compiled by the Louisiana District Council Credentials Committee and published for the convenience of the Fellowship, with the understanding it is not to be used for purposes of solicitation. This official list shall be revised

annually and shall contain the names of those who are engaged in active ministry and whose credentials have been renewed by the issuance of a fellowship card for the current year.

- b. Ministers with disabilities.** Ministers with permanent disability or illness, which prevents them from engaging in active ministry, shall be indicated as disabled. The credential status of the minister shall remain unchanged. The annual renewal of his or her credentials shall take place in the regular manner. Ministers with disabilities thus approved by their district shall not have further obligation of financial support to the General Council.

Section 6. Senior-Retired Ministers

In respect and honor to those ministers who have given years of service to the Fellowship, the term *senior-retired* shall be used for those who are 65 years of age or older and who have ceased to engage in any regular appointed ministry.

- a. Application for retired category.** Senior-retired status shall be granted only to those ministers who filed a request for such status with the District. The district secretary shall forward annually to the general secretary a list of those ministers who have made these requests.
- b. Guidelines**
 - 1.** Reports. Senior-retired ministers shall file an abbreviated credential renewal to maintain a correct mailing to maintain a correct mailing address.
 - 2.** Designation in publications. Senior-retired ministers shall have this status indicated in the Official List of Assemblies of God Ministers.
- c. Support of General Council National Leadership and Resource Center.** Senior-retired ministers shall be free to distribute as they desire the portion of their tithes previously paid to the General Council.
- d.** Support of District Council Headquarters: Senior-retired ministers shall not be obligated to pay tithes/dues to the District Council. However, they shall be encouraged to continue financially supporting the District Council.

Section 7. Responsibilities and Requirements

- a. Representation of our distinctive Pentecostal testimony.** It is expected that Assemblies of God ministers shall correctly and properly represent our distinctive Pentecostal testimony in teaching, practice, and personal conduct.
- b. Ethical and responsible handling of personal finances.** It is expected that ministers will live within their means and avoid the habit of running into debt which brings reproach upon the cause of Christ.
- c. Financial Responsibility.** The work of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God and The General Council of The Assemblies of God, in its program of developing the spirit of cooperation and fellowship in U.S. and World Missions fields, incurs considerable expense, including the financial support of the executive officers and offices.

Ministers holding credentials in the Assemblies of God (with the exception of senior-retired ministers) are obligated to support the District Council and General Council offices by the following minimum contributions:

- 1.** To the District Council Headquarters: All ministers shall pay 75% of their ministerial tithes and 25% of their secular tithes as dues to the District. Any housing or housing allowance provided by a church or the District shall be considered as part of the minister's income in figuring tithes/dues. Exceptions to the monthly requirements (i.e. bimonthly, quarterly, etc.) may be granted, but must be requested annually.
- 2.** To the General Council Headquarters: Ordained, licensed and certified ministers shall recognize their obligations to contribute to the General Council as specified by the General Council Constitution and Bylaws. All who can are strongly urged to give more than the suggested amount, either personally or through the assemblies they pastor. Compliance with the above requirements shall be a prerequisite for renewal of credentials of all active ministers. If their contributions are in arrears, they shall be given opportunity to meet this deficit with their renewal.

- d. **Accountability.** The District Board shall oversee the accountability of ministers regarding compliance with the District's tithing policy in a relational manner as described in the District Policy and Procedures Manuals. Any minister who has not complied with the District's financial policy shall not be renewed for credentials until he/she has been approved by the District Board during a regularly scheduled meeting.

Section 8. Cooperative Relationships to the General and District Councils

- a. **Amenability.** All certified, licensed, and ordained ministers shall be amenable to both the Louisiana District Council and The General Council of The Assemblies of God in matters of doctrine and discipline. All local church credential holders shall be amenable to their local church under guidelines established by the General Presbytery and the District Council in matters of doctrine and discipline.
- b. **Affiliation with District.** All credential holders residing within the boundaries of this District shall be expected to affiliate with the District Council and work in cooperation with the same.
 - 1. *Exception.* Ministers who reside in another district but pastor or serve in the Louisiana District shall be expected to affiliate with the Louisiana District. Ministers who reside in the Louisiana District but pastor or serve on the staff of a church located in another district shall be required to affiliate with the district in which the church is located.
 - 2. *Nationally appointed U.S. missionaries.* Nationally appointed U.S. missionaries shall become members of the district in which they serve and shall be listed on the ministerial roster of that district by the office of the general secretary. They may also retain membership in this District, be listed as a missionary under national appointment in the district yearbook, and be extended voice and vote in the District while on official furlough.
 - 3. *Church-planting ministries.* Ministers who serve in a trans-district ministry related to church-planting efforts may do so provided:
 - i. They have a scope of ministry which reaches beyond district boundaries; and
 - ii. Both districts agree to the assignment; and
 - iii. If the assignment involves a language group, they follow the guidelines provided by the Executive Presbytery of the General Council and adhere to these Bylaws governing inter-district relations. Church planters holding credentials may obtain affiliation with the district they intend to serve and retain honorary membership in the Louisiana District, be listed in the district yearbook, and be extended voice and vote in the District for such time as they serve in another district. The financial responsibilities shall be the same as those of a nationally appointed U.S. missionary.
- c. **Cooperation with other districts.** Ministers shall be expected to cooperate with other district councils in which they may labor temporarily. It is recommended as a standard of proper practice that all ministers conform to the financial policy of the district with which they are affiliated with the following exceptions:
 - 1. Financial responsibility of world missionaries. World missionaries will be obligated to pay \$25 per month to their home district when resident in the U.S. and \$10 per month when resident on their fields.
 - 2. Financial responsibility of chaplains. All chaplains, military and institutional, will be obligated to their home district in the amount of 10 percent of their tithes from income earned from the chaplaincy. All chaplains are also encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the district in which they fulfill their assignments.
 - 3. Financial responsibility of nationally appointed or approved U.S. missionaries. Nationally appointed or approved U.S. missionaries shall contribute 25 percent of their tithe to their member district where they serve and 25 percent of their tithe to their home district if they are listed as honorary members. Missionaries who minister in their home district shall contribute a minimum of 50 percent of their tithe to that district.

Section 9. Transfer of Credentials

- a. Certificate of transfer.** When a member minister takes up residence in a district other than the Louisiana District, a certificate of transfer shall be issued within 60 days by the Louisiana District to that district, unless there are charges pending against the minister. The certificate of transfer shall be accepted by the district into which the minister moves. When a minister moves from another district to the Louisiana District, it is expected that a certificate of transfer from that district will be received within 60 days. Exceptions may be made for the following:
1. Ministers and the minister's credentialed spouse moving to serve at the Assemblies of God national office and/or affiliated entities.
 2. Those who have attained the age of 60 and are no longer engaged in active ministry and those who have attained the age of 65 and are not pastoring a church.
 3. Those who are in the Armed Forces currently on active duty.
 4. Those who are serving on the staffs of schools affiliated with the General Council and District Council, or nonaffiliated schools acceptable to the General Council and the district council in which the school is located.
 5. Those who are appointed U.S. missionaries or world missionaries who are on furlough or on temporary assignment in the United States and reside in a district other than the Louisiana District.
 6. Ministers having membership in one district and a mailing address only in another district.
 7. Students in schools outside their home districts.
 8. Those who are serving in a non-Assemblies of God institution providing:
 - i. They have a regular scope of ministry which reaches beyond district boundaries.
 - ii. Both districts agree to the exception.
 - iii. The institution is acceptable to both districts.
 9. Church planters involved in trans-district ministry.
- b. Transfers from Assemblies of God World Fellowship.** A minister holding ordination (or equivalent) with a member group of the Assemblies of God World Fellowship, and desiring to reside in the Louisiana District, may transfer his or her ordination to The General Council of The Assemblies of God if the following criteria are met:
1. A letter of recommendation from the executive committee of the national church or equivalent letter of recommendation.
 2. Completion of two courses, one on the history and polity of the U.S. church and one on the Spirit-empowered church.
 3. A completed ministerial application.
- c. Transfers between language/ethnic districts and geographical districts.** Credential holders from language/ethnic districts may transfer to geographical districts and credential holders from geographical districts may transfer to language/ethnic districts provided the credential holder is serving as a pastor or staff member of a church in the district that the credential holder desires to transfer to. In instances where the credential holder is not a pastor or staff member of a church in the district to which the credential holder is transferring, both districts shall agree to the transfer. Credential holders must settle their district financial obligations before transfers are granted. The credential holder shall have a right of appeal to the General Council Credentials Committee in the event either district recommends denial of the transfer.
- d. Transcript.** In order to assist a member minister who is transferring into another district, a transcript giving helpful information concerning the minister and his or her spouse should accompany the certificate of transfer.

