

**North Texas District
Council of the Assemblies of God**

CONSTITUTION



Article	Subject	Page
I.	Name	3
II.	Nature and Corporate Limits	3
III.	Prerogatives	3
IV.	Principles and Purposes for Fellowship	3
V.	Tenets of Faith, Statement of Fundamental Truths	4
VI.	Relationships	9
VII.	Membership	9
VIII.	Meetings	9
IX.	Officers and Division Directors	9
IX.	Regional Councils	10
X.	Sectional Councils	11
XI.	Local Assemblies	12
XII.	Dissolution	13
XIII.	Amendments	13

**THE NORTH TEXAS DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD**

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. NAME

The corporate name shall be THE NORTH TEXAS DISTRICT COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD.

ARTICLE II. NATURE AND CORPORATE LIMITS

The North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God is a district of The General Council of the Assemblies of God that comprises all local Assemblies of God churches located in North and East Texas within the following boundaries:

Beginning at the southwest corner of the State of Oklahoma (the northwest corner of Hardeman County), and running south on county lines to the southwest corner of Haskell County, thence due west to the northwest corner of Fisher County; thence due south to the southwest corner of Nolan County; thence due west to the northwest corner of Sterling County; thence due south on county lines as near as possible to the southwest corner of Sutton County; thence due east to Gillespie County; thence due south to the southwest corner of Gillespie County; thence due east to Blanco County; thence due east in such a manner as to include Blanco, Hays, Caldwell, Bastrop, Lee, Burleson, Brazos, Madison, Houston, Trinity, Polk, Angelina, San Augustine, and Sabine Counties

ARTICLE III. PREROGATIVES

The prerogatives of The North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God shall be:

- a. To encourage and promote the evangelization of the district, the nation, and 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 establish and maintain such departments and institutions as may be necessary for the propagation of the gospel and the work of this Pentecostal fellowship.
- g. To approve all scriptural teachings and practices, and to disapprove unscriptural teachings and practices. A list of disapproved doctrines and practices is set forth in Articles IX and X of the Bylaws.
- h. To have the right to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of such property, real or chattel, as may be needed for the prosecution of its work.

ARTICLE IV. PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES FOR FELLOWSHIP

The principles and purposes of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God shall represent, as nearly as possible, the body of Christ as described in the New Testament scriptures. The Council shall recognize the principles inherent in that body as also inherent in this Fellowship, particularly the principles of unity, cooperation, and equality. The Council 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.

ARTICLE V. TENETS OF FAITH STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply 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 or 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 Ghost (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, whereby 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 Ghost, but that this distinction and relationship, as to its mode is inscrutable and incomprehensible, because 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 Ghost

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 Ghost which constitutes Him the Holy Ghost and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore the Father is the Begetter, the Son is the Begotten; and the Holy Ghost is the one proceeding from the Father and 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 Ghost 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 Ghost is from the Father and the Son proceeding, as to nature, relationship, cooperation, and authority. Hence, no person in the Godhead either exists or 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 Ghost. 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 Ghost 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 is an **unspeakable** joy in the Holy Ghost 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 titles 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 Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to 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 Saviour 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 a prophecy of His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers “till He come!”

7. The Baptism in the Holy Ghost

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost 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 endowment 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 Ghost 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 Ghost

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost 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, 21; 1 Thessalonians 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 Ghost 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 6:11,13; 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 16:15, 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. RELATIONSHIPS

The North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God shall recognize itself as being part of and in cooperation with The General Council of the Assemblies of God and shall prosecute its activities through its district office, sections, and local assemblies.

ARTICLE VII. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God

The membership of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God shall consist of all ordained and licensed ministers holding an accredited fellowship certificate and churches holding a Certificate of Affiliation issued by The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 2. Voting Constituency

a. The voting constituency at a District Council shall be composed of all accredited ordained and licensed ministers of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God, present and registered, and one accredited delegate from each member church affiliated with The General Council of the Assemblies of God, present and registered.

b. The courtesy of the floor shall be extended to Assemblies of God ministers from outside the North Texas District without the right to vote.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

Section 1. District Council

a. **Regular sessions.** Regular sessions of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God shall be held annually, date and location to be decided by the Executive Presbytery, and announcement to be published not later than one month prior to date of meeting.

b. **Special sessions.** Special sessions of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God may be called by the Executive Presbytery, if agreed upon by a majority of the District Presbytery.

c. **Right of initiative.** The right of initiative in calling special sessions shall be granted to any member of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God when the occasion demands. A statement setting forth the reasons for a special session of the Council signed by not less than 15 percent of the voting constituency of the Council is required to call a special session.

Section 2. Sectional Councils

The North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God shall schedule at least one council annually for every section, date and location to be decided by the Executive Presbytery, and announcement to be published not later than one month prior to date of meeting.

ARTICLE IX. OFFICERS AND DIVISION DIRECTORS

Section 1. Executive Officers

a. **Officers.** The executive officers shall consist of a superintendent, assistant superintendent, secretary-treasurer, and such other officers that may be authorized by the constituent body in the future.

b. **Term of office.** The term of office of executive officers shall continue for four years or until their successors qualify, the term to begin 30 days after the adjournment of the annual council where elections occur. Newly elected officers will begin their service to the District Council one week prior to the termination of any incumbent's term, thus enabling orientation to office responsibilities by the time the official term begins.

Section 2. Executive Presbytery

a. **Composition.** The Executive Presbytery shall be comprised of no less than twelve persons, including the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the secretary-treasurer, the elected general presbyter, and regional executive presbyters and at least two sectional presbyters elected by the District Presbytery. Should the assistant superintendent or the secretary-treasurer be elected general presbyters, their seat(s) on the Executive Presbytery will be filled by a qualified minister, without geographical restriction, elected by the District Council.

b. Term of office.

(1) Sectional presbyters named to the executive presbytery by the district presbytery are elected for two years to begin on January 1 following their election and they will be limited to two consecutive terms.

(2) Ministers named to the executive presbytery by the district council are elected for two years to begin immediately after the district council.

Section 3. General Presbyters

a. **Representation.** The general presbyters representing the District Council shall consist of the superintendent, the secretary-treasurer, and one elected, qualified officer. The elected general presbyter shall be an ordained pastor of a church located in the North Texas District.

b. **Term of office.** The election of the general presbyter shall be for a term of two years, beginning immediately upon election.

Section 4. Regional Executive Presbyters

a. **Representation.** The Regional Executive Presbyters shall consist of those elected by regions consisting of sectional as defined by the District Presbytery.

b. **Term of office.** The Regional Executive Presbyter shall serve for a term of two years beginning January 1 following their election.

Section 5. District Presbytery

a. **Regular membership.** The District Presbytery shall consist of all executive and sectional presbyters.

b. **Term of office.** Sectional presbyters will be elected for a term of two years to begin on January 1 following their election.

c. **Honorary presbyters.** Distinguished elders may be nominated by the District Presbytery and elected by the District Council as honorary presbyters for life, subject to the following basic qualifications: The nominees must have reached at least 60 years of age and completed at least 15 years of elected service on the District Presbytery. Honorary presbyters are non-voting members of the District Presbytery.

Section 6. Division Directors

Directors of the various divisions herein-after established shall be chosen as provided in the bylaws.

ARTICLE X. REGIONAL COUNCILS

Section 1. Membership

Membership of the regional councils shall consist of all ordained, licensed, and certified ministers holding an accredited fellowship certificate and all sectional churches holding a Certificate of Affiliation issued by The General Council of the Assemblies of God in any section within the region.

Section 2. Voting Constituency

The voting constituency at a regional council shall be composed of all accredited ordained, licensed, and certified ministers within the region and one duly elected delegate from each church within the region holding a Certificate of Affiliation issued by The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 3. Officers

a. **Regional committee.** The regional committee shall consist of the regional executive presbyter and the sectional presbyters within the region.

Section 4. Area of Authority

a. **Supervision.** The regional council shall have supervision over all the activities of the Assemblies of God in its region in keeping with the authorization of the District Council.

b. **Elections and meetings.** The regional council shall elect its own officers and arrange for its own meetings, the annual council being excepted.

c. **Credentialing.** The regional council shall have authority to examine and give final recommendation to applicants for all credentials to the District Credentials Committee.

d. **Amenability to District Council.** The regional council cannot be authorized, in any way, to violate the principles and policies of the District Council. In the prosecution of the work in its prescribed area, the regional council shall be amenable to the District Council in matters of doctrine and the personal conduct of all ministers who are permitted to have regional endorsement.

ARTICLE XI. SECTIONAL COUNCILS

Section 1. Membership

Membership of the sectional councils shall consist of all sectional ordained, licensed, and certified ministers holding an accredited fellowship certificate and all sectional churches holding a Certificate of Affiliation issued by The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 2. Voting Constituency

The voting constituency at a sectional council shall be composed of all accredited ordained, licensed, and certified ministers within the section and one duly elected delegate from each sectional church holding a Certificate of Affiliation issued by The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 3. Officers

a. **Sectional committee.** The sectional committee shall consist of the presbyter and at least two ordained ministers.

b. **Term of office.** Sectional committeemen will serve for a term of two years beginning on January 1 following their election.

c. **Department representatives.** Officers of the various departments in the section shall be chosen in compliance with the district bylaws.

Section 4. Area of Authority

a. **Supervision.** The sectional council shall have supervision over all the activities of the Assemblies of God in its section in keeping with the authorization of the District Council.

b. **Elections and meetings.** The sectional council shall elect its own officers and arrange for its own meetings, the annual council being excepted.

c. **Credentialing.** The section shall have authority to examine and recommend applicants for all credentials to the District Credentials Committee.

d. **Amenability to District Council.** The sectional council cannot be authorized, in any way, to violate the principles and policies of the District Council. In the prosecution of the work in its prescribed area, the sectional council shall be amenable to the District Council in matters of doctrine and the personal conduct of all ministers who are permitted to have sectional endorsement.

ARTICLE XII. LOCAL ASSEMBLIES

Section 1. General Council Affiliated Assemblies

A general council affiliated assembly is one which has applied for and has received a Certificate of Affiliation from The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

a. **Requirements for affiliation.** Churches desiring to be affiliated with The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall meet the following requirements. They shall:

(1) Accept the tenets of faith of the Assemblies of God.

(2) Adopt a standard of membership which may be determined either by the local assembly itself or by agreement with the District Council.

(3) Have a minimum active voting membership of 20 persons who shall accept their full share of responsibility for the maintenance of scriptural order in the local body.

(4) Adopt a constitution and bylaws compatible with those recommended by the District Council.

(5) Have an adequate number of spiritually qualified members to fill the offices of the church called for in its constitution and bylaws.

(6) Make provision for a pastor who is a credentialed minister in good standing with the General Council and/or the District Council.

b. **Relationship to and support of the General Council and the District Council.** A General Council affiliated assembly should cooperate in the work and support the programs of the General Council, the District Council, and the sectional councils and may send delegates to the General Council, the District Council, and the sectional council.

c. **Right of self-government (sovereign rights).** Each General Council 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 acquire and hold title to property, either through trustees or in its corporate name as a self-governing unit. The fact that it is affiliated with The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall in no wise destroy its rights as above stated or interfere with its sovereignty.

d. **Subordinate in matters of doctrine and conduct.** A General Council affiliated assembly shall recognize that the District Council or the General Council has the right to approve scriptural doctrine and conduct and to disapprove unscriptural doctrine and conduct and the authority to withdraw its Certificate of Affiliation if deemed necessary.

e. **Right of appeal.** When in need of counsel or advice, the General Council affiliated assembly may appeal to the District officary for help. It may appeal from a decision by the District officary 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.

Section 2. District Council Affiliated Assemblies

A District Council affiliated assembly is one which is dependent and under the supervision of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God, through the sectional presbyter and committee where the assembly is located.

a. **Requirements for affiliation.** Churches desiring to become a District Council affiliate assembly with the North Texas District Council shall meet the following requirements. They shall:

- (1) Accept the tenets of faith of the Assemblies of God.
- (2) Adopt a constitution and bylaws approved by the District Council.
- (3) Function in accordance with provisions set forth by the District Presbytery, in cooperation with and under the supervision of the sectional presbyter and sectional committee.

b. Relationship to and support of the General Council. A District Council affiliated assembly shall cooperate in the work and support the programs of the General Council, the District Council, and the sectional councils. Such assemblies are encouraged to qualify for the status of a sovereign General Council affiliated assembly as soon as possible.