Section 10. Credential Renewals and Reinstatements

- a. Terminology**
1. Renewed. The term renewed shall apply to all ministers who have met the annual deadline for renewal

- including those who are delinquent but who renew by January 15.
2. Reinstated. The term reinstated shall apply to the persons whose names have been deleted from the official ministerial list, who upon application, are approved for restoration of credentials.
- b. **Expiration date.** All fellowship certificates are valid only until December 31 of each year and must be renewed annually. The renewing of credentials is the responsibility of the individual minister. Ministers who do not receive an annual renewal form by December 1 should notify the District Office.
 - c. **Grace period until January 15.** All who have not renewed their fellowship certificates postmarked on or before December 31 shall be considered delinquent. They shall be required to pay a late fee of \$50 up until January 15, to be divided equally between the District Council and the General Council.
 - d. **Reinstatement of lapsed minister.** Ministers whose renewal applications are not postmarked by January 15 shall be recorded as lapsed as of December 31. They must make application for reinstatement and pay a nonrefundable fee of \$100, to be divided equally between the District Council and the General Council. These ministers shall not be subject to the minimal time-lapse required of those whose credentials have been terminated for other causes.
 - e. **Reinstatement of other than dismissed minister.** When a minister who is a member of the Louisiana District is removed from our rolls for any cause, except failure to renew and dismissal, and shall apply for reinstatement, he or she shall not be eligible for reinstatement until at least 6 months have elapsed after his or her name has been stricken from our list of ministers. The application must be made in the district where the minister resides and be accompanied with a nonrefundable fee of \$100 to be divided between the District Council and the General Council. If the termination was processed by another district, the Louisiana District shall seek a letter of clearance from the district that processed the termination and, upon receipt of the clearance, may add its endorsement and forward the application, together with the letter of clearance, to the General Council Credentials Committee for its action.
 - f. **Renewal of credentialed ministers working and residing outside the United States.** Credentialed ministers working and residing outside the United States, not under the auspices of Assemblies of God World Missions, are required to communicate their residency and ministry status to the appropriate Assemblies of God World Missions regional director for the purpose of credentials renewal. The District shall instruct such ministers to do so as a prerequisite to credentials renewal. If credentialed ministers who are working and residing outside the United States fail to contact the appropriate Assemblies of God World Missions regional director prior to credentials renewal, and are unknown to Assemblies of God World Missions leadership, their credential will not be renewed.

Section 11. Non-disciplinary Credential Terminations

- a. **On the initiative of the minister.**
 1. *Lapsed.* Ministers who do not renew their credentials shall be listed as lapsed, provided there is no cause for disciplinary action. Their names shall be published as lapsed in the *Assemblies of God Ministers Letter*, hereinafter referred to as the ministers letter, or disseminated electronically to ministers only.
 2. *Resigned.* Ministers who elect to remove themselves from the Fellowship shall submit a letter of resignation to the District. If there is no cause for disciplinary action, their resignation shall become effective after having been approved by both the district council and General Council credentials committees. Their termination shall be listed in the minister's letter as resigned or disseminated electronically to ministers only.
- b. **On the initiative of the district.**
 1. *Inactive.* When a minister becomes inactive for 2 consecutive years, according to the stipulations set forth in Bylaws, Article VII, Section 6, paragraph b, his or her name shall be published as inactive in the minister's letter or disseminated electronically to ministers only.

2. *Not renewed.* If in the opinion of the credentials committees a minister's credentials should not be renewed short of disciplinary action, the minister's name shall be published as not renewed in the minister's letter or disseminated electronically to ministers only.
- c. **As a result of affiliation with another church organization.** In the event a minister shall identify with another organization granting ministerial credentials, and shall have received such credentials, his or her credentials with The General Council of The Assemblies of God shall be terminated. An investigation shall be made to determine the proper category of termination.
- d. **Surrender of credentials.** In all cases of termination of current credentials, the minister shall be requested to surrender his or her credential (Certificate of Ordination, Ministry License, Certificate of Ministry) and current fellowship card to the district office. The District shall forward these to the office of the general secretary of The General Council of The Assemblies of God. Refusal to surrender his or her credential and current fellowship card shall be considered insubordination and may result in placing a charge against the minister.
- e. **Notification of action.** It shall be the responsibility of the District Office to notify the office of the general secretary of actions taken in the termination of credentialed ministers, and send to that office a Ministerial Status Report form.
- f. **Publication of termination.** The names of ministers who are "lapsed" or who have "resigned" shall be so indicated and published in the ministers letter from the General Headquarters.

The ministers of the District shall be notified of the non-disciplinary termination of any affiliated minister as soon as possible following official notification of termination of credentials from the General Council. This notification shall be made through the district publication or other means deemed necessary.

ARTICLE VIII. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED

In accord with its constitutional prerogatives, The General Council of The Assemblies of God has declared itself pertaining to disapproval of certain matters as follows:

Section 1. Unconditional Security

In view of the biblical teaching that the security of the believer depends on a living relationship with Christ (John 15:6); in view of the Bible's call to a life of holiness (1 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14); in view of the clear teaching that a man may have his part taken out of the Book of Life (Revelation 22:19); and in view of the fact that one who believes for a while can fall away (Luke 8:13); The General Council of The Assemblies of God disapproves of the unconditional security position which holds that it is impossible for a person once saved to be lost.

Section 2. Legalism

- a. **Matters of conscience.** The Assemblies of God disapproves of those who hold to matters of conscience, such as eating or not eating meats, who press their opinions on others.
- b. **Adding conditions to salvation.** The Assemblies of God also disapproves of those who hold to issues which seem to add conditions to salvation, such as keeping the seventh day, who press their opinions on others.

Section 3. Eschatological Errors

- a. **The restitution of all things.** The Assemblies of God understands the teaching of Acts 3:21 to limit the restoration to that of which the prophets have spoken, thus denying the universal redemption theory. We are opposed to all forms of universalism (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:10).

- b. Setting a date for the Lord's return.** It is unwise to teach that the Lord will come at some specified time, thereby setting a date for His appearing (Mark 13:32, 33; Luke 12:37-40; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). It is also unwise to give out from the platform, or publish, visions of numbers and dates fixing the time of the second coming of the Lord.
- c. Post-Tribulation Rapture.** The General Council of The Assemblies of God has declared itself in the Statement of Fundamental Truths that it holds to the belief in the imminent coming of the Lord as the blessed hope of the Church; and since the teaching that the Church must go through the Tribulation tends to bring confusion and division among the saints, it is recommended that all our ministers teach the imminent coming of Christ, warning all to be prepared for that coming, which may occur at any time, and not lull their minds into complacency by any teaching that would cause them to feel that specific Tribulation events must occur before the rapture of the saints.
- d. Amillennialism.** The General Council of The Assemblies of God disapproves of the amillennial teaching and its attendant erroneous philosophy which denies the fact of a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth, and substitutes for it the theory that this Christian or Church dispensation is the spiritual Millennium of which, its proponents say, the Bible writers prophesied.
- e. Credentials jeopardized if made an issue.** We recommend that those ministers who embrace any of the foregoing eschatological errors refrain from preaching or teaching them. Should they persist in emphasizing these doctrines to the point of making them an issue, their standing in the Fellowship will be seriously affected (Luke 21:34-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:9,10; 2 Thessalonians 1:4-10; Revelation 3:10,19,20).