Section 3. Cooperating Assemblies

A Cooperating Assembly is one which subscribes to Article V. Statement of Fundamental Truths of the General Council Constitution and enters into a cooperative status with the North Texas District and the General Council on a temporary basis (4-year term, renewable by the request of the local church congregation at the discretion of the North Texas District Executive Presbytery in cooperation with the General Council Executive Presbytery) before officially affiliating with the North Texas District Council and the General Council.

Section 4. Parent Affiliated Assemblies

A Parent Affiliated Assembly is one which shall be under the supervision of a parenting church, in accordance with the parenting church's constitution and bylaws.

Section 5. Assemblies of God Total Giving Participation

All assemblies are expected to have an interest in, and contribute regularly to, the Assemblies of God Total Giving plan.

ARTICLE XIII. DISSOLUTION

The assets of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God, a Texas corporation, are irrevocably dedicated to religious and/or charitable purposes, the same being stated fully in its Articles of Incorporation and heretofore in the articles of this constitution. In the event of liquidation, dissolution, or the revocation of its charter or abandonment of its stated purposes, after providing for the payment of debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets will not inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article Third hereof. All such remaining assets will be distributed to The General Council of the Assemblies of God, which is organized and operated exclusively for religious and/or charitable purposes, and if The General Council of the Assemblies of God is no longer a qualifying 501(c)(3) organization then the remaining assets may be distributed to another qualifying organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, under which section the organization has established tax exemption status, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the constitution may be made at any regularly called session of the District Council provided that the proposed amendments shall have been submitted at least four months prior to the session in writing to the Executive Presbytery and provided notice of the proposed amendment is published and mailed to the District membership at least 60 days prior to the session. Amendments to the constitution shall require a two-thirds vote of all members present and voting.

**North Texas District Council
of the Assemblies of God**

BYLAWS



Bylaws

<u>Article</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
I.	Rules of Order.....	3
II.	Election of Officers.....	3
III.	Duties of Officers.....	8
IV.	Committees	13
V.	Regional Councils.....	14
VI.	Sectional Councils	15
VII.	Local Assemblies.....	18
VIII.	Ministry.....	29
IX.	Christian Marriage and Family	38
X.	Doctrines and Practices Disapproved	39
XI.	Discipline.....	44
XII.	Finances	45
XIII.	Benevolences and Insurance.....	47
XIV.	Division of Administration	48
XV.	Division of the Secretariat and Treasury	48
XVI.	Division of Missions.....	49
XVII.	Division of Church Planting and Development	50
XVIII.	Division of Adult Ministries	50
XIX.	Division of Youth and Student Ministries	51
XX.	Division of Children's Ministries	52
XXI.	Institutions	52
XXII.	Publications.....	53
XXIII.	Arbitration Agreement.....	54
XXIV.	Amendment.....	55
XXV.	Suspension of Bylaws.....	55

**THE NORTH TEXAS DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD**

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. RULES OF ORDER

Section 1. Parliamentary Order

The work of the North Texas District Council shall be governed by parliamentary procedure as set forth in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, in keeping with the spirit of Christian love and fellowship, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Section 2. Order of Business

The regular order of business for the District Council shall be:

- a. Report of the district superintendent
- b. Report of the assistant district superintendent
- c. Report of the district secretary-treasurer
- d. Divisional reports
- e. Unfinished business
- f. Election of officers
- g. New business
- h. Adjournment

All business sessions of the District Council shall commence with prayer. A time shall be set aside in each District Council for prayer for the sick.

Section 3. Quorum

a. **District Council.** All members registered and voting in any meeting of the District Council shall constitute a quorum.

b. **District Presbytery.** A simple majority of all district presbyters present and voting in any meeting of the District Presbytery shall constitute a quorum.

c. **Executive Presbytery.** The presence of a simple majority of executive presbyters at any meeting of the Executive Presbytery shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Defined

a. **Executive officers.** The executive officers shall be the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the secretary-treasurer.

b. **District officers.** The district officers shall be the executive officers, the executive presbyters, the district presbyters, and the general presbyters.

c. **Division directors.** Division directors shall be those persons elected in the manner described in the bylaws relating to each division to administer the various authorized divisions of ministry of the district.

Section 2. Qualifications

a. The executive and district officers of the North Texas District Council shall be ordained ministers; they shall be persons of mature experience and ability whose lives and ministries are above question. They shall have been members of the North Texas District Council for at least one full year prior to their election, and shall fully cooperate with all of the district policies.

b. District presbyters shall be residents of the section they are to represent.

c. Regional presbyters shall be a member of the region they represent and be an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God.

Section 3. Nominations and Elections

a. Nomination and Election Process for District Superintendent, Assistant District Superintendent, and District Secretary-Treasurer

(1) The District office will send a letter to each authorized voting constituent by March 1, detailing the office to be filled, constitutional qualifications, and unique responsibilities of that office. A ballot and envelope will accompany this letter whereby each authorized voting constituent may submit a nomination by secret ballot.

(2) A nomination shall be placed on the approved ballot and sealed in an envelope. This envelope shall be placed in the envelope which has been provided by the District with the authorized voting constituent's signature on the outside of the envelope and then mailed to the office of the District Secretary/Treasurer. If the nomination is from a church delegate, a ballot may be filled out and sealed in an envelope. This envelope will then be placed in the envelope provided by the District and the name of the church and signature of the Lead Pastor must be on the outside of this envelope, thereby verifying the delegate's right to vote. All nominations must be received in the District Secretary/Treasurer's office by April 1 or postmarked by April 1.

(3) All of the names will be given to a Teller committee which will count the nominations. The Teller committee is to be appointed by the Superintendent.

(4) The Executive Presbytery shall appoint a committee of at least six Ordained Assemblies of God ministers to serve on the Information Committee. At least three of these members shall be ordained ministers within the District who are not District Officials.

(5) All qualified individuals receiving a minimum of ten (10) votes then moves to the consideration phase. An initial phone call to the potential nominee will be placed to inquire of their willingness to meet with the Information Committee. If the potential nominee does not desire to continue with the process, the individual may decline to meet with the Information Committee.

(6) If the individual decides to continue the process then a meeting is established with the Information Committee. The Information Committee will clearly inform the potential nominee of the qualifications and responsibilities of the office. This will allow the potential nominee the opportunity to discover information which will enable the individual to determine God's direction regarding allowing their name to be placed in nomination.

(7) All names of potential nominees who receive a minimum of ten votes will be displayed at District Council as a verification of the nominating ballot. Then, only the potential nominees who have agreed to allow their name to be placed in nomination will be presented and voted upon. If a name receives 2/3 of all votes cast in the nomination process, then the nominee will be elected.

(8) A two-thirds majority of all votes cast shall constitute an election. If no election is reached after the casting of the second elective ballot, the three nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. If no election has been declared after the casting of the third elective ballot, the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon.

(9) The superintendent and the secretary-treasurer shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot on an odd numbered year as dictated by the term of office, and the assistant superintendent shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot on an even numbered year as dictated by the term of office.

b. The following requirements shall apply to the nomination and election of all other district officers with the exception of presbyters at the sectional level. Only nominees receiving 5 or more votes on the nominating ballot will be published on the list of nominees presented to the voting constituency.

A two-thirds majority of all votes cast shall constitute an election. If no election is reached after the casting of the second elective ballot, the three nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. If no election has been declared after the casting of the third elective ballot, the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon.

c. Two nonresident executive presbyters shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot on an even numbered year as dictated by the term of office from the sectional presbyters by the District Presbytery. A two-thirds majority of all votes cast shall constitute an election.

d. General presbyters shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot on an odd numbered year as dictated by the term of office. A two-thirds majority of all votes cast shall be necessary to constitute an election. The voters, from those displayed, shall write the name they desire on the ballot. If no election has been reached after three ballots, the four names receiving the highest number of votes shall be balloted upon.

e. The regional executive presbyters shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot in their respective regional councils on an even numbered year as dictated by the term of office. A two-thirds majority of all votes cast shall be required for an election. If no election is reached after the casting of the second elective ballot, the three nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. If no election has been decided after the casting of the third elective ballot, the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. The one elected shall be submitted to the Executive Presbytery to be ratified and seated. The District Council reserves the right to review any action of a section, a region, or the District Presbytery regarding the election and ratification of a regional presbyter.

f. Nominees to the General Council Executive Presbytery

(1) *General Council nonresident executive nominees.* The North Texas District at its annual meeting prior to the General Council session shall nominate two ordained ministers of mature experience and ability, whose lives and ministries are above question, one of whom is not an elected full-time district official, to be presented to the General Council as nominees from its area.

(2) *Additional representation.* The North Texas District at its annual meeting prior to the General Council session shall nominate two individuals from its district to the Executive Presbytery, one who is an ordained minister under 40 years of age at the time of election and one ordained female (no age requirement). From the nominees the General Presbytery shall select and submit to the General Council four names of ordained pastors under 40 years of age at the time of election and four names of ordained females (no age requirement). The candidates shall be presented to the General Council in session and voted on by secret ballot. A two-thirds vote shall be required to elect.

They shall be elected as nominees to the General Council by a two-thirds majority of all votes cast. If no election has been decided after the casting of the second elective ballot, the three nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. If no election has been decided after the casting of the third elective ballot, the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. Nominations and elections shall be by secret ballot.

g. Sectional presbyters shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot in their respective sections on an even numbered year as dictated by the term of office. A two-thirds majority of all votes cast shall be required for an election. If no election is reached after the casting of the second elective ballot, the three nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. If no election has been decided after the casting of the third elective ballot, the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. The one elected shall be submitted to the Executive Presbytery to be ratified and seated. The District Council reserves the right to review any action of a section, region, or the Executive Presbytery regarding the election and ratification of a sectional presbyter.

h. No office shall be filled by acclamation.

i. In the event the number of votes required to elect is received by a qualified candidate on the nominating ballot, an election shall be decided.

j. In the event that an election has not been decided for a district or sectional office requiring a two-thirds majority by the sixth elective ballot, the election shall be decided by a simple majority on the seventh elective ballot.

Section 4. Vacancies

a. District Superintendent, Assistant District Superintendent, and District Secretary-Treasurer

(1) If a vacancy occurs while District Council is in session, then nominations shall be received for the vacated office by secret ballot from those at the District Council. All individuals who receive ten nominations shall have their names displayed. Potential nominees will then decide if they desire to allow their name to go to the Information Committee.

* If they allow their name to move forward in the process, the Chair will inform them where they need to go to schedule a meeting with the Information Committee.

After meeting with the Information Committee, the names of the nominees will be presented to the District Council for election.

**The Chair will determine the best manner for potential nominees to withdraw their name. The Chair can decide this based upon time and the number of potential nominees.*

(2) If an Executive Office is vacated when the District Council is not in session the Executive Presbytery will temporarily allocate the responsibilities of the vacated office to ensure the continuation of the ongoing functions of the office.

(3) A special session of the District Council will be called in accordance with our Constitution (ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS, Section 1. District Council, b. Special Sessions.) to fill an unexpired term of an Executive Official. In cases where an office is vacated within ninety days prior to a regularly scheduled District Council, the office shall remain vacant until such District Council is held and no Special Session District Council shall be called.

(4) Within ten days of an announced vacancy, the nomination process will start and a letter will be mailed out including a date and time for a Special Session District Council to be held within forty-five days from the vacancy of the office. Should the office be vacated by death, the Special Session District Council shall be held within seventy-five days of the death.

(5) Nominations will be received by the District Secretary/Treasurer's office up to thirty days after the date of the nominating letter.

(6) Upon the election of an Executive Official, their term shall begin no later than thirty days after their election.

(7) Length of the term of office shall be determined by the Special Session District Council, with a recommendation from the District Presbytery being given at said Council.

b. Elected General Presbyters.