Section 4. Membership in Secret Orders

Ours is a last-day message in preparation for the coming of the Lord (Matthew 24:14), leaving us no alternative but wholehearted devotion to the cause of spreading the gospel (Luke 9:62); and it is well known that the various secret orders require much valuable time and interest, thus diverting the servant of the Lord out of the way (Ephesians 5:16).

The nature of such organizations demands secrecy (John 18:20; Acts 26:26) reinforced by religious oaths (Matthew 5:34) and strong attachment by binding obligations to persons who are for the most part unregenerate (2 Corinthians 6:14). The spirit, philosophy, and general influence of such secret orders aim at the improvement of the natural man only (1 Corinthians 2:14; Colossians 2:8), thus wrongly channeling by incorrect interpretation important spiritual truths (2 Peter 3:16).

Confidence in these secret orders and their teachings has always tended toward the embracing of a false hope of salvation through good works and improved moral service (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

In consideration of the foregoing, all ministers affiliated with the Assemblies of God should refrain from identifying themselves with any of the secret orders that the General Council recognizes as essentially of the world, worldly; and the General Council advises any who may have identified themselves with such orders to sever their connections with them (2 Corinthians 6:17). Furthermore, Assemblies of God ministers are requested to use their good influence among our lay members to dissuade them from such fraternal affiliations (1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Section 5. Divorce and Remarriage

a. Membership

(1) *Marriage entanglements before conversion.* There are now among Christian people those who became entangled in their marriage relations in their former lives of sin and who do not see how these matters can be adjusted. We recommend that these people be received into the membership of local assemblies and that their marriage complications be left in the hands of the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24).

(2) *Common-law marriages.* We recommend that in no case shall persons be accepted into membership who are known to be living in a common-law state of matrimony.

b. Remarriage. Low standards on marriage and divorce are very hurtful to individuals, to the family, and to the cause of Christ. Therefore, we discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. We positively disapprove of Christians getting divorces for any cause except fornication and adultery (Matthew 19:9). Where these exceptional circumstances exist or when a Christian has been divorced by an unbeliever, we recommend that the question of remarriage be resolved by the believer in the light of God's Word (1 Corinthians 7:15, 27–28).

c. Local church leadership

(1) *Standard for offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon.* Since the New Testament restricts divorced and remarried believers from the church offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon, we recommend that this standard be upheld by all our assemblies (Titus 1:5–9; 1 Timothy 3:12), except when the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9) or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10–15) or in the case of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Psalms 11:5; 146:5–9; Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 1:16–17; Ephesians 4:1–3, 31–32; Ephesians 5).

(2) *Prerogative of local assemblies.* It is understood that recommendations are not binding, but local assemblies shall maintain the prerogative of setting their own standards (in accord with provisions of Article IX of the Constitution).

d. Performing marriage ceremonies

(1) *Ministerial guidelines.* We discourage any Assemblies of God minister performing a marriage ceremony for anyone who has been divorced and whose former spouse is still living, unless the case is included in the exceptional circumstances described in these Bylaws.

(2) Violation of conscience not required. We realize that the remarrying of such persons included in the exceptive circumstances as stated in the Bylaws could violate the conscience of a minister; and if this should be the case, the minister should not be expected to perform such ceremonies.

(3) *Same-sex ceremonies.* No minister shall perform any type of marriage, cohabitation, or covenant ceremony for persons who are of the same sex. Such a ceremony would endorse homosexuality which is a sin and strictly forbidden in God's Word (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:9-11). Any minister of our Fellowship who performs a ceremony for these types of disapproved relations, unless, innocently deceived into doing so, shall be recommended for dismissal.

(4) *Counsel.* An Assemblies of God minister is urged to counsel applicants for marriage ceremonies with scriptural guidelines for Christian marriage prior to performing the ceremony. A minister may not perform ceremonies for persons who, in the minister's opinion, approach marriage without proper forethought, wisdom, and sobriety.

e. Ministerial credentials. We disapprove of any married minister of the Assemblies of God holding credentials if either minister or spouse has a former spouse living unless the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9) or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10–15) or in the case of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Psalms 11:5; 146:5–9; Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 1:16–17; Ephesians 4:1–3, 31–32; Ephesians 5).

Section 6. Worldliness

In view of the alarming erosion of national moral standards, we reaffirm our intention of holding up Bible standards against all forms of worldliness. We urge all believers to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.... For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15, 16).

In its teaching regarding worldliness, the Scriptures warn against participation in activity that defiles the body, or corrupts the mind and spirit; the inordinate love of or preoccupation with pleasures, position, or possessions, which lead to their misuse; manifestation of extreme behavior, unbecoming speech, or inappropriate appearance; any fascination or association which lessens one's affection for spiritual things (Luke 21:34,35; Romans 8:5-8; 12:1,2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 2:8-10; 4:12; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17; Titus 2:12).

Section 7. Abuses of Stewardship

a. Tithing

1. According to the Scriptures, tithes should be used for the support of the active ministry and for the propagation of the gospel and work of the Lord and not be given to charity or used for other purposes. In tithing, the ministers ought to be examples.
 2. We recognize the duty of tithing and urge all our people to pay tithes to God. It is recommended that arrangements satisfactory to the pastor and the church be made by all pastors and churches, so that the pastor may receive regular and adequate support. We disapprove, however, of the teaching that all tithes necessarily should belong to the pastor for his or her support.
- b. Solicitation of funds**
1. It is considered improper and unethical for ministers or missionaries to solicit funds, by letter or otherwise, for anything or any reason whatsoever without proper authorization.
 2. The purpose of this section is not to hinder or discourage legitimate projects but to protect the Fellowship from those who employ methods not in harmony with Assemblies of God principles or policies. Leaders in local projects shall have unquestioned freedom in local churches or communities. Projects of general interest to the District must have authorization of the district officers. Projects or institutions of national scope that plan to solicit funds from Assemblies of God churches must have the authorization of the Executive Presbytery of The General Council of The Assemblies of God. Promotion of all projects of a missions character must have the authorization of the Executive Presbytery.
 3. The obtaining and use of mailing lists for promotional purposes not having proper authorization or which are not in keeping with policies of The General Council of The Assemblies of God shall be considered improper and unethical, whether it be under the name of a prayer chain beyond a local scope, chain letters, or appeals to the constituency for the support of ventures of strictly local or personal character. All offenders guilty of the practices expressed in the foregoing paragraphs shall be subject to discipline.
- c. Private ownership of religious institutions.** The General Council of The Assemblies of God approves the holding of title to all church buildings, schools, or other institutions that are supported by funds solicited for the work of God by properly constituted corporations. It disapproves the holding of title to such properties by the ministers of the Assemblies of God, through private ownership, corporations sole, or closed corporations. In the event a local congregation is not incorporated or set in order by the District Council, title should be vested in properly qualified trustees. Where private ownership exists, a properly incorporated body shall be formed and title to the property shall be transferred to the corporation. A disregard of this principle and recommendation shall seriously affect the relation of the Assemblies of God members involved in such ownership.

Section 8. Violations of Ministerial Ethics and Courtesy

- a. In relation to pastors and assemblies.** All discourteous conduct is disapproved, and all ministers are advised against interfering with pastors and assemblies, whether it be by going in upon their work without consent or by such correspondence with members of the assembly as will hurt the influence of the leader. All correspondence which concerns the whole assembly shall be addressed to the one in charge and not to individual members. Where there is no pastor, letters concerning the work shall be addressed to the officers of the assembly. A pastor or minister who has formerly ministered in a neighboring church in an area shall not be considered for appointment as pastor of a District Supervised church.

Any minister who so offends shall be subject to discipline in accordance with Louisiana District Bylaws Article IX.

- b. In relation to ministers holding office in local assemblies.** The divine purpose of the ministry is to carry the gospel to the lost, and those having such a call have no time to serve tables, but rather must give themselves to the study and preaching of the Word and to prayer. Therefore, we discourage the election of

local preachers to the office of deacon or any official place which might hinder their activities in the ministry.

- c. **In relation to privileged communications:** Assemblies of God ministers are encouraged to respect as sacred and confidential information confided to them while they are functioning in their ministerial capacities as spiritual counselors and are encouraged not to disclose such confidential information except with the permission of the confidant, to prevent the commission of a crime, or if required by law.

Section 9. Ministry in a Non-Assemblies of God Church

Ministers shall not be limited or restrained from entering open doors to preach this Pentecostal message, so long as they retain Assemblies of God doctrine, standards of holiness, proper attitudes, and proper ministerial conduct without compromise.

Inasmuch as unity is a vital principle for growth and spiritual development of the Assemblies of God Fellowship, it is essential that we recognize our relationship to each other and that we practice Christian cooperation in all our pastoral, evangelistic, missionary, and local church work.

We recommend therefore that our ministers confer with district officials before engaging in ministry in any church group or organization not affiliated with the Assemblies of God so as to ascertain whether such ministry might result in confusion or misunderstandings. If the minister does not have district approval, he or she shall be expected to refrain from conducting services for the church. Ministers who violate this principle shall be subject to discipline.

Section 10. An Improper Attitude toward Those Removed From the Fellowship

In order to render effective decisions made in the interest of proper discipline and for the protection of our assemblies, all who hold credentials, and local churches holding certificates of affiliation, shall refrain from taking an attitude toward offenders that would tend to nullify or set at naught the solemn verdict of those entrusted with this responsibility. Those who fail to support said verdict shall be subject to reprimand or, if persisted in, appropriate discipline.

Section 11. Interdenominational or ecumenical relationships

The General Council of The Assemblies of God encourages ministers or churches to fellowship with other Christians of like precious faith who hold to the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the universality of sin, the substitutionary Atonement, the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and His second coming.

The General Council of The Assemblies of God shall not belong to any interdenominational or ecumenical organization that denies the evangelical beliefs stated in the above paragraph, and urges its ministers and churches to avoid entanglement with such interdenominational or ecumenical organizations except as opportunity may arise to support biblical values in the culture or provide opportunity to bear witness to our evangelical and Pentecostal faith and experience.

Section 12. Divine Healing and Professional Medicine

The General Council of The Assemblies of God disapproves of any credentialed minister counseling a believer to exclude medical advice and/or treatment when seeking prayer for physical healing.

Assemblies of God ministers shall not represent medical advice and/or treatment as a lack of faith in God's healing power.

Section 13. Accountability in Educational Attribution

- a. **Attribution.** In order to maintain our testimony of quality and integrity in educational credential before the Church and the world, and to minimize the possibility of our ministers and churches being victimized

by, or supporting, or perpetrating frauds in education or credentialing, we maintain certain standards for the attribution of degrees, certifications and titles.

1. *Attribution by ministers.* Our ministers shall refrain from listing, promoting, or attributing to themselves or others any degrees or titles conferred by institutions or organizations having, at the time of conferral, a formal accreditation status less than that of our appropriately corresponding Assemblies of God institutions (whether our institute, regional university, or seminary levels).
 2. *Attribution by the General Council.* No media, ministry, department, arm, or employee of the General Council shall list, attribute, or promote for any person, any degree or title conferred by an institution or organization having, at the time of conferral, a formal accreditation status less than that of our appropriately corresponding Assemblies of God institutions (whether our institute, regional university, or seminary levels).
 3. *Attribution by local churches.* We strongly encourage our ministers, boards, and churches to take great care to ensure that all ministers and church employees have actually earned the legitimately accredited education, training, and certification, as defined above, which they claim by their titles or degrees (such as counselor, therapist, doctor, and so on).
 4. *Attribution accepted.* All previously earned or conferred degrees prior to August 2007, from any institution whatsoever shall be fully accepted and grandfathered in.
- b. **Intentional failure to comply.** Intentional refusal to comply with this ethical standard for educational credentials constitutes perpetrating a fraud upon the church and the world, personally and in the good name of the Assemblies of God, and the General Council disapproves of such practices.

Section 14: Abstinence from Alcohol, Tobacco, & Recreational Drugs

The General Council of the Assemblies of God disapproves of the use of substances, such as but not limited to alcohol, tobacco, and recreational drugs, that are harmful to the body or mind, or that detract from a Christian's testimony, or that are a cause of stumbling to others, or that impair good judgment.

ARTICLE IX. DISCIPLINE

Section 1. The Nature and Purposes of Discipline

Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the church is responsible. The aims of discipline are that God may be honored, that the purity and welfare of the ministry may be maintained, and that those under discipline may be brought to repentance and restoration.

Discipline is to be administered for the restoration of the minister, while fully providing for the protection of the spiritual welfare of our local assemblies. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective, and is to be exercised as under a dispensation of mercy.

Section 2. The Relationship between the District and General Council Credentials Committees

The Executive Presbytery of the General Council is the Credentials Committee of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. It shall have the final authority in matters of doctrine and the personal conduct of all certified, licensed, and ordained ministers. District actions related to the termination of credentials or the remedial discipline of restoration are to be in the form of recommendations to the General Council Credentials Committee. All references to the discipline of ministers within this article of these Bylaws relate solely to certified, licensed, and ordained ministers.

Section 3. Causes of Disciplinary Action

Violations of Assemblies of God principles as stated in these Constitution and Bylaws may give cause for disciplinary action by the credentials committees. Among such causes for action, whether committed in

person or digitally, shall be:

a. Sexual Misconduct

- (1) Moral transgression involving sexual misconduct
- (2) Moral transgression involving pornography.

b. Financial Misconduct

- (1) Immoral, unethical, or illegal practices related to personal finances
- (2) Immoral, unethical, or illegal practices related to church or ministry finances

c. Relational/Ethical Misconduct

- (1) Blatant misrepresentation of our Pentecostal testimony
- (2) A declared open change in doctrinal views
- (3) A contentious or noncooperative spirit
- (4) An assumption of dictatorial authority over an assembly
- (5) An arbitrary rejection of counsel from district leadership
- (6) Violations of ministerial courtesy or ethics (*See* Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 8.)
- (7) An improper attitude toward those dismissed from the Fellowship (*See* Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 10.)
- (8) General inefficiency in the ministry
- (9) Moral or ethical transgression other than sexual misconduct
- (10) Ministry in a non-Assemblies of God church without proper approval from district leadership (*See* Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 9.)
- (11) A marriage in violation of our standards for either a recognized divorce or a biblical marriage (*See* Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 5, paragraphs d and e.)

d. Substance Use and Abuse

Violation of ARTICLE XIII. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED, Section 14, Abstinence from Alcohol, Tobacco, & Recreational Drugs including:

- (1) Use or abuse of alcohol or recreational drugs
- (2) Abuse or addiction involving other legal substances
- (3) Use, abuse, or addiction involving other illegal substances

Notwithstanding the above, when more than seven (7) years have elapsed from an occurrence that is cause for disciplinary action, the District Credentials Committee may recommend to the General Council Credentials Committee that no discipline be administered when, in view of all the circumstances, it would appear that such discipline would serve only as punitive in nature rather than restorative. In all such cases, final determination shall be made by the General Council Credentials Committee.