(1) In the event the elected general presbyter shall move to another district or shall vacate his office for any other reason, the District Presbytery shall appoint one to serve as elected general presbyter until that office is regularly filled at the next meeting of the district council.

(2) In the event an elected general presbyter is unable to attend a duly called session of the General Presbytery by reason of illness or any other emergency, the District Executive Presbytery shall select an alternate, provided he meets the ordinary requirements for general presbyter. He shall have all the rights and privileges of a regularly elected general presbyter. Certification of an alternate general presbyter shall be presented to the general secretary in accordance with the General Council bylaws.

c. District Presbyters. In the event of a vacancy in the office of a district presbyter, the district superintendent shall call a special business meeting of the voting constituency of that section for the purpose of electing a successor.

d. Regional Executive Presbyters. In the event of a vacancy in the office of a regional executive presbyter, the district superintendent shall call a special business meeting of the voting constituency of that region for the purpose of electing a successor.

ARTICLE III. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Duties of the District Superintendent

The duties of district superintendent shall include the following:

- a. Emphasize and implement the fourfold mission of the church working in cooperation with the General Council.
- b. Be superintendent of all work on the field conducted in behalf of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God.
- c. Supervise all the work of the district office and be an ex-officio member of all committees and boards.
- d. Act as president of the corporation in all legal matters and shall be authorized to sign all official and legal documents.
- e. Preside at all sessions of the District Presbytery and the District Council and receive all communications directed to these bodies.
- f. Preside at all sessions of the Executive Presbytery and the Credentials Committee and receive all communications directed to these bodies.
- g. Administer discipline in all cases when requested to do so by the Credentials Committee or the District Presbytery.
- h. Conduct sectional councils annually and other conventions and conferences as agreed upon in consultation with the Executive Presbytery and District Presbytery.
- i. Be authorized to perform any other functions usual and customary as presiding officer or such as may be directed by the District Council, the District Presbytery, or the Executive Presbytery.

Section 2. Duties of the Assistant District Superintendent

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

- a. Assist the district superintendent.
- b. Serve as vice president of the corporation and preside at meetings in the absence of, or at the request of, the district superintendent.
- c. Act as the director of the Division of Missions.
- d. Be an ex-officio member of all committees and boards.
- e. Perform any other functions as are customary to his office, or as may be directed by the District Council, the District Presbytery, the Executive Presbytery, or the district superintendent.

Section 3. Duties of the Secretary-Treasurer

As Secretary

The duties of the district secretary shall include the following:

- a. Make and keep true records of the proceedings of the North Texas District Council and shall publish the same as approved and directed by the Executive Presbytery.
- b. Be secretary of the corporation, the custodian of the official seal, and shall be authorized to sign all official and legal documents.
- c. Issue credentials under the direction of the Credentials Committee and shall keep a record of all credentialed ministers and assemblies in the district.
- d. Serve as secretary of the District Presbytery, the Executive Presbytery, and the Credentials Committee; and he shall keep accurate minutes of the deliberation of these bodies.
- e. Be authorized to edit and prepare for distribution the minutes of the meeting of the District Presbytery after examination and approval thereof by the Executive Presbytery.
- f. Be an ex-officio member of all committees and boards.
- g. Perform such other functions as are customary or as may be directed by the District Council, the District Presbytery, the Executive Presbytery, or the district superintendent.

As Treasurer

The duties of the district treasurer shall include the following:

- h. Serve as treasurer of the corporation and shall be custodian of all funds.
- i. Keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements, conducting the work of his office according to accepted business methods.
- j. Give reports as may be requested by the District Council, the District Presbytery, or the Executive Presbytery.
- k. Give bond to an amount not less than \$15,000.
- l. Be responsible to have the treasurer's books audited annually by a competent auditor and shall have the audit published and distributed to the district constituency.
- m. Perform such other functions as are customary to the office of treasurer or as may be directed by the District Council, the District Presbytery, the Executive Presbytery, or the district superintendent.

Section 4. Duties of the Executive Presbytery

- a. The Executive Presbytery shall serve as the trustees of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God. They shall be empowered to supervise and have general oversight of all divisions.

They shall be authorized to act for the corporation in all matters that affect its interest while the District Council is not in session, subject to the provisions of paragraph f. Section 4. of this article.

b. The Executive Presbytery shall have the right and duty of interpreting policy originating in the legislation of the District Council or the District Presbytery. Such interpretations shall be final unless reversed at the next meeting of the body in which the legislation originated.

c. They shall have the right to buy, take, lease or otherwise acquire, own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of real property; to borrow monies as deemed necessary and to issue bonds, trust deeds, mortgages, debentures, and notes; and to enter into contracts; all as may seem expedient and proper in the furtherance of the work of the North Texas District Council, subject to provisions of paragraph f. Section 4. of this article.

d. To hold in trust such funds as may be committed to them as trustees, or to dispose of the same as may be directed.

e. All properties of the corporation shall be bought, taken, sold, transferred, mortgaged, leased, assigned, or conveyed in the corporate name upon authorization by the Executive Presbytery, as trustees thereof, and the superintendent and secretary shall be authorized and they hereby are authorized to execute all documents pertaining to such transactions.

f. In all matters of great importance, the Executive Presbytery shall communicate with the members of the District Presbytery before final action shall be taken. The Executive Presbytery shall be amenable to the District Presbytery.

g. The Executive Presbytery shall arrange for and announce the meetings of the District Council, with consideration for the interests of the Fellowship as a whole.

h. The Executive Presbytery shall arrange for its own meetings and call special business meetings of the District Presbytery when deemed advisable.

i. They shall constitute or provide for the Board of Directors for all subsidiary corporations of the North Texas District Council.

j. They shall act as the District Credentials Committee and shall supervise all matters pertaining to disciplinary action. (See Article X of the bylaws.)

k. They shall have the oversight of all district publications.

l. They shall administer the District Church Loan Fund program.

Section 5. Duties of the General Presbyters

a. They shall be members of the Executive and District Presbytery.

b. They shall represent the North Texas District Council to the General Council.

c. They shall represent the General Council to the Fellowship of the District Council.

d. They shall serve on the Board of Regents of Southwestern Assemblies of God University.

Section 6. Duties of the Regional Executive Presbyter

- a. The Regional Executive Presbyter will fulfill the responsibilities as a member of the Executive Presbytery (Article III, Section 4).
- b. Shall direct district church multiplication and health strategies in the region of responsibility.
- c. Shall have oversight of sectional presbyters and sectional committees in the region of responsibility.
- d. Shall be responsible for training sectional presbyters and sectional committees.
- e. Shall have regular meetings for vision casting from Superintendent and relationship building.
- f. Shall have oversight of increasing the number of sections within their region as needed.
- g. Shall have oversight of discipline issues within their region.
- h. Shall have oversight of credential candidates within their region.
- i. Shall be accountable to the Executive Committee for the fulfillment of duties.

Section 7. Duties of the District Presbytery

- a. The District Presbytery shall be empowered to act in all matters which pertain to the proper functioning of divisions and institutions in the district or to delegate such duties to the Executive Presbytery while the District Council is not in session. The decisions of the District Presbytery shall be final unless reversed by the District Council.
- b. They shall meet at least twice annually, date and location to be determined by the Executive Presbytery.
- c. Any six members of the District Presbytery shall have the prerogative of calling a special session of the District Presbytery by presenting a signed request to the district superintendent who shall determine the time of such meeting in consultation with the Executive Presbytery.
- d. The District Presbytery shall act as a Court of Appeal for the reviewing of testimony given in all hearings relating to credentialed ministers. Its decision shall be forwarded as a recommendation to the General Council Credentials Committee.
- e. The District Presbytery shall determine the salaries and allowances of all elected officers and directors of the District Council. A salaries committee of three district presbyters shall be appointed to two year terms by the Executive Presbytery for the purpose of making a review of such salaries and allowances. It shall present its recommendations to the District Presbytery.
- f. They shall be responsible to develop and maintain a district Policy and Procedure Manual to provide guidelines for and coordination of all district and sectional administrative operations.
- g. The District Presbytery is authorized to make editorial changes in the District Bylaws to bring them into alignment with the General Council Bylaws and will submit a report summarizing the changes made to the next meeting of the North Texas District Council.

h. They shall elect a layperson representative to serve on the Southwestern Assemblies of God University Board of Regents with the members of the General Presbytery.

i. They shall elect district representatives to serve on the Board of Directors of the Pleasant Hills Children's Home.

Section 8. Duties of the Sectional Presbyter

The duties of the sectional presbyter shall include:

- a. Promote and supervise the work of the Fellowship in his section.
- b. Lead the sectional committee in interviewing and processing all sectional candidates for ministerial credentials.
- c. Supervise the missions program in his section in cooperation with the district missions program and shall assist in missionary itineration.
- d. Encourage and facilitate church planting and revitalization under the supervision of the regional executive presbyter.
- e. Assist the regional executive presbyter in the investigation of charged offenses and in the administering of discipline when such action is warranted.
- f. Assist in leading churches through the process of becoming a General Council affiliated assembly.
- g. Chair sectional meetings and be an ex-officio member of all committees of the section.
- h. Encourage the ministers to support the district spiritually, morally, and financially.
- i. Make periodic reports to the regional presbyter.
- j. Be authorized to perform any other official and/or legal function customary to the office of sectional presbyter as an official representative of the district, or as may be directed by the Executive Presbytery.
- k. In the event a sectional presbyter is elected as a regional presbyter, that position as sectional presbyter shall be vacated and an election will be held to fill the un-expired term.

ARTICLE IV. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

a. **Appointment of standing committees.** Standing committees shall be appointed by the district superintendent in cooperation with the District Presbytery as necessity may require. All such committees shall serve for the designated time or until their purpose is accomplished. When vacancies occur in standing committees, the Executive Presbytery shall be authorized to fill such vacancies.

b. **Credentials Committee.** The district Executive Presbytery shall constitute the Credentials Committee. It shall examine all applications for credentials and provide for an ordination and dedication service for all accepted candidates. It may delegate the routine work of the Credentials Committee to the sectional committees or regional committees as appropriate.

c. **Resolutions Committee**

(1) *Procedure for presentation of resolutions.* All resolutions for presentation to the District Council, except emergency measures, and any business growing out of Executive Presbytery and District Presbytery meetings just prior to the District Council shall be processed in the following manner:

(a) Resolutions that affect the constitution, shall be presented in writing to the Executive Presbytery 120 days prior to the District Council session, and the Resolutions Committee shall prepare the resolutions in printed form and mail them to the voters and churches 60 days prior to the District Council session.

(b) All other resolutions shall be presented to the district secretary's office 60 days prior to the District Council session, and the Resolutions Committee shall prepare the resolutions in printed form and mail them to the voters and churches 30 days prior to the District Council session.

(c) Resolutions of an emergency nature can be presented at the District Council, but must be determined to be appropriate by a two-thirds vote of the Resolutions Committee and then must be decided by a two-thirds vote of the District Council.

(d) Resolutions that result from action taken in the Executive Presbytery or District Presbytery meetings just prior to the District Council are exempt from the time restrictions for presentation to the District Council.

(2) *Sponsorship policy.* All resolutions presented to the Resolutions Committee shall be signed by the author or sponsor. When a resolution is presented for the consideration of the District Council in session, the author, sponsor, or a spokesman therefore shall be expected to be the first speaker on behalf of the resolution.

(3) *Appropriateness of resolutions.* The Resolutions Committee shall, by a two-thirds vote, determine the appropriateness of a proposed resolution, including the following criteria in its decision:

(a) Possible conflict with the corporate charter, constitution, or bylaws.

(b) Those proposals absurd in substance.

(4) *Right of sponsor.* If the Resolutions Committee determines that a resolution is inappropriate, it shall so advise the author and shall apprise the author of the right to present the proposed resolution to the house for determination as to appropriateness.

(5) *Format of presentation.* The Resolutions Committee shall:

(a) Put resolutions in proper form.

- (b) Eliminate duplication of similar resolutions.
- (c) Offer in a logical sequence all resolutions relating to a specific subject.

d. **The District Media Committee.** This committee will be under the direction of the executive officers and district presbytery to assist in the timely release of information related to the activities and actions of the district council in session and other district wide efforts.