Section 4. Right of Initiative

- a. Authority.** Occasions sometimes arise which make it necessary to deal with ministers who for some reason seem to have reached the place where, in the opinion of the leaders, endorsement can no longer be given. Credentials committees which have the authority to ordain ministers and to recommend them for credentials also have the right to withdraw their approval and to recommend the recall of credentials.
- b. Prior right of district.** The officers of the district in which an alleged offense is reported to have occurred shall be recognized as having the prior right of initiative in matters of discipline.
- c. Responsibility of district of affiliation.** If the district in which an alleged offense is reported to have occurred for some reason cannot take action, the General Council Credentials Committee shall refer the matter, together with the facts and supporting instruments, to the district with which the minister is affiliated.
- d. Responsibility of General Council Credentials Committee.** In the event a district fails to take action within 90 days after a matter has been referred to it, it shall be the responsibility of the General Council Credentials Committee to see that action is initiated.

Section 5. Investigation of Reports or Complaints of Alleged Violations or Confessions of Violations of Assemblies of God Principles

- a. **Within the Louisiana District.** Reports or complaints of alleged violations of Assemblies of God principles or confessions of such by a minister within the Louisiana District shall be investigated. The district superintendent, or an appointed representative, shall conduct the investigation to determine their source and validity. It is the responsibility of the district superintendent to safeguard the church, the minister, the District, and the Fellowship. In the event such reports or complaints against a minister are filed with the General Council Credentials Committee, they shall be referred to the District for investigation. If the minister resides in another district, a copy shall be sent to that district.
 1. Interview with complainants. The persons involved shall be interviewed to ascertain the facts in the case and the reasons underlying the persistence of the reports or complaints.
 2. Interview with accused minister. The accused minister shall be given an opportunity to be interviewed to discuss the complaints received in the hope that the matter can be resolved.
 3. Signed complaints. In the event the investigation so warrants, a signed complaint shall be filed with the District Office by each complainant describing the alleged offense. These complaints should be signed by the complaining witness or witnesses, by the district superintendent, or by the district superintendent's appointed representative.
 4. Conditions for ministry during investigation. Conditions of continuing ministry may be subject to restriction during the time of investigation at the discretion of the appropriate district officers on the basis of evidence at hand and the nature of the alleged offense. Such conditions are subject to review in 3-month intervals until such investigation has been completed resulting in either clearing the person of the allegations or filing formal charges.
- b. **Outside United States.** In case the alleged misconduct of a minister affiliated with the Louisiana District occurs outside the United States in an area under the general oversight of the Assemblies of God World Missions, that division shall take the initiative to file complete data with the District. Any hearing affecting that individual's ministerial credentials shall be held in the Louisiana District. The Assemblies of God World Missions shall convey all information available to the District as follows:
 1. Report to District. At the earliest date after the Assemblies of God Missions receives a report of misconduct, such report shall be conveyed by telephone and by letter to the district superintendent.
 2. Confidential File. A confidential file shall be submitted to the district superintendent, conveying all information as it becomes available to the division. A final complete file shall be prepared under the direction of the field director of the field involved and shall be presented to the district superintendent for use in any action the District may take.
 3. Additional information. When in the judgment of the Assemblies of God World Missions or the District, basic information is lacking (which information may be available at the site of the alleged misconduct), arrangements may be made for the gathering of such.

Section 6. Preparation and Filing of Charges

If after due investigation it is determined that charges should be made, proper charges shall be prepared and filed in the District Office. If no one appears to sign the charges, the district officers making the investigation may file charges based on the evidence in their possession. The person against whom charges have been filed shall be informed in writing by certified mail, at the last address furnished to the District, of the charges made in keeping with these Bylaws.

Section 7. District Hearing and Discipline

- a. **District hearing.** In the event the reports or complaints cannot be dealt with privately to the satisfaction of all concerned, the superintendent of the district in which the alleged offense is said to have occurred, or the superintendent of the district with which the minister is affiliated, shall arrange for a hearing by the District Council Credentials Committee for the accused minister. The minister shall be required to appear at the hearing in the hope the matter can be resolved. It is recommended that the accuser(s) and/or other

witnesses (if needed) be present at this hearing.

- b. Forfeiture of rights of accused.** A hearing shall not be considered as final disposition of the case until the accused be present and be allowed all rights and privileges granted herein. However, an accused member may be found guilty of charges and disciplined for failure to appear at the hearing, or if proof is found of willful neglect to take advantage of rights and privileges provided in these Bylaws.
- c. Discipline**
 - 1.** Cause for discipline. A minister who has been found guilty of violating any of the Assemblies of God principles set forth in these Bylaws, either by a confession of the minister involved or by deliberation of the District Board, shall be subject to disciplinary action.
 - 2.** Determination of discipline. It shall be the responsibility of the credentials committees to determine whether the circumstances of the case merit restoration or dismissal. The credentials committees shall weigh decisions on:
 - i.** the basis of the offense itself,
 - ii.** the manner and thoroughness of repentance,
 - iii.** the attitude of the offending minister toward the discipline, and
 - iv.** the willingness manifested to cooperate.
 - 3.** Administering discipline redemptively. If the District determines that guilt has been established, discipline shall be administered prayerfully and in the fear of God, in accordance with the Scriptures, and as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of this ecclesiastical body.
- d. Surrender of credentials.** Disciplined ministers shall be required to surrender their ministerial credentials and their current fellowship card to the District Office. In the event of restoration the credentials shall be held in the District Office. In the event of dismissal the District shall forward the credentials to the general secretary of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Refusal to surrender ministerial credentials and current fellowship card may result in placing an additional charge against the minister.

Section 8. Restoration

Recognizing that the underlying principle involved in discipline is redemptive, and that man's conscience frequently brings him to judgment and confession, and that justice can sometimes be best served with mercy, an effort should be made to lead the offending minister through a program of restoration, administered in love and kindness. The following provisions for restoration shall apply.

- a. Basis.** Those found to have violated any of the Assemblies of God principles stated in these Bylaws may request a program of restoration as an alternative to dismissal. Restoration is a privilege granted out of mercy and not a right to be expected or demanded. The primary purpose is to restore a person to God, spouse, and family, with the results leading to possible restoration to ministry. Granting such request shall be at the discretion of the District and General Council credentials committees.
- b. Procedure and requirements.** The following procedure shall be used by the District Board in determining the specific requirements for restoration for the individual minister.
 - 1. Restoration requirements.** The specific terms and conditions of the restoration program as recommended by the District Credentials Committee are to be forwarded to the General Council Credentials Committee for approval. After such approval they shall be given to the minister.
 - i. Suspension.** The minister shall be considered to be under suspension during the entire period of restoration.
 - ii. Terms and Conditions**
 - (1) Period of Time.** The program for restoration shall continue for not less than 1 year except when the violation involves misconduct defined in these Bylaws, Article IX, Section 3, paragraph a, in which case it shall continue for not less than 2 years.
 - (2) Authority.** The General Presbytery shall be authorized to establish guidelines and policy in regards to terms and conditions of restoration. Such guidelines and policy shall be consistent

with provisions of the Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

- iii. *Extent of ministry*. The extent to which ministry may be permitted, if any, shall be determined by the District Board, subject to the approval of the General Council Credentials Committee and compatible with the guidelines and policy established by the General Presbytery.
 - iv. *District membership*. The minister shall not be permitted to transfer his or her membership to another district during the period of restoration.
 - v. *Publication*. While the minister's credentials are in a state of suspension, the minister's name shall not be removed from the ministerial roster, nor shall the minister's disciplinary status be published in either the General Council or District Council official publications.
 - vi. *Credentials renewal*. The minister shall renew his or her credentials annually in the regular manner.
 - vii. *Supervision*. In the event his or her ministerial activity has been terminated, the minister must become established in a local church working under the supervision of a pastor or presbyter.
 - viii. *Reports*. The minister must submit reports quarterly to the district superintendent.
 - ix. *Ministerial benefits*. During the program of restoration the minister shall continue to be eligible for benefits such as the minister's group insurance and Ministers Benefit Association.
 - x. *Program administration*. The approved restoration program shall be administered by the District Board.
2. *District progress reports*. The District Council Credentials Committee shall submit to the General Council Credentials Committee on February 1 and August 1 of each calendar year a progress report relative to the restoration of ministers under discipline.
 3. *Completion of restoration*. When the restoration program has been satisfactorily completed, the suspension shall be lifted and the minister shall be restored to good standing.
 4. *Transfer of information*. A restoration information form for District use, prepared and distributed by the general secretary, shall be completed by the district in which the restoration occurred when the restored minister requests a transfer to a new district. The completed restoration form shall accompany the Certificate of Transfer to another district. A disciplined minister shall, as a condition of entering a restoration program, sign a Limited Disclosure Agreement approved by the General Presbytery allowing the basis of his or her restoration program to be disclosed by the district superintendent or district secretary of a transferring district. The information shall be preserved for future reference in the files of the District and the General Council.
- c. **Eligibility of previously dismissed**. In the event a minister who has been dismissed requests reinstatement, the District shall first obtain permission from the General Council Credentials Committee before submitting an appropriate restoration program as prescribed in this article. The dismissed minister shall not be eligible for reinstatement until the requirements for restoration have been completed. Consideration may also be given to a minister if in the opinion of the credentials committees he or she has satisfactorily fulfilled the remedial requirements of such restoration.

Section 9. Referral for Action to the General Council Credentials Committee

a. District Recommendation

1. **Restoration**. When a minister is to be placed in a restoration program in accordance with this article, the District shall forward to the General Council Credentials Committee the specific charges and recommended terms of restoration. The District shall inform the minister involved of its action and, where applicable, the superintendent of the minister's district of affiliation.
2. **Dismissal**. When a minister has been found guilty of violating any of the Assemblies of God principles as set forth in these Bylaws, and it is determined that restoration is not feasible or fails, a minister's credentials are to be terminated by dismissal. The District shall forward to the General Council Credentials Committee the specific charges and its recommendation for dismissal. The District shall

inform the minister involved of its action and, where applicable, the superintendent of the minister's district of affiliation.

3. Subsequent dismissal. Should evidence come to light following a minister's resignation, or the lapse of his or her credentials, of conduct occurring prior to his or her resignation or lapse of credentials that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action under Article XI, Section 3, of these Bylaws, the district at its discretion may request the General Council Credentials Committee to change that minister's status from lapsed or resigned to dismissed. The district shall inform the minister involved of its action and, where applicable, the superintendent of the minister's district of affiliation. All rights of appeal will apply.
- b. **General Council Credentials Committee action.** The General Council Credentials Committee shall consider the recommendation of the District and shall concur if in its judgment the District was justified in the action taken. If the General Council Credentials Committee does not concur, it may remand the case, together with its recommendations, back to the District for review and reconsideration. The District shall report the results of its recommendation to the General Council Credentials Committee for final disposition.
- c. **General Council to hold information.** All pertinent information relating to the disciplinary action taken against a minister shall be preserved for future reference in the office of the General Council Credentials Committee.
- d. **Final disposition.** The general secretary shall notify the minister and the district(s) involved of the final disposition of the case.

Section 10. Right of Appeal

- a. **Filing of appeal to the General Council Credentials Committee.** The right of appeal applies to all actions of discipline and termination of credentials other than lapsing or resigning on the initiative of the minister. An accused minister shall have 30 days from the date notification of the General Council Credentials Committee decision was mailed to appeal to the General Council Credentials Committee. The minister shall be apprised officially of this right at the time notification is given to the minister of the decision of the General Council Credentials Committee. The appeal is to be sent to the office of the general superintendent, and should include any new or exculpatory information not previously considered, with copies sent to the district superintendent and any other districts involved.
- b. **Consideration of appeal by the General Council Credentials Committee.** The General Council Credentials Committee may respond to the appeal in one of the following ways:
 1. Remanding of case to the District. If in the judgment of the General Council Credentials Committee, justice has not been served, the case shall be remanded to the District Board for review and reconsideration. The District shall report the results of its review to the General Council Credentials Committee for final disposition.
 2. Denial of appeal.
 - i. Forfeiture of right of appeal. No appeal shall be granted by remanding the case to the District Board if proof is found of willful neglect on the part of the accused to take advantage of available rights and privileges during the district hearing.
 - ii. Insufficient grounds. The General Council Credentials Committee shall have the prerogative to determine whether there is sufficient cause to grant an appeal, and remand the case to the District.
- e. **Right of appeal to the General Presbytery.** A disciplined minister whose appeal has been denied by the General Council Credentials Committee may appeal to the General Presbytery. An accused minister shall have 30 days from the date notification of the General Council Credentials Committee decision was mailed to appeal to the General Presbytery. The appeal is to be sent to the office of the general superintendent, and should include any new or exculpatory information not previously considered, with copies sent to the district superintendent and any other districts involved. The decision of the General Presbytery shall be

final.

Section 11. Publication of Dismissal

No publication of a dismissed minister's name, in print or electronically, shall be made until the District has been advised by the office of the general secretary that such has been authorized by the General Council Credentials Committee. An additional 30 days from the date of the notification shall be given the dismissed minister to exercise the right of appeal.

Section 12. Reinstatement of Credentials

- a. Authorization.** Application for reinstatement of a minister affiliated with the Louisiana District may be made through the Louisiana District Council. The application shall be considered subject to the approval of the district in which the termination was made.
- b. Minimal time-lapse for dismissed ministers.** The minimal time-lapse required before a minister who has been dismissed is eligible for reinstatement shall be 1 year, except it shall be 2 years for a minister who has been dismissed because of charges as stated in these Bylaws Article IX, Section 3, paragraph a. The time-lapse shall be computed from the date of the District Board action as it appears on the ministerial status report filed with the General Council Credentials Committee.
- c. Restoration obligatory.** When a minister has been dismissed from our Fellowship and applies for reinstatement, he or she shall comply with the procedures for restoration outlined in this Article.
- d. Option to refer to General Presbytery.** The General Council Credentials Committee may also hold the reinstatement of a minister's credentials in abeyance until the next session of the General Presbytery in order that the General Presbytery may have the opportunity to review the case, in which event the matter of reinstatement of such minister may be left entirely with that body.
- e. Reinstatement fee.** When applying for reinstatement the minister must include a \$100 reinstatement fee with the application to be divided equally between the District Council and the General Council.

Section 13. Notice

Notice shall be deemed to have been given to a minister by certified mail from the District or General Council Credentials Committee on the basis of the last address furnished to the District or General Council by the minister. In the event the certified letter is returned as undeliverable for any reason, notice will have been deemed to have been given in view of the fact it is the minister's responsibility to furnish the District Council or General Council his or her address, and to accept lawful mail.

Section 14. Legal Representation

The discipline of ministers is a sacred responsibility that is entrusted to the credentials committees of the District and the General Council. A minister shall not be permitted to be accompanied by one or more attorneys at any meeting, hearing, or appeal pertaining to his or her discipline. A minister shall be permitted to be accompanied by one approved credentialed minister at any meeting, hearing, or appeal pertaining to his or her discipline.

ARTICLE X. MISSIONS

Section 1. Assemblies of God World Missions

- a. Authorization.** The Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God shall assume responsibility and do all within its power for the spread of the gospel in foreign lands and to other people groups. In keeping with this objective, there shall be an Assemblies of God World Missions Division of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God to which shall be committed all the world missions interests of the District.

- b. **Purpose.** The primary responsibility of this division shall be to work in cooperation with and serve as a central point of contact between The General Council of The Assemblies of God World Missions Division and the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God and to act as an agency of the church in fulfilling its fourfold mission.
- c. **Government and Organization**
There shall be a district Director of World Missions appointed by the district superintendent and ratified by the District Board. Any person serving in an elected district office is eligible to serve in this position.