Section 2. Other Committees

Other committees may be appointed by the district superintendent in cooperation with the Executive Presbytery or the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE V. REGIONAL COUNCILS

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of the regional councils shall be to:

- a. Administer district policies and directives within the region.
- b. Afford opportunity for ministerial fellowship and counsel within the region.
- c. Promote all district activities and ministry.
- d. Promote intra-sectional projects, training, and fellowship.

Section 2. Boundaries

a. **Geographical divisions.** The North Texas District Council shall be divided geographically into regional councils.

REGION ONE: North Central

REGION TWO: Central

REGION THREE: South Central

REGION FOUR: West

REGION FIVE: South East

REGION SIX: North East

b. **Alterations of boundaries.** The Executive Presbytery is authorized to alter regional boundaries.

c. **Creation of new regions.** The Executive Presbytery is authorized to create new regions.

Section 3. Representation

Each region shall be represented on the Executive Presbytery by the regional presbyter elected from its regional membership.

Section 4. Meetings

a. **Annual council.** (See Article VIII. Section 2 of the constitution.)

b. **Regional meetings.** Regional leadership shall work in close harmony with the district leadership in scheduling district sponsored meetings in the region.

c. **Other meetings.** Each region shall have the prerogative to provide for such meetings as may be necessary for the administration and promotion of its responsibilities and ministries.

Section 5. Regional Presbytery

a. **Qualifications**

(1) Regional Presbytery shall be comprised of the regional executive presbyter and the sectional presbyters of that region.

ARTICLE VI. SECTIONAL COUNCILS

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of the sectional councils shall be to:

- a. Administer district policies and directives within the section.
- b. Afford opportunity for ministerial fellowship and counsel.
- c. Promote all district activities and ministry.
- d. Promote intraassembly fellowship.

Section 2. Boundaries

a. **Geographical divisions.** The North Texas District Council shall be divided geographically into sectional councils.

b. **Relational Sections.** The North Texas District Council may be divided into Relational Sections as approved by the Executive Presbytery.

c. **Alterations of boundaries.** The Executive Presbytery is authorized to alter sectional boundaries, or form new sections, subject to the following provisions:

(1) Proposed changes may be initiated by the regional presbytery or any concerned church(es) or either of the sections affected by the proposed alterations.

(2) The Executive Presbytery may proceed to act on any proposed change, providing both affected sections and all affected churches support the proposed alteration.

(3) Should any affected church or either section involved object to the proposed boundary change, the Executive Presbytery will not act until it receives a report of an investigative committee comprised of five presbyters (exclusive of the two involved presbyters) named by the district superintendent.

(4) When proposed sectional alterations result in the formation of new sections or in the dissolution of existing ones, the action of the Executive Presbytery must be approved by the District Presbytery.

d. Affiliation of churches

(1) Each church shall be affiliated with the section in which it is located.

(2) Churches located in areas with more convenient access to fellowship with a neighboring section may request the Executive Presbytery to approve their affiliation with a section other than the geographical section in which they are located. Any action of the Executive Presbytery in regard to such requests may be appealed to the District Presbytery by either the affected church or either of the affected sections.

Section 3. Ministerial Membership

a. Ministerial membership of each section shall include all credentialed ministers who reside within its geographical boundaries. (See Article VIII. Section 4. b. of the bylaws.)

b. Should a credentialed minister actively serve a local church as pastor or in any ministerial position, the minister shall be considered to be a member of the section in which the church is located, irrespective of the minister's residence. (For sectional council memberships, see Article X. Section 1. of the constitution.)

Section 4. Representation

Each section shall be represented on the District Presbytery by the presbyter elected from its sectional membership.

Section 5. Meetings

a. **Annual council.** (See Article VIII. Section 2 of the constitution.)

b. **District/sectional meetings.** Sectional leadership shall work in close harmony with the district leadership in scheduling district sponsored meetings in the section.

c. **Other meetings.** Each section shall have the prerogative to provide for such meetings as may be necessary for the administration and promotion of its responsibilities and ministries.

Section 6. Sectional Committees

a. Qualifications

(1) Committeepersons must be ordained ministers of mature experience and proven ability. They may serve in any local ministerial capacity.

(2) They must have been a member of the North Texas District Council for six months and be a member of the section served by the committee.

(3) They must have a validated record of financial support to their section, the District Council, and the General Council.

b. Nomination, election, and term of office

(1) Committeepersons shall be elected at the annual sectional council.

(2) Nominations shall be by secret ballot.

(3) Voting shall be by secret ballot; a simple majority being required for an election. In the event the required number of votes needed to elect is received by a qualified candidate on the nominating ballot an election shall be decided. If no election is decided after the casting of the second elective ballot, when two positions remain open, the four nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. If only one position remains, then the three nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. If no election has been decided after the casting of the third elective ballot, if two positions remain open, the three nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further voted upon. If only one position remains open, the two nominees receiving the highest number shall be voted upon.

(4) Terms of committeepersons shall be for two years and shall be effected by approximately one-half of the committee being elected annually.

(5) No office shall be filled by acclamation.

c. Vacancies. Vacancies in the committee shall be filled by special elections in a sectional meeting.

d. Duties of sectional committees

(1) They shall serve as an advisory board to the presbyter, helping in implementing and promoting the total sectional program.

(2) They shall assist the presbyter in interviewing and processing all sectional candidates for ministerial credentials.

(3) They shall assist the presbyter in the investigation of charged offenses and in the administering of discipline when such action is warranted.

(4) They shall serve as the official board for all district council affiliated churches except those branch churches established at the initiative of a General Council affiliated church. In this case, oversight shall be the responsibility of the sponsoring church.

(5) They shall elect one from the committee to serve as secretary-treasurer for the section whose work shall be directed by the presbyter.

Section 7. Finances

a. **Revenue.** Each sectional office shall be supported from the tithes and offerings of its constituent members, with the recommendation that:

(1) Each minister of the section shall contribute a minimum of 15% of his/her tithe to the North Texas District Office designated as sectional tithe/dues, and the district shall be responsible to return tithe/dues designated for the Section where they reside, no less than once a month. Any variance in this practice must be approved in writing from the office of the District Secretary/Treasurer.

(2) Each member church shall contribute at least one offering per year to the sectional office for its general operation.

b. Disbursements

(1) Disbursement of any monies received into the sectional treasury shall be made by the sectional treasurer as authorized by the presbyter and committee, in accord with the policies established by the District Presbytery.

(2) Each section is amenable to the District Presbytery in all fiscal matters and shall file a financial report with the district office annually.

(3) It is recommended that each section provide regular remuneration and reimbursement to its presbyter and committee for their service.

Section 8. Sectional Financial Reports

The sectional secretary-treasurer shall mail a full financial written report with the end-of-the-year contribution receipts. Such reports shall be mailed no later than January 31.

ARTICLE VII. LOCAL ASSEMBLIES

A. GENERAL COUNCIL AFFILIATED ASSEMBLIES

Section 1. Definition

A General Council affiliated assembly is one that has applied for and received a Certificate of Affiliation from the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 2. Requirements for Affiliation

Churches desiring to affiliate with the General Council shall meet the requirements as set forth in Article XI. Section 1. paragraph a. of the constitution.

Section 3. Procedure for Affiliation

a. A church desiring affiliation shall forward its request to the presbyter of the section in which it is situated. The presbyter shall provide an approved application form and procedural instructions.

b. There shall be a duly called meeting in which the assembly shall be set in order. Such meeting shall be presided over by an officer of the district who shall assist the assembly in the adoption of a constitution and bylaws acceptable to the district (Article XI. Section 1. paragraph a. of the constitution).

c. A non-Assemblies of God church which desires to affiliate with the General Council shall request guidance and assistance from the office of the sectional presbyter.

d. The district Executive Presbytery shall determine if an assembly has reached a state of growth, maturity, and stability qualifying it for affiliation with the General Council.

e. Upon approval by the Executive Presbytery, the application for affiliation shall be forwarded to the general secretary. Recognition of affiliation shall be completed when the assembly receives a Certificate of Affiliation from the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 4. Prerogatives and Privileges

a. Autonomy

(1) A General Council affiliated assembly shall have recognition and be entitled to all the privileges granted by the constitution and bylaws of the General Council. It shall have 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 if it does not conflict with the General Council or the North Texas District Council constitution, bylaws, and policies.

(2) Affiliation with the General Council shall not destroy the rights of the assembly nor interfere with its sovereignty.

(3) A General Council affiliated assembly shall have the right to receive into its fellowship members who shall qualify for membership according to scriptural principles and the standards determined by the North Texas District Council in cooperation with the local assembly and shall be empowered to administer discipline to the same according to the Scriptures and its bylaws.

(4) A General Council affiliated assembly shall have the right to acquire and hold title to property in its corporate name or in the name of its trustees and their successors in office.

b. Available ministries

(1) A General Council affiliated assembly shall have access to the general oversight and pastoral care of North Texas District Council officers who shall lend assistance and give advice when called upon for that purpose. It shall be entitled to aid from the North Texas District Council officers in preparing and adopting constitution and bylaws for the assembly, in conducting special business meetings, electing officers, and choosing a pastor.

(2) A General Council affiliated assembly shall have access to General Council and North Texas District Council approved institutions, such as colleges, divisional ministries, and publications.

(3) The services of the General Council and the North Texas District Council are available to assist the General Council affiliated assembly in dealing with any of its problems, either internal or external, when requested by the pastor and/or majority of the official board or by a petition signed by 30 percent of the voting members.

c. **Representation.** A General Council affiliated assembly shall have the privilege of sending duly appointed and certified delegates to the meetings of the General Council and the North Texas District Council.

d. **Right of appeal**

(1) When an assembly affected by an action executed by a section considers an appeal necessary, the appeal is to be directed to the district Executive Presbytery. Further appeal can be made to the District Presbytery.

(2) When there is a question as to whether or not the assembly has received proper help from the North Texas District, further appeal may be made to the General Council Executive Presbytery and to the General Council General Presbytery.

Section 5. Responsibilities

a. **Adherence to General Council principles and doctrine.** Local assemblies shall 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. **Assemblies of God Total Giving Participation.** A General Council affiliated assembly agrees to participate in the cooperative program of the General Council and the North Texas District Council for the propagation of our distinctive testimony in both home and foreign lands, and to share in such provisions as may be made in the General Council and the North Texas District Council for the maintenance of the Fellowship.

d. **Annual reports.** 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 secretary and the General Council secretary.

e. **Constitution and bylaws.** A General Council affiliated assembly shall file one copy of its constitution and bylaws in the North Texas District office together with one copy of any amendments that shall be adopted.

f. **Safeguarding the assemblies**

(1) *Persons seeking ministry.* Pastors and leaders of assemblies should make proper investigation regarding persons who desire to teach or minister. Use of the platform should be denied until spiritual integrity and reliability have been determined. Since the use of non-Assemblies of God ministers may bring confusion and problems detrimental to the Fellowship, it is recommended that Assemblies of God churches use Assemblies of God ministers. Pastors and district officials should maintain an exchange of information regarding persons unknown to our Fellowship seeking ministry in our assemblies.

(2) *Name of the assembly.* To distinguish our assemblies from other denominations and branches of Pentecostal organizations, and to maintain uniformity in our identity, it is recommended

that each assembly indicate its affiliation with the Assemblies of God by using the Assemblies of God name and/or emblem as a part of its official church name.

(3) An affiliated assembly shall not represent itself as being either independent or nondenominational.

(4) No minister dismissed by the Assemblies of God may be allowed to pastor or have ministry in an Assemblies of God church. Pastors and district officials should maintain an exchange of information regarding dismissed ministers known to be seeking ministry in our assemblies.

g. Transfer of local church membership

(1) *Letter of introduction.* It is recommended that a member who desires to transfer his membership request that a letter of introduction be mailed to the church with which he or she desires to affiliate.

(2) *Acknowledgement of transfer.* It is recommended that the receiving church give an acknowledgement of transfer to the former church.

h. Support

(1) *To District Council.* It is recommended that each local assembly in affiliation with the North Texas District Council support the district ministries with a minimum of two percent of the unrestricted tithes/offerings received through the voluntary support of the assembly. This support shall be designated for disbursement to ministries that benefit the local assemblies of the district, either directly or indirectly; i.e., district divisions of ministry, camp development and operation, scholarships, assistance to assemblies in need, and ministerial enhancement.