Section 2. Assemblies of God U.S. Missions

- a. **Authorization.** The Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God shall assume responsibility and do all within its power to spread the gospel to the home land. In keeping with this obligation, there shall be an Assemblies of God U.S. Missions Division of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God.
- b. **Purpose.** The primary responsibility of this division shall be to act as an agency of the church in fulfilling its fourfold mission. The essential functions are promoting the establishing of indigenous churches representing all cultural, socioeconomic, and other identifiable groups requiring specialized understanding and methods; and facilitating the evangelization and discipleship of individuals within these groups. All such activities shall be conducted in full cooperation with the District Council. The division shall provide coordination, promotion, assistance to motivate action, and shall receive and disburse funds.
- c. **Government and Organization.**
There shall be a district Director of U.S. Missions appointed by the district superintendent and ratified by the District Board. Any person currently serving in an elected district office shall be eligible to serve in this position.
- d. **Departments.** The District Board shall be authorized to establish departments within the division. The district superintendent shall appoint a leader for each department to be ratified by the District Board. The department leader shall be charged with the operation of the department under the direction of the division director. Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the District Operations Manual. These departments may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 1. *Intercultural Ministries*
 2. *Chaplaincy*
 3. *Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, U.S.A.*
 4. *Adult and Teen Challenge, U.S.A.*
 5. *Benevolence Ministries*
- e. **Amenability.** The division and all of its departments shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the District Board.

Section 3. District Approved Missionaries

- a. Credentialed ministers of the Louisiana District may apply for District Approved Missionary Status. Approval of District Missionary Status must be granted by the Board of Executives and Presbyters and the District Director of U. S. Missions.
- b. District Approved Missionaries must operate within the guidelines of the District Operations Manual.

Section 4. Church Life

- a. **Authorization.** There shall be a Church Life ministry divided into two teams: Church Planting and Church Development.
- b. **Purpose.** The purposes of these teams shall be the establishment of new Assemblies of God churches in Louisiana and to assist existing churches and leaders within the state in strong, healthy development and maturity.
- c. **Government and Organization.** Church Life shall be under the general oversight of the district

superintendent. There shall be one director for Church Planting and one Director for Church Development to be appointed by the Superintendent and ratified by the District Board. The directors shall not be subject to the general prohibition against dual offices.

- d. **Financial Support.** All the work of the Church Planting and Development Teams shall be paid from funds sent in for support of Church Planting and Development and any monies budgeted from the General Fund.
- e. **Reversionary Clause.** All properties, real and movable, which are purchased with Church Planting and Development funds shall be subject to a reversionary clause in the Articles of Incorporation and the Constitution and Bylaws of the church. This clause shall require that all properties, real and movable shall revert to the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God if the church shall cease to function as an Assemblies of God church of the District or cease to exist as a corporation.

Section 5. District Screening Committees

There shall be district screening committees for Assemblies of God World Missions and Assemblies of God U.S. Missions and District Appointed Missionaries.

- a. **The District World Missions Screening Committee.** The district World Missions Screening Committee shall consist of the Executive Board, the district Director of World Missions, and the applicant's presbyter. The district superintendent shall be the chairman of this committee.
 - 1. This committee shall evaluate applicants for missions appointments or approval through the use of interviews and references. The findings of this committee shall be presented to the District Board.
 - 2. Applicants for short-term missions assignments (Missionary Associates) shall be evaluated by the district Director of World Missions and the district superintendent or their assigned representatives.
- b. **The District U.S. Missions Screening Committee.** The district U.S. Missions Screening Committee shall consist of the Executive Board, the district Director of U.S. Missions, and the applicant's presbyter. The district superintendent shall be the chairman of this committee.
 - 1. This committee shall evaluate applicants for missions appointments or approval through the use of interviews and references. The findings of this committee shall be presented to the District Board.
 - 2. Applicants for Church Mobilization assignments shall be evaluated by the district Director of U.S. Missions and the district superintendent, or their assigned representatives.
- c. **District Appointed Missions Screening Committee.** Either the World Missions Screening Committee or the U.S. Missions Screening Committee shall evaluate applicants for District Missions Appointment depending on the applicant's field of service.

ARTICLE XI. DIVISION OF CHURCH MINISTRIES

Section 1. Ministries

The District Board shall establish such church ministries including divisions, departments, and commissions as may from time to time be needed to carry out the fourfold mission of the church. The operation of these ministries shall be provided for in the District Operations Manual.

Section 2. Appointment of Departmental Leaders

- a. All departmental leaders shall be appointed by the District Superintendent and ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the District Board.
- b. All assistant departmental leaders shall be appointed by the departmental leader in consultation with the District Superintendent and ratified by the District Board.
- c. All ministry leaders appointed to full time positions in the District must have been a licensed minister of the General Council of the Assemblies of God for a minimum of two years and must advance to ordination

within two years of his or her appointment. All appointees to positions not requiring credentials must have been members of an Assemblies of God church for the past five years and have been actively involved in the ministry of the department for which he or she is being appointed.

- d. All appointed departmental leaders shall be reviewed annually by the District Board of Executives and Presbyters.

Section 3. Departmental Financial Policies

- a. **Operational income.** Operational income for all departments shall be provided by tithes and offerings from ministry groups of local churches, offerings from local churches, event registration fees, chartering fees, fund-raisers, or offerings from individuals.
- b. **Salaries and remunerations.** All salaries and remunerations for departmental personnel shall be determined by the District Board.
- c. **Supervision.** The District Board shall supervise and approve departmental finances.
- d. **Financial support of other ministries.** Departments may give financial support to ministries or projects outside the department provided such support shall have District Board approval. Support for outside ministries or projects shall be specified in the reports distributed to the District Council.

ARTICLE XII. GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS AND AREAS

Section 1. Purpose

The Regions and Areas exist to:

- a. Provide Godly, healthy leader care to all our ministers and churches in the most effective way possible
- b. Create opportunities for gifted, Spirit-led leaders to serve our District
- c. Engender and nourish strong, healthy relationships among our ministers
- d. Build bridges between local churches and District leaders
- e. Increase the number of accessible locations for the annual area business meetings, District departmental activities, and equipping and training ministers and church members to fulfill the Great Commission

Section 2. Names and Boundaries

- a. **Changes.** The boundaries of the Areas and the Regions shall be determined or changed by the District Board as needed to fulfill the purposes of the Areas and Regions or when requested by members of the Areas and Regions involved. Changes initiated by the District Board must be ratified by the members of the Areas involved.
- b. Names and boundary lines of the Geographic Areas

1. Alexandria Area

The Alexandria Area shall consist of the territory bounded by a line beginning at a point on the Wisner Area line just west of Trout, then following the Wisner Area line to the Red River and the Mississippi River, then south along the Mississippi River to Morganza, then following an imaginary line from Morganza towards Newton, Texas to a point southwest of Elizabeth, then following an imaginary line running north, just west of Elizabeth and east of Montgomery, to where it intersects with the Winnfield Area boundary, then along the Winnfield Area boundary east to the point of beginning.

2. Baton Rouge Area

The Baton Rouge Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the north by the State line and the St. Helena Parish line; on the east by the Tangipahoa Parish line and the St. Helena Parish line; on the west by the Alexandria Area line, and the Lafayette Area line; on the south by the Raceland Area line and the New Orleans Area line.

3. Bossier City Area

The Bossier City Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the north by the Arkansas State line; on the west by the Texas line, down to a point just north of Mooringsport, then running east to the Red

River and following the Red River to Curtis; then east to the southwest corner of the Ruston Area, passing just south of Heflin; then north along the west boundary of the Ruston Area to the State line.

4. *Coushatta Area*

The Coushatta Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the north from a point on the Texas line due west of Longstreet and continuing to Longstreet; then along Louisiana Highway 3015 and U.S. Highway 171 until they intersect with Louisiana Highway 175 east of Mansfield. From that intersection, the line turns northeast through the southwest corner of the Webster Parish line and proceeds on the same angle until it intersects the Bossier City Area line. It then turns east along the Bossier City Area line to the northwest corner of the Winnfield Area line at Bryceland where it turns south. The eastern boundary is the Winnfield Area line, the southern boundary is the Leesville Area line and the western boundary proceeds north along the State line from the Leesville Area line to the point of beginning, due west of Longstreet.