(2) *To General Council.* 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. This offering shall be called Fellowship Partners Offering, and shall be included with the Annual Church Ministries Report. It is suggested that each church's minimal offering be based upon its average Sunday morning attendance. A church averaging less than 50 is asked to send \$25 for the year; less than 100 but more than 50, \$50; less than 250 but more than 100, \$100; less than 500 but more than 250, \$250; less than 1,000 but more than 500, \$500; less than 2,000 but more than 1,000, \$1,000; over 2,000, \$2,000.

Section 6. 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 district council in matters of doctrine and conduct (Article XI. Section 1. paragraph d. of the constitution).

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 both the General Council and the district council are available to assist the General Council affiliated church 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 church or a petition

signed by 30 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 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.

Section 7. Church Government

Each General Council affiliated assembly is urged to pattern its constitution and bylaws after the “Suggested Constitution and Bylaws” provided by the Fellowship, giving careful consideration to the following:

a. Pastoral selection procedure

(1) Minister’s procedure

(a) At least one month prior to departure, the pastor should notify the district superintendent, the sectional presbyter, and the local assembly of his or her resignation.

(b) When negotiating with a church board or pulpit committee, the candidate should seek to avoid indulging in or expressing exaggerated claims of personal ability and success, or outspoken expression of divine leading as to the will of God.

(2) Church procedure

(a) The church should first consult the district executive officers and the sectional presbyter for recommendations.

(b) It is recommended that no candidates be considered and voted upon unless endorsed by the district executive officers.

(c) No local assembly shall call a minister to serve as its pastor who is not credentialed with the Assemblies of God without the written approval of the district officary. Care should be taken to impress the local church that this is designed for its protection.

(d) To avoid unnecessary competition, it is recommended that only one minister’s name be presented at a time to the congregation for a “yes” or “no” vote.

(e) It is recommended that the pastor’s initial election be by a two-thirds vote, for a minimum of two years and that reelection be by a majority vote. All voting should be by secret ballot.

b. **Pastoral decorum.** As the undershepherd of Christ and leader of the local flock, the pastor is not to serve the church from a domineering role. Imposed, dictatorial leadership is deemed as unscriptural and unethical (1 Peter 5:13).

c. **The church board.** As an advisory body, serving the local assembly, church boards are not to assume the role of a dictatorial body. Arrogant, noncooperative conduct shall be deemed unscriptural and unethical.

(1) Local assemblies and pastors are urged to refrain from appointing, electing, or retaining on their church board, such persons who are noncooperative or who do not meet the Biblical qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and Acts 6. However, a divorce determined to be a pre-conversion divorce should not prevent one divorced and remarried from serving if they meet other qualifications.

(2) The assembly is encouraged to avoid placing credentialed ministers on its board, except in cases where qualified laymen are not available. Should the church require the service of the credentialed minister as a member of its board, and problems arise affecting the pastoral leadership of the church, the minister must immediately disqualify himself or herself as a member of the board, lest his or her ministerial status be brought into question.

Section 8. Intervention in Local Assemblies

a. **Right of intervention.** Inasmuch as the approval of an assembly is the prerogative of the District Council and the General Council, and is indicated by the issuance of Certificates of Affiliation, the District has the right to request meetings with the assembly if for some reason its status is in question. The General Council has the right to withdraw its certificate of affiliation if deemed necessary.

b. **Circumstances requiring intervention.** While the right of the local assembly to sovereignty is a basic General Council principle, it is also recognized that the assembly has a responsibility to the District and the General Council and both have a responsibility to the assembly. Some circumstances which may require intervention by the District Presbytery are:

- (1) Prevailing confusion or division resulting from disruption.
- (2) Assumption of dictatorial authority by the pastor or the church board.
- (3) Prolonged absence of pastoral leadership.
- (4) Evident danger of property loss.
- (5) Deviation from the Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths, principles, and practices.
- (6) Attempt to disaffiliate from the Assemblies of God fellowship.

c. Intervention procedure

(1) In seeking to assist the assembly in such matters, official representatives of the North Texas District have the right to meet with the board or voting members, or the district executive officers may be extended an invitation for such purposes by (a) a request of the pastor, (b) an action of a majority of the board, or (c) a petition of thirty (30) percent of the active voting members.

(2) Before intervention procedures are initiated by any one of the foregoing groups, certain scriptural principles should be followed. Thirty (30) percent of the active voting members may petition the District for help, with the petitioning process and delivery to the district council taking no more than 30 days in total to complete. When district officers receive such requests, it is recommended they first verify that scriptural principles of reconciliation, such as those found in Matthew 18:15-17 and I Timothy 5:19 have been reasonably attempted by the requesting party in situations involving interpersonal conflict.

(3) When a proper investigation by the sectional presbyter and committee indicates that circumstances warrant intervention, an official representative of the district may declare the assembly to be under district supervision either by public announcement or by written statement to the pastor and/or church board. Such action is understood to be an emergency measure to preserve the assembly in its proper and scriptural order until the condition is resolved and the church returned to its previous status by the Executive Presbytery.

Section 9. Guidelines of Minimal Membership

a. If a General Council affiliated church is unable to meet any of the criteria for affiliation as set forth in the Constitution, Article XI, Section 1, paragraph a, it shall seek the assistance of the district officers for help in maintaining the minimal requirements for General Council affiliation. The district may use any means prescribed by its 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.

b. The church shall remain in district affiliated status until it again meets the requirements for affiliation as a General Council assembly.

c. When the assembly meets such requirements, a request for General Council affiliation shall be filed with the sectional presbyter for appropriate processing.

Section 10. New Assemblies

The planting of new churches shall be a priority goal of the North Texas District Council. 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, sections, and the district council. The executive presbytery, the district presbytery, or sectional committees, 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 presbytery, and the decision of the district presbytery may be appealed to the General Council Executive Presbytery, whose decision shall be final.

Section 11. 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 shall seek to exercise strong and wise leadership in ascertaining the facts and attempt to preserve Assemblies of God adherents for the Fellowship. Within the bounds of ethical principles, sound doctrine, and district policy, the North Texas District shall attempt to retain any meritorious group within the Assemblies of God.

b. **Status of minister.** Circumstances of the occasion shall 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 wrong conduct and wrong attitudes resulting in a church split, the District Presbytery shall deal appropriately with the minister as provided in Article XI of these bylaws.

Section 12. Church Property

a. Location

(1) Property being considered for use and/or development as a site for an Assemblies of God church, temporarily or permanently, is subject to approval of the sectional presbyter and committee.

(2) The sectional presbyter and committee shall give preference to established churches desiring to relocate by directing them to sites which will best serve the needs of the local church and the expansion plans of the section.

(3) In the event the pastor and/or church is dissatisfied with the site recommendations of the sectional officers, the decision may be appealed to the Executive Presbytery. Should dissatisfaction persist, further appeal may be made to the District Presbytery whose decision shall be final.

(4) Merging of churches. Assemblies shall be expected to seek approval from the sectional committee and the Executive Presbytery before negotiating a merger with another assembly.

b. **Funding.** Methods and management of financing required for the purchase, development, and improvement of any properties utilized by the local church shall be conducted in the highest possible degree of Christian ethics and integrity.

(1) It is recommended that each General Council affiliated assembly and/or its pastor shall consult with the district officary before entering loan agreements, bond programs, or other methods of financing which obligate the church and its assets in major property acquisition, building, remodeling, or development.

(2) Such consultation is deemed to be compatible with the cooperative fellowship agreement in which the church shares and is a safeguard for sound fiscal management.

c. Private ownership and deeds

(1) The North Texas District approves the holding of title to church buildings, schools, institutions, or other properties that are supported by funds solicited for the work of God by properly constituted corporations or by trustees and their successors in office when the assembly is not incorporated.

(2) The North Texas District disapproves the holding of title to such properties by Assemblies of God ministers through private ownership where initiative of action or final authority is not vested in a corporation of the whole, if those properties are supported by funds solicited for the work of God.

(3) Where private ownership exists, it is strongly recommended that a properly incorporated body be formed and title to the property be transferred to that corporation, taking into consideration equity that the title holder may legitimately have. A disregard of this principle and recommendation

shall seriously affect the relationship of the Assemblies of God members involved in such ownership with the District Council and the General Council.

(4) Each assembly shall be expected to use the district suggested forms for the preparation of legal documents such as deeds, articles of incorporation, and constitution and bylaws. It is understood that nothing contained in such instruments shall deprive the assembly of its sovereign rights.

(5) It is recommended that each assembly shall include in its deeds, articles of incorporation, and/or constitution and bylaws the following dissolution clause. In the event said church should cease to exist due to lack of membership or failure of organization; or in the event the congregation should sever its affiliation with the Assemblies of God organization, said property shall become the property of The North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., and the executors and presbyters of said Assemblies of God shall have the right to use and hold said property and dispose of same for the furtherance of the Gospel within the District.

B. NORTH TEXAS DISTRICT AFFILIATED ASSEMBLIES

Section 1. Defined

District Council affiliated assemblies are deemed to be churches in the Fellowship which are amenable to the North Texas District through the supervision of the sectional presbyter and committee where the assembly is located (Article XI. Section 2 paragraph a. of the constitution) or churches established at the initiative of and sponsored by a General Council affiliated assembly. They have been entered into such classification as:

- a. Projects within the North Texas District which are supported wholly or in part by the district U.S. missions funds;
- b. Churches which are under district supervision, but are not receiving financial support from district U.S. missions funds;
- c. Churches which may become dependent upon the district because of inability to govern their own affairs or the inability to meet all of their financial obligations;
- d. Assemblies which do not meet the membership requirements of the General Council affiliated assembly; (All District affiliated assemblies with capability for General Council affiliation shall be encouraged to make application for such affiliation.) and/or
- e. Branch assemblies which are established by a General Council affiliated assembly.
- f. Established non-Assemblies of God churches desiring to affiliate with the Assemblies of God.

Section 2. Initiative in Establishing New Churches

Initiative may be taken in establishing new assemblies by:

- a. The North Texas District Division of Missions;
- b. Sectional committees in cooperation with the Division of Missions;

c. Established General Council affiliated churches opening branch works or helping responsible persons in cooperation with and by permission of the sectional committee and the Division of Missions; and

d. Concerned Assemblies of God ministers in cooperation with the sectional committee and the district Division of Missions.

Section 3. Procedure for New Church Recognition

a. Persons or churches desiring to establish a new Assemblies of God church shall submit their request and intended plans to the presbyter and committee of the section in which the church is to be located.

b. Procedure shall include approval from the presbyter and committee for location sites, whether temporary or permanent, as well as building and financing plans, naming the assembly and other requirements in accord with the district New Church Evangelism Policy.

c. Should there be disagreement about opening a new church, the Executive Presbytery shall act as a board of mediation.

Section 4. Prerogatives and Privileges

a. North Texas District affiliated churches shall be accorded certain rights and privileges of the Fellowship, including the services of the district officary, division directors, camps, conferences, conventions, and meetings, without the right to vote.

b. The church shall recognize its responsibilities to the Fellowship in maintaining proper standards of order and conduct, and by participating in the various programs provided for the propagation of our distinctive Pentecostal testimony, both at home and abroad (Article XI. Section 2 of the constitution).

c. A district council affiliated assembly shall be requested to keep an up to date record of its membership and a report of the same shall be sent annually, on forms provided, to the office of the district secretary and the general secretary.

Section 5. Sovereignty

a. When a North Texas District affiliated assembly has developed sufficiently in doctrinal standards, and the adherents have matured in Christian experience so they may assume the responsibility for maintaining proper scriptural order, and having at least 20 adults eligible for membership, they may take steps to organize the assembly and to seek recognition as a General Council affiliated assembly.

b. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Presbytery to determine when an assembly has met those conditions qualifying it for appropriate affiliation.

Section 6. Organization and Government

District affiliated assemblies shall be governed by the constitution and bylaws for dependent assemblies provided by the district. Since their rights are subordinated to the district and the sectional committee serves as the church board, they shall function under the corporate umbrella of the North Texas District Council.

If the church is a branch church sponsored by a General Council affiliated church, they shall be governed by the sponsoring church's constitution and bylaws or one they would approve and function under the corporate umbrella of the sponsoring church.

a. Pastor

(1) The pastor shall be appointed by the sectional presbyter and committee to a renewable term of two years and shall be directed to lead the church to a point of sufficient development to warrant recognition as a General Council affiliated assembly.

If the church is a branch church sponsored by a General Council affiliated church, the pastor shall be appointed in a manner decided by the sponsoring church and its local leadership.

(2) Because a pastor under appointment is amenable to the sectional officers, a resignation shall be made to the presbyter.

If the church is a branch church sponsored by a General Council affiliated church, a resignation shall be made to the pastor and leadership of the sponsoring church, and the sectional presbyter shall be notified of the resignation.

(3) The expression of the local assembly regarding appointment of the pastor shall be considered, with the final decision being made by the sectional committee.

If the church is a branch church sponsored by a General Council affiliated church, the pastor shall be confirmed in a manner determined by the sponsoring church.

b. Management. The sectional presbyter and committee shall provide supervisory assistance to the assembly and, as its trustees, shall help in dealing with any of its problems, both internal and external, including providing for pastoral care, appointing an advisory committee, managing its financial responsibilities, and conducting special business meetings. In every case, the assembly will seek the guidance of the sectional officers before entering into any type of financial agreements, which obligate the church or its assets.

If the church is a branch church sponsored by a General Council affiliated church, the sponsoring church shall provide supervisory assistance in all matters of the church's operation whether business matters, providing for an advisory committee, or matters related to the church's ministry.

C. COOPERATING ASSEMBLIES

Provision may be made by district councils and the General Council Executive Presbytery for the status of a cooperating assembly, which would allow churches that subscribe to Article V. Statement of Fundamental Truths of the General Council Constitution to enter into a cooperative status with a district and the General Council on a temporary basis (4-year term, renewable by the request of the local church congregation at the discretion of the district council in cooperation with the General Council Executive Presbytery) before officially affiliating with the district council and the General Council.

D. PARENT AFFILIATED ASSEMBLIES

A Parent affiliated assembly shall be under the supervision of a parenting church, in accordance with the parenting church's constitution and bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII. 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 (renewable by the local church for an additional 2-year term). 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 the applicant to fulfill the fourfold mission of the church (Article V. paragraph 10. of the constitution).
- 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 Constitution and Bylaws.

g. Basic education requirements. Any level of formal academic achievement (diploma or degree) shall not be a requirement for credentials; however, credential applicants shall meet the following criteria:

(1) All applicants are required to be interviewed by the District Credentials Committee or the interviewing committee designated by them, and in preparation for the interview, pass a standard exam approved by 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, preferable, in an endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary school; or in a seminary, college, Bible college, or school approved by the District 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 the Global University of the Assemblies of God, or pass the final examinations in the prescribed courses; or

(4) Be recommended by the District 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 for approval of such candidates are presented from the district to the General Council Credentials Committee and may be granted on a case by case basis.

h. Marriage status. We disapprove of any married persons holding ministerial credentials with The North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God, if either marriage partner has a former companion 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 (I Corinthians 7:10-15), except as hereinafter provided.

i. Ecclesiastical annulments and marriage dissolutions. The Executive Presbytery of the General Council shall have the authority to determine whether an applicant's annulment of a former marriage is consistent with the scriptural position of the Fellowship relating to the granting or holding of ministerial credentials; or, in the case of a divorce or dissolution whether the circumstances would more appropriately be classified as calling for an annulment, or if the divorce occurred prior to conversion. In those cases involving pre-conversion divorce, they shall be decided on an individual basis just as those that deal with annulment are decided. The application for an annulment must be accompanied by clear and satisfactory evidence of an illegal marriage through deception or fraud. Appeals from the decisions of the Executive Presbytery may be made to the General Presbytery.

j. 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 ministry, and/or district and General Council leadership.

k. 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 sectional 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) Take 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 credentials committee for an oral interview.
- (8) Be recommended by the district 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 recognition shall relinquish their ministerial credentials with any other organization, unless an exception is granted by the General Council Credentials Committee upon recommendation of a district council credentials committee for a minister serving as a missionary in this country who holds a credential with a member body of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, or in special and/or unique cases as determined by the District Council Credentials Committee and ratified by the General Council Credentials Committee.

Section 3. Specific Qualifications

a. Residency requirements of applicants. To obtain ministerial credentials through the North Texas District, all applicants must be residents of or hold credentials in the district and appear before its 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 adopted by the district council. It shall be non-transferable (limited to the issuing local church).

c. Certified minister.

(1) *General requirements.* They shall show promise of usefulness in the gospel work. They shall have been a member in an Assemblies of God church for at least one year and submit written recommendation from the local pastor or assembly. Any exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the District Executive Presbytery. They shall devote full or part of their 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 licensed credential 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 outreach. 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 he or she accepts another qualifying assignment. Other limitations are:

(a) The ministry certificate on a provisional basis will be issued for 1 year and shall not be renewed more than two times.

(b) 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.

(1) *Preaching ministry.* Qualifications are as follows:

(a) Clear evidence of a divine call.

(b) Character and preparation suitable for that calling and practical ministry experience.

(c) Evident purpose to devote one's life in service to the proclamation of the gospel.

(d) Membership in an Assemblies of God church for at least one year. Any exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the District Executive Presbytery.

(e) Written recommendation from the local pastor or assembly.

e. Ordained Minister. Qualifications for ordination are outlined in the New Testament Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:17; Titus 1:7-9). In addition:

(1) Applicants must be 23 years of age or older.

(2) They must have met all the requirements 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 two full consecutive years immediately prior thereto.

(4) No minister shall be ordained without the endorsement of the sectional committee of the section of which he or she is a member.

(5) *Residency requirements of applicants.* Applicants must be residents of or hold credentials in the North Texas District. An applicant who has been licensed in another district shall not be approved for ordination until he or she has been a member of this district for at least one year. If the applicant has not been a member of the North Texas District for two full consecutive years, he or she must meet the requirements and secure the endorsement of the officary of the district in which he or she was previously licensed, as well as that of the North Texas District before being approved for ordination.

(6) *Exceptions to residency requirements.* In the event that an applicant has qualified and been approved for ordination by the district of his former residence before being publicly ordained, the North Texas District Credentials Committee may waive the one-year residency requirement and ordain the applicant upon the request or approval of the former district.

(7) 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.

(8) Membership in an Assemblies of God church. Any exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the District Executive Presbytery.

Section 4. Action of the Credentials Committee

a. **Credentialing authority.** The General Council Credentials Committee has delegated to the North Texas District Council the authority to examine, approve, and recommend candidates who qualify as certified ministers, licensed ministers, and ordained ministers. Final approval and issuance of the ministerial credential shall be made by the General Council Credentials Committee. Approved candidates shall be recognized publicly at their sectional councils. Those approved for ordination shall be recognized in the District Council ordination service, which shall include the laying on of hands.

b. **Credentials applications.** All applications for ministerial credentials must be initiated through the District secretary's office. They will then be forwarded for further processing to the appropriate presbyter. (See Article VI. Section 3.)

Section 5. Credentials 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 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. **Renewal fee.** The annual renewal fee for credentialed ministers, except senior-retired ministers, shall be \$65.

c. **Senior-Retired Ministers.** Senior-Retired Ministers shall be exempt from paying an annual renewal fee.

d. **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. In the event a minister does not receive a renewal form by December 1, he or she should notify the district office.

e. **Grace period until January 15.** All who shall have failed to renew their fellowship certificates by mail postmarked on or before December 31 shall be considered delinquent. They shall be required to pay a late fee as determined by the General Presbytery up until January 15, to be divided equally between the district and General Council offices.

f. **Reinstatement of lapsed minister.** Ministers whose renewal applications are not postmarked by January 15 shall be recorded as lapsed as of the expiration date of December 31. They must make application for reinstatement and pay a nonrefundable fee of \$200 (\$50 to the district office, \$50 to the General Council office and \$10 to the sectional office), in addition to the \$65 renewal fee and the \$25 background check fee. These ministers shall not be subject to the minimal time-lapse required of those whose credentials have been terminated for other causes.

g. **Reinstatement of other than dismissed minister.** When a minister who is a member of our Fellowship 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 non-refundable fee as determined by the General Presbytery to be divided between the district and the General Council (See General Council Bylaws Article X, Section 12, paragraph b.)

The district secretary's office shall seek a letter of clearance from the district that processed the termination and, upon receipt of the clearance, the district credentials committee may add its endorsement and forward the application, together with the letter of clearance, to the General Council Credentials Committee for its action.

Section 6. Official List

a. **Active ministers.** An official list of all ministers shall be compiled by the Credentials Committee of The North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God 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 for the current year.

b. **Inactive ministers.** All ministers who shall withdraw from active ministry or shall cease to engage in pastoral, evangelistic, or other full-time ministry shall be expected to notify the district office.

(1) *Definition.* All ministers who have not been actively engaged in viable ministry and proclamation of the gospel over a period of one year shall have their names placed upon the inactive list for the following year.

(2) *Removal of inactive ministers from ministerial list.* When a minister is definitely inactive for two consecutive years, his or her name shall be eliminated from the ministerial list, unless the District Credentials Committee specifically requests otherwise.

(3) *Exceptions.* This shall not apply to those whose inactivity has been caused by the infirmity of old age or ill health; or those engaged in other aspects of full-time ministry such as

headquarters or district workers, educators, ministers of music, ministers of youth, and ministers of Christian education; or those who have reached the age of 60 years; or those ministers who have had 25 years of approved service as credentialed ministers, or those whose spouse is disabled or has retired giving them little opportunity for public ministry.

(4) *Disabled ministers.* A permanently disabled or permanently ill minister whose illness prevents him or her from engaging in active ministry shall be indicated as inactive. The credential status of the disabled minister shall remain unchanged. The annual renewal of his or her credentials shall take place in the regular manner. Disabled ministers thus approved by the district shall not have further obligation of financial support to either the District Council or the General Council.

c. **Restoration to active status.** Should an inactive minister at any time return to active ministry, his or her name may be restored to the active list upon application bearing endorsement by the district officary.

d. **Senior ministers.** In respect and honor to those ministers who have given years of service to the Fellowship, senior status shall automatically be given to all credential holders who have reached the age of 65, whether they continue in full-time ministry or not. Ministers who have reached the age of 65 and are semi-retired or retired may file a request for such status with the district secretary who shall appropriately process the request. All ministers with semiretired or retired status shall be eligible for all of the rights and benefits pertaining thereto.

e. **Terminology**

(1) The term senior-active shall be used for credential holders who continue to serve more than half-time to full-time in the ministry.

(2) The term senior-semiretired shall be used for credential holders who continue to be active, but for half-time or less.

(3) The term senior-retired shall be used for those who have ceased to engage in any regular appointed ministry.

f. **Support of General Council Headquarters.** Senior-active and senior-semiretired ministers shall continue to designate the required amount of support to the General Council Headquarters as set forth in Bylaws Article XIII, Section 1, paragraph c, (1) of the General Council Bylaws. Senior-retired ministers shall be free to distribute as they desire the portion of their tithes previously paid to the General Council.

Section 7. Ministerial Relations

a. **Amenability.** All certified, licensed, and ordained ministers shall be amenable to both the district council and the General Council of the Assemblies of God in matters of doctrine and discipline. (See Bylaws Article XI) All local church credential holders shall be amenable to their local church under guidelines established by the General Presbytery and district council in matters of doctrine and discipline.

b. **Affiliation with district.** All credentialed ministers residing within the North Texas District shall be expected to affiliate with the District Council and work in cooperation with the same except in the case where a minister resides in this district but pastors a church in another district. He or she shall then be required to be a member of the district in which the church is located.

c. **Cooperation with other districts.** While ministers shall be expected to cooperate with other district councils in which they may labor temporarily, it is required that they conform to the financial policy of the North Texas District Council with the exceptions listed in the General Council Bylaws, Article VII, Section 8. paragraph c.