5. *Four Rivers Area*

The Four Rivers Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the north by the Northeast Area; on the west by the Winnfield and Ruston Areas; and on the east by the Mississippi River. The southern boundary begins at Tullos, following U.S. Highway 84 to its intersection with Louisiana Highway 500 just west of Trout, then a straight line southeast to the eastern point of Saline Lake, then following the Catahoula Parish and the Concordia Parish lines east and south along the Red River to the Mississippi River. Clarks A/G shall be affiliated with the Wisner Area.

6. *Lafayette Area*

The Lafayette Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the west by the Lake Charles Area line and on the north by the Alexandria Area line to the point of intersection with the Atchafalaya River. It then turns along the Atchafalaya south to Melville, then a southeastern line to Bayou Sorrel, then a southwesterly line through Calumet to the Gulf coast. The southern boundary is the Gulf of Mexico.

7. *Lake Charles Area*

The Lake Charles Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the north by extending the Alexandria Area's imaginary line beginning at Morganza towards Newton, Texas, running just south of DeRidder to the Texas line; on the east by a point just east of Pine Prairie and from there south to the Gulf coast; on the south by the Gulf of Mexico and on the west by the State line.

8. *Leesville Area*

The Leesville Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the north by the southwestern corner of the Winnfield Area line and by an imaginary line extending from the southwestern corner of the Winnfield Area towards Center, Texas to the state line; on the east by the Alexandria Area; on the south by the Lake Charles Area; and on the west by the State line.

9. *New Orleans Area*

The New Orleans Area shall consist of all territory on the East Bank of the Mississippi River in five (5) parishes: St. John the Baptist, St. Charles, Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Bernard.

10. *North Central Area*

The North Central Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the west by an imaginary line beginning at Bryceland and running due north to the Arkansas line, passing just west of Arcadia, following the State line east to the Ouachita River, then south to Bayou DeSiard (Monroe included in this Area), then east to U. S. Highway 165, then south to U.S. Highway 80 until it intersects with the Millhaven Road, then south on Millhaven Road to Interstate 20, then proceed southwesterly to a point where U.S. Highway 165 enters Caldwell Parish, then west and north along the Ouachita Parish line to a point due east of Bryceland, then directly west to the point of beginning.

11. *Northeast Area*

The Northeast Area shall consist of the territory that shall be east of a line beginning with the Ouachita River at the State line and running south to Bayou DeSiard, then proceed east to U.S.

Highway 165, south to U.S. Highway 80, then proceed east on U.S. Highway 80 until it intersects with the Millhaven Road, to the south of Millhaven Road to Interstate 20, and then east on Interstate 20 to the Mississippi line. The Mississippi River forms the eastern boundary. The Arkansas state line forms the northern boundary. The New Life Assembly of God in Delhi shall be included in this Area.

12. Northlake Area

The Northlake Area shall consist of four parishes: St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, and St. Tammany. The Mississippi state line forms the north and east boundaries. Lake Ponchartrain and the southern boundary of St. Helena Parish forms the southern boundary. The western boundaries of Tangipahoa and St. Helena parishes, which run from Lake Ponchartrain northward to the Mississippi state line, forms the western boundary.

13. Raceland Area

The Raceland Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the west by an imaginary line beginning at Bayou Sorrel, proceeding southwesterly through Calumet to the Gulf coast. The boundary on the north shall proceed from Bayou Sorrel in a northeasterly direction, towards Carville, to the Mississippi River, then southeast along the west bank of the Mississippi River to Taft. The east boundary shall be an imaginary line running southeasterly from Taft to just east of Grand Isle, passing just east of Boutte. The Gulf coast is the southern boundary.

14. Shreveport Area

The Shreveport Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the west by the Texas state line, on the south and east by the northern boundary line of the Coushatta Area, and on the north by the southern boundary line of the Bossier City Area.

15. West Bank Area

The West Bank Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the west by an imaginary line beginning from the Mississippi River at Taft and running southeasterly to just east of Grand Isle, passing just east of Boutte. The Mississippi River shall be the northern and eastern boundaries. The Gulf coast is the southern boundary.

16. Winnfield Area

The Winnfield Area shall consist of the territory bounded on the north and east by an imaginary line beginning at Bryceland and running east to the Ouachita Parish line, then following the Ouachita Parish line south and east to U.S. Highway 165, following U.S. 165 south to Tullos, then turning southeast along U.S. Highway 84 to a point just west of Trout where the line turns west and extends to the Red River at the southwest corner of Winn Parish. From that point the boundary goes north to the point of beginning at Bryceland.

c. The geographic regions shall be:

1. The Northeast Region consisting of the Northeast, Ruston, Winnfield and Wisner Areas;
2. The Northwest Region consisting of the Bossier City, Coushatta, Leesville and Shreveport Areas;
3. The Southeast Region consisting of the New Orleans, New Orleans Westbank, Northlake and Raceland Areas; and
4. The Southwest Region consisting of the Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette and Lake Charles Areas.

Section 3. Officers and Elections

a. Officers.

1. The Regional Executive Presbyters shall be elected in accordance with Bylaws Article II, Section 1. Officers, c. Regional Executive Presbyters.
2. The following officers shall be elected for a two (2) year term at the annual Area business meetings on the odd numbered years and shall serve as The Area Committee to carry out the business of the Area:
 - i. Presbyter

- ii. Assistant Presbyter
- iii. Secretary/Treasurer
- b. **Qualifications.** The Area Committee members must be qualified according to Bylaws Article II, Area 2. Qualifications, b. Presbyters.
- c. **Representation.** In the event the presbyter of any Area cannot fulfill the duties of the office or attend meetings of the District Board, the assistant presbyter shall represent the Area in all matters. In the event the assistant presbyter cannot fulfill the duties of the Area presbyter or attend meetings of the District Board, the secretary/treasurer shall represent the Area in all matters.
- d. **Ministry Team representatives.** Each ministry team leader, in consultation with the Area presbyter and the regional executive presbyter, shall have the authority to appoint representatives as deemed necessary to accomplish the goals and vision of the ministry team.
- e. **Vacancies.** In the event the term of office of any of the Area officers is not fulfilled and there are more than ninety (90) days remaining in the term, The Regional Executive Presbyter shall call a special meeting of the Area for the purpose of electing someone to fulfill the term.

ARTICLE XIII. CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Louisiana District Council shall be a participant of the regional operation of Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) at Waxahachie, Texas. The district superintendent and the district secretary/treasurer shall, by virtue of their offices, serve as members of the Board of Regents of SAGU. A third member of the Board of Regents shall be appointed annually by the district superintendent and ratified by the District Board. One Christian layman of the Louisiana District shall be chosen by the District Board to be a member of this Board of Regents.

ARTICLE XIV. DISTRICT POLICY AND OPERATIONS MANUALS

Section 1. Board Policy Manual.

The District Board shall maintain a policy manual. This manual shall not be in conflict with the District Constitution & Bylaws, and it shall be made available to all members of the District upon written request in any form to the Louisiana District secretary/treasurer.

Section 2. District Operations Manual.

The District Board shall maintain a District Operations Manual. This document shall set forth the procedures, guidelines, and parameters relating to the operation and structure of divisions, departments, commissions, and ministries of the Louisiana District Council of the Assemblies of God. The administrative officers of the District shall be responsible for adherence to The District Operations Manual. All proposed additions, deletions, and modifications to the District Operations Manual shall be presented to the District Board for approval or amendment. The District Operations Manual shall be made available to all members of the District upon written request in any form to the Louisiana District secretary/treasurer.

ARTICLE XV. AMENDMENTS

All amendments to these Bylaws shall require a majority of all votes cast for adoption at any regular or duly called session of the District Council.