Section 8. Ministerial Ethics

a. **Violation of ministerial courtesy.** All discourteous conduct is disapproved, and all ministers are advised against interfering with pastors in charge of 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.

Any minister who so offends shall be subject to scriptural discipline as an offender by the district officary or by the General Council Executive Presbytery. Such discourtesy will seriously affect the granting of annual fellowship cards and may be the basis for their recall.

b. **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.

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 council 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 considered as having opened the door for censure or charge which may necessitate the recall of their credentials.

c. **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 shall refrain from taking any attitude toward offenders that would tend to nullify the solemn verdict of the brethren entrusted with this responsibility. The offenders shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

d. **Holding office in local assemblies.** (See Article VII. A. Section 7. paragraph c. subparagraph (2)).

Section 9. Transfer of Credentials

a. **Intradistrict transfer.** All ministers, when moving from one section to another within this district, shall be required to notify the presbyter of the section from which they are moving and request that an intradistrict transfer be sent to the presbyter of the section into which they are moving.

b. **Certificate of transfer.** All ministers moving into this district from another district shall be responsible to see that a certificate of transfer is filed with the district secretary. Likewise, a certificate of transfer shall be sent to the district into which a minister moves upon leaving the North Texas District. A

transcript giving helpful information concerning the minister and spouse should accompany the certificate of transfer.

c. **Exceptions.** Exceptions may be made for the following:

- (1) Ministers moving to serve at the Assemblies of God Headquarters.
- (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 Assemblies of God U.S. missionaries or Assemblies of God World missionaries who are on furlough or on temporary assignment in the United States and reside in a district other than their home district.
- (6) Ministers having membership in one district and a mailing address only in another district.
- (7) Students in schools outside their home district.
- (8) Those who are serving in a non-Assemblies of God institution providing:
 - (a) They have a regular scope of ministry which reaches beyond district boundaries.
 - (b) Both districts agree to the exception.
 - (c) The institution is acceptable to both districts.
- (9) Church planters involved in transdistrict ministry.

Section 10. Nondisciplinary 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 Minister, hereinafter referred to as the ministers letter.

(2) *Resigned.* Ministers who elect to remove themselves from the Fellowship shall submit a letter of resignation to the district with which they are affiliated. 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 ministers letter as resigned.

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 VIII, Section 6, paragraph b, his or her name shall be published as inactive in the minister's letter.

(2) *Not renewed.* If in the opinion of the credentials committee a minister's credentials should not be renewed short of disciplinary action, the minister's name shall be published as not renewed in the ministers letter.

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 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.

Section 11. Ministerial Status Changes

All changes in a minister's status are to be reported immediately to the district office, which in turn is to report this information to the office of the general secretary of the General Council, on the Ministerial Status Report form provided by that office.

Section 12. 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, or to prevent the commission of a crime, or if required by law.

ARTICLE IX. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Section 1. Christian Marriage

Marriage was established by God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18, 21-25) and confirmed by Jesus Christ to be a permanent relationship between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6). Because marriage is not only a commitment to a spouse, but also to God (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:9; Ephesians 5:31), a believer should marry only another believer (2 Corinthians 6:14). Christian marriage is a reflection of the love, purity, and permanence between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:23-33).

Even though some marriages may fall short of the biblical ideal (see Article IX, Section 5 of the General Council Bylaws), husbands and wives who devote themselves to God (Ephesians 5:21) and find nurture and instruction in the body of Christ (Hebrews 10:25) can realize the strength and blessing of God in their relationship.

Section 2. Children

Children “are a heritage from the Lord;” therefore, rearing them is to be treated as a sacred trust. God’s strength and wisdom are available on a daily basis in order to bring up children to love and obey God (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

ARTICLE X. 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 strongly affirms that the Scriptures teach a life of “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). However, since sincere commitment to holy living sometimes results in sharp differences of opinion among believers on debatable matters of personal conscience, the Assemblies of God disapproves the practice of pressing these debatable matters of personal conscience upon others (Romans 14:1-4).

b. **Adding conditions to salvation.** The Assemblies of God strongly affirms that salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8,9). Therefore, the Assemblies of God disapproves any teaching or practice that seems to add conditions to salvation (Galatians 3:1-5).

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. **PostTribulation 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 men 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 years' 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 should any of our ministers embrace any of the foregoing eschatological errors, they 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 unregenerated (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 us should refrain from identifying themselves with any of the secret orders which we recognize as essentially of the world, worldly, and we advise any who may have identified themselves with such orders to sever their connections therewith (2 Corinthians 6:17). Furthermore, our 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) *Commonlaw marriage.* We recommend that in no case shall persons be accepted into membership who are known to be living in a commonlaw 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 as he walks 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 (I Corinthians 7:10-15). However, we recommend that all other opportunities for Christian service for which these believers may be qualified be made available to them.

(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 XI 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 companion is still living, unless the case is included in the exceptional circumstances described in the Article X. Section 5. paragraph b.

(2) *Violation of conscience not required.* We realize that the remarrying of such persons included in the exceptive circumstances in Article X. Section 5. paragraph b. 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 dismissed from the Fellowship.

(4) *Counsel.* An Assemblies of God minister is required to counsel applicants for marriage ceremonies with scriptural guidelines for Christian marriage prior to the performing of the ceremony. He 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 companion living unless the divorce occurred prior to 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 (I Corinthians 7:10-15). (See also Article VIII. Section 2. paragraphs h and i).

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 Scripture warns against participation in activity which 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, and fascination or association which lessens one’s affection for spiritual things (Luke 21:34,35; Romans 8:5-8; 12:1,2; 2 Corinthians 6:4-18; 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 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 officary.

Projects or institutions of national scope 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, corporation of sole, closed corporation or any other type of ownership where initiative of action or final authority is not vested in a corporation of the whole. 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. The Ecumenical Movement

The General Council of the Assemblies of God disapproves of ministers or churches participating in any of the modern ecumenical organizations on a local, national, or international level in such a manner as to promote the Ecumenical Movement, because:

a. We believe the basis of doctrinal fellowship of said movement to be so broad that it includes people who reject the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the universality of sin, the substitutionary Atonement, and other cardinal teachings which we understand to be essential to Biblical Christianity.

b. We believe the emphases of the Ecumenical Movement to be at variance with what we hold to be Biblical priorities, frequently displacing the urgency of individual salvation with social concerns.

c. We believe that the combination of many religious organizations into a world superchurch will culminate in the religious Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18.

(This is not to be interpreted to mean that a limitation may be imposed upon any Assemblies of God minister regarding his Pentecostal witness or participation on a local level with interdenominational activities.)

Section 9. 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 10. Accountability in Educational Attribution

a. Attribution. In order to maintain our testimony of quality and integrity in educational credentials 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 of 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 employees 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 insure 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.

ARTICLE XI. 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 it is to be exercised as under a dispensation of mercy. All references to the discipline of ministers within this article of the bylaws relate solely to certified, licensed, and ordained ministers.

Section 2. Causes of Disciplinary Action

Violations of Assemblies of God principles as stated in the General Council Constitution and Bylaws may give cause for disciplinary action by the Credentials Committee. Among such causes for action shall be:

- a. Any moral failure involving sexual misconduct.
- b. Moral failure involving pornography.
- c. Any moral or ethical failure other than sexual misconduct.
- d. General inefficiency in the ministry.
- e. A failure or inability to represent our Pentecostal testimony correctly.
- f. A contentious or noncooperative spirit.
- g. An assumption of dictatorial authority over an assembly.

- h. An arbitrary rejection of district counsel.
- i. A declared open change in doctrinal views.
- j. Immoral, unethical, or illegal practices related to personal, church, or ministry finances.
- k. A marriage in violation of our stand on marriage and divorce. (See Article IX. Section 5.)
- l. Violations of ministerial courtesy. (See Article VIII. Section 8. paragraph a.)
- m. Ministry without prior approval in a non-Assemblies of God church (See Article VIII. Section 8. paragraph b.).
- n. An improper attitude toward those dismissed from the Fellowship (See Article VIII. Section 8. paragraph c.).

Section 3. District Procedure

a. In the event that a credentialed minister of the North Texas District should violate Assemblies of God principles, thus subjecting himself or herself to disciplinary action, the District Credentials Committee will take actions and follow procedures, which are in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

b. 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 2, 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.

ARTICLE XII. FINANCES

Section 1. Authorization and Supervision

a. The offices and ministries of the North Texas District Council shall be supported from tithes, offerings, and other scriptural methods of financial support.

b. All finances shall be under the supervision of the Executive Presbytery.

c. The audited financial statement and operational budget shall be included in the published official report distributed at the annual meeting of the District Council.

Section 2. Required Professional Dues

It is required of all ministers, to remain in good standing with the North Texas District Council, that they give at least ten percent of their income, as professional dues, for the support of the active ministry, and for the propagation of the gospel and work of the Lord. These funds should be divided as specified in Article VI. Sectional Councils, Section 7. Finances, paragraph a. Revenue., subparagraph (1), and Article XII. Finances, Section 3. District Council Support, paragraph b. From ministers, and Section 4. General Council Support, paragraph a. From ministers. The remaining funds may be given to local churches or other approved ministries at the minister's discretion.

Section 3. District Council Support

a. The work of the District Council in its sphere of service and its program of developing the spirit of cooperation and fellowship incurs considerable expense, including the financial support of its officers and offices and the subsidizing in part of its divisions and ministries.

b. **From ministers.** To enable the fulfillment of our reason-for-being as a district fellowship, each credentialed minister with the exception of those classified as senior-retired shall send at least fifty-five percent of their tithe, as professional dues, in support of the district financial program, reporting their support on the annual credential renewal application. All credential holders shall be responsible to return tithe/dues to the District no less than once a month. Any variance in this practice must be approved in writing from the office of the District Secretary/Treasurer. The district Credentials Committee shall review the report of each minister to determine if the minister has been cooperating with the financial program. Should there be an indication of noncompliance the minister may be notified to meet the sectional presbyter and sectional committee in conjunction with the district Credentials Committee for explanation. A minister's credentials may be held until the matter of support is resolved. The presbyter of the section in which the minister resides shall be contacted as a resource before the minister's credentials are renewed.

c. **From churches.** It is recommended that each local assembly in affiliation with the North Texas District Council support the district ministries with a minimum of two percent of the unrestricted tithe/offerings received through the voluntary support of the assembly. This support shall be designated for disbursement to ministries that benefit the local assemblies of the district, either directly or indirectly; i.e., district divisions, camp development and operation, scholarships, assistance to assemblies in need, and ministerial enhancement.

Section 4. General Council Support

a. **From ministers.** Ordained ministers should recognize their obligation to contribute \$25 per month from their tithes, or as an offering. Licensed ministers should contribute \$20 per month and certified ministers should contribute \$10 per month. 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 an opportunity to meet this deficit with their renewal.

b. **From assemblies.** 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. This offering shall be called Fellowship Partners Offering, and shall be included with the Annual Church Ministries Report. It is suggested that each church's minimal offering be based upon its average Sunday morning attendance. A church averaging less than 50 is asked to send \$25 for the year; less than 100 but more than 50, \$50; less than 250 but more than 100, \$100; less than 500 but more than 250, \$250; less than 1,000 but more than 500, \$500; less than 2,000 but more than 1,000, \$1,000; over 2,000, \$2,000.

Section 5. District Ministerial Retirement Program

For those making the full contribution (tithes/dues) as noted in Article XII. Section 3 (b), ten percent (10%) of the amount received by the North Texas District shall be contributed to the Ministers Benefit

Association, a retirement program of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. These contributions shall inure to the benefit of the individual minister.

The Executive Presbyters will make deposits to the minister's individual account twice a year. In order for one to participate in the first deposit, they must be current with their minimum tithes support as of June 30th. A second deposit will be made for those ministers who are current for the year as of December 31st.

If a minister specifically requests, this ten percent (10%) may be placed in a district reserve fund for benevolence and be distributed at the discretion of the Executive Presbytery.

ARTICLE XIII. BENEVOLENCES AND INSURANCE

A. BENEVOLENCES

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

The district shall provide for benevolent services to its ministers and companions who qualify for such services and shall participate in the General Council benevolence programs.

Section 2. Administration and Relationship

The district Benevolence Fund shall be under the supervision of the Executive Presbytery and all benevolence ministries shall function as an integral part of the North Texas District Council.

Section 3. Support

Each minister, church, and section shall be encouraged to support national and district benevolences in accordance with the recommended policies.

B. INSURANCE

Section 1. District Council

The district may assist its members in the establishment of such insurance programs as may be deemed advisable by the District Presbytery.

Section 2. General Council

The district shall participate in the group life insurance program provided through the General Council.

Section 3. Retirement

The district recommends that each minister participate in the General Council retirement program or an equivalent of their choice and that each church, where practicable, be urged to assume the costs of a program for its ministers.

ARTICLE XIV. DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

a. Authorization. There shall be a Division of Administration that shall serve the North Texas District Council under the oversight of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

b. Purpose. The primary purpose of this division is to partner with the local church through nurturing and mentoring leaders, providing resources, and equipping the church to reach, disciple, and multiply.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Leadership. The district council shall elect a Superintendent, an Assistant Superintendent, and a Secretary-Treasurer in accordance with the North Texas District Bylaws, Article II, Section 3., a. They shall be charged with the overall operation of the district offices under the oversight of the Executive Presbytery.

b. Departments. The District Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the guidelines of the District Policy Manual. They shall include but not be limited to the following:

- (1) Lakeview Camp and Conference
- (2) CounselCare
- (3) Annual Minister's Retreat
- (4) NTD Church Loan Department

c. Amenability. The division and all of its functions shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE XV. DIVISION OF THE SECRETARIAT AND TREASURY

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

a. Authorization. There shall be a Division of the Secretariat and Treasury that shall serve the North Texas District Council under the oversight of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

b. Purpose. The primary purpose of this division is to conduct the corporate record keeping and the corporate fiduciary responsibilities of the North Texas District with accuracy and integrity.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Leadership. The District Council shall elect a Secretary-Treasurer in accordance with the North Texas District Bylaws, Article II, Section 3, paragraph a. The person shall be charged with the overall operation of this division under the oversight of the Executive Presbytery.

b. Departments. The District Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the guidelines of the *District Divisional Ministries Manual*. They shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) The Secretariat Department
- (2) The Treasury Department

c. Amenability. The division and all of its functions shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE XVI. DIVISION OF MISSIONS

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

a. Authorization. There shall be a Division of Missions that shall serve the North Texas District Council under the supervision of the District Presbytery.

b. Purpose. The primary purpose of this division is to promote, develop and encourage missions work within the district and around the world.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Leadership. The District Council shall elect an Assistant District Superintendent in accordance with the North Texas District Bylaws, Article II. Section 3. Paragraph A. That person shall be charged with the operation of the division.

b. Departments. The District Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the *District Council Policy Manual*. These departments shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Assemblies of God World Missions
- (2) Assemblies of God U.S. Missions
- (3) Other related functions and activities

c. Amenability. The division and all of its functions shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE XVII. DIVISION OF CHURCH PLANTING AND DEVELOPMENT

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

a. Authorization. There shall be a Division of Church Planting and Development that shall serve the North Texas District Council under the supervision of the District Presbytery.

b. Purpose. The primary purpose of this division is to promote, develop and encourage church planting and development within the district.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Leadership. The Executive Presbytery shall elect a leader of the division, subject to the ratification of the District Presbytery. That person shall be charged with the operation of the division.

b. Departments. The District Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the *District Council Policy Manual*. These departments shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Church Planting and Development
- (2) Church Revitalization Projects
- (3) Other related functions and activities

c. Amenability. The division and all of its functions shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE XVIII. DIVISION OF ADULT MINISTRIES

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

a. Authorization. There shall be a Division of Adult Ministries that shall serve the North Texas District Council under the supervision of the District Presbytery.

b. Purpose. The primary purpose of this division is to promote, develop and encourage adult ministry within the district.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Leadership. The Executive Presbytery shall elect a leader of the division, subject to the ratification of the District Presbytery. That person shall be charged with the operation of the division.

b. Departments. The District Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the *District Council Policy Manual*. These departments shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Small Groups and Discipleship
- (2) Men's Ministries
- (3) Women's Ministries
- (4) Singles Ministries
- (5) Senior Adult Ministries

- (6) Sunday School
- (7) Other related functions and activities

c. Amenability. The division and all of its functions shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE XIX. DIVISION OF YOUTH AND STUDENT MINISTRIES

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

a. Authorization. There shall be a Division of Youth and Student Ministries that shall serve the North Texas District Council under the supervision of the District Presbytery.

b. Purpose. The primary purpose of this division is to promote, develop and encourage youth and student ministry within the district.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Leadership. The Executive Presbytery shall elect a leader of the division, subject to the ratification of the District Presbytery. That person shall be charged with the operation of the division.

b. Departments. The District Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the *District Council Policy Manual*. These departments shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Youth Alive
- (2) Youth Missions
- (3) Youth Camps and Conventions
- (4) Leadership Development
- (5) Other related functions and activities

c. Amenability. The division and all of its functions shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE XX. DIVISION OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

a. Authorization. There shall be a Division of Children's Ministries that shall serve the North Texas District Council under the supervision of the District Presbytery.

b. Purpose. The primary purpose of this division is to promote, develop and encourage children's ministry within the district.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Leadership. The Executive Presbytery shall elect a leader of the division, subject to the ratification of the District Presbytery. That person shall be charged with the operation of the division.

b. Departments. The District Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the *District Council Policy Manual*. These departments shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Royal Rangers
- (2) Missionettes
- (3) Children's Church
- (4) Kid's Camps and Conventions
- (5) Leadership Development
- (6) Children's Missions
- (7) Other related functions and activities

c. Amenability. The division and all of its functions shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE XXI. INSTITUTIONS

Section 1. Southwestern Assemblies of God University

a. Authorization and purpose. The North Texas District Council as co-owner shall participate in the regional operation of Southwestern Assemblies of God University at Waxahachie, Texas, for the purpose of providing Bible centered courses of training to prepare Christian workers for effectual service at home and abroad.

b. Governance

(1) Together with the other co-owner districts, the North Texas District Council shall share in the ownership, governance, and support of the college, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the college.

(2) The North Texas General Presbyters and the District Youth Director, by virtue of their office, together with one layperson chosen biennially by the District Presbytery shall represent the district on the Board of Regents.

c. Amenability. The college and its board of regents shall be amenable to the respective co-owner districts comprising Southwestern's region.

Section 2. Pleasant Hills Children's Home

a. **Authorization and purpose.** The North Texas District Council as co-owner, shall participate with the South Texas and West Texas District Councils in the support and operation of Pleasant Hills Children's Home, for the purpose of ministering to the needs of children.

b. Administrative representation

(1) The district superintendent, assistant district superintendent, district secretary-treasurer, and the district women's ministries director shall serve on the Pleasant Hills Children's Home Board of Directors, by virtue of their office.

(2) Other district representatives shall be chosen by the District Presbytery, in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the home.

c. **Amenability.** The home and its board of directors shall be amenable to the North Texas, South Texas, and West Texas District Councils and their officers.

Section 3. Institutional Support

a. It is recommended that each church place Southwestern Assemblies of God University and Pleasant Hills Children's Home in their monthly missions budget.

b. It is recommended that individuals support our institutions through personal contributions, wills, trusts, company matching grants, and other methods of support in keeping with Christian stewardship.

ARTICLE XXII. PUBLICATIONS

Section 1. North Texas District News

The official organ of the North Texas District Council shall be the North Texas District News. The purpose shall be to publish regular reports of the work of the district officers and directors, pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and other ministers. Other articles may be printed to exhort, encourage, and provide information pertinent to the needs of the district.

Section 2. North Texas District Yearbook

An annual District Yearbook shall be published under the direction of the district secretary-treasurer and shall contain the current constitution and bylaws, a list of all North Texas ministers and churches, minutes from the previous district council session, and other information deemed essential by the Executive Presbytery.

Section 3. Other Publications

Other publications may be published as deemed necessary under the oversight of the Executive Presbytery.

ARTICLE XXIII. ARBITRATION AGREEMENT

Inasmuch as the scriptures require Christians to take their disputes to the saints and not to the civil courts (1 Corinthians 6:1-8), all disputes that may arise (1) between any minister holding credentials with this District or serving as pastor of a church located within the District, and either the North Texas District Council (including any officer thereof) or the General Council of the Assemblies of God (including any officer thereof), or (2) between any General Council or District Council affiliated church located within this District, and either the North Texas District Council (including any officer thereof) or the General Council of the Assemblies of God (including any officer thereof), shall be resolved by binding arbitration if efforts to mediate or conciliate the dispute have failed. Either party to the dispute may initiate the arbitration process by filing with the other party a written request for arbitration within a reasonable time after the dispute has arisen and efforts to mediate or conciliate have failed. In such a case, the minister and the district (or General Council, as the case may be) shall each name an arbitrator, and the two so selected shall name a third. If a minister has a dispute with both the District and General Council, then the District and General Council shall together agree upon and select one arbitrator. All arbitrators must be ordained Assemblies of God ministers who are not executive officers of the North Texas District. The third arbitrator chosen by the other two shall disclose, before accepting the appointment, any financial or personal interest in the outcome of the arbitration, and any existing or past financial, professional, family, or social relationships which are likely to affect impartiality or which might reasonably create an appearance of partiality or bias. Either of the parties to the arbitration, on the basis of such disclosures, may disqualify such a candidate from serving as the third arbitrator. A third arbitrator who serves without objection from either party has a continuing duty to disclose relationships or interest which may impair his impartiality. Either party, regardless of the stage of the arbitration process, may on the basis of such disclosures disqualify such a person from further participation.

The arbitrators shall appoint the time and place for the hearing and cause notification to the parties to be served personally or by registered mail not less than five days before the hearing. Appearance at the hearing waives such notice. The arbitrators may adjourn the hearing from time to time as necessary and, on request of a party and for good cause, or upon their own motion, may postpone the hearing to a later date. The arbitrators may hear and determine the controversy upon the evidence produced notwithstanding the failure of a party duly notified to appear. The parties are entitled to be heard, to present evidence material to the controversy, and to cross-examine witnesses appearing at the hearing. The hearing shall be conducted by all the arbitrators, but a majority of them may determine any question and render a final award. If during the course of the hearing, an arbitrator for any reason ceases to act, he or she shall be replaced in the same manner in which he or she was originally selected. The arbitrators may in their absolute discretion admit as evidence any affidavit or declaration concerning the matters in dispute, a copy thereof having been given at least ten days previously to the party against whom the same is offered, but the person whose evidence is so taken shall be subject to cross-examination by such party. The arbitrators shall have the power to order and direct what they shall deem necessary to be done by either of the parties relating to the matters in dispute. Costs of the arbitration shall be assessed in the discretion of the arbitrators, who may award by and whom they shall be paid. Any submission of a dispute to arbitration shall not be revoked by the death of the minister involved in the dispute, and any award will be binding upon his or her heirs and successors.

The decision of the arbitrators shall be binding on both parties, and both parties submit themselves to the personal jurisdiction of the courts of Texas, both state and federal, for the entry of a judgment confirming the arbitrators' award.

The arbitration process is not a substitute for the disciplinary process set forth in the bylaws of the District and the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and shall in no way affect the authority of either the District or the General Council of the Assemblies of God to investigate reports of ministerial misconduct, conduct hearings, and administer discipline.

Any matter not provided for herein shall be governed by the provisions of the Uniform Arbitration Act.

If a dispute may result in an award of monetary damages, then use of this arbitration procedure is conditioned on acceptance of the procedure by the liability insurers of both the District and General Council, and the insurers' agreement to honor any arbitration award up to any applicable policy limits.

ARTICLE XXIV. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the bylaws may be made by resolution in agreement with Article IV., Section 1., paragraph c. Amendments shall require a majority of all votes cast for adoption.

ARTICLE XXV. SUSPENSION OF BYLAWS

These rules of order (bylaws) may be suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote provided such motion be made in keeping with parliamentary order.