

North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God

BYLAWS



Bylaws

Article	Subject	Page
I.	Rules of Order.....	3
II.	Election of Officers.....	3
III.	Duties of Officers.....	8
IV.	Committees	15
V.	Regional Councils.....	16
VI.	Sectional Councils	17
VII.	Local Assemblies	20
VIII.	Ministry.....	30
IX.	Doctrines and Practices Disapproved	38
X.	Discipline	45
XI.	Christian Marriage and Family	46
XII.	Finances	46
XIII.	Benevolences and Insurance	48
XIV.	Division of Administration	49
XV..	Institutions	50
XVI.	Publications.....	51
XVII.	Arbitration Agreement.....	51
XVIII.	Amendments	53
XIX.	Suspension of Bylaws.....	53
XX.	Emergency Bylaw.....	53

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**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 General Presbyter, the Regional Executive Presbyters, the District Presbyters, and the Executive Presbyter at Large elected by the District Council.

c. **Division directors.** Division directors shall be those persons appointed 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 the district policies.

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

c. Regional Executive Presbyters shall be a member of the region they represent.

d. Dual Roles. There are cases where the same person may legitimately fill two offices. They are as follows:

(1) An elected General Presbyter may only serve in a dual role as either a Regional Executive Presbyter, or a District Presbyter, or an Executive Presbyter at Large.

(2) An Executive Presbyter at Large may only serve in a dual role as either a District Presbyter or an elected General Presbyter.

(3) A Regional Executive Presbyter may only serve in a dual role as an elected General Presbyter.

(4) A Sectional Presbyter may only serve in a dual role as either an Executive Presbyter at Large, or an Executive Presbyter elected by the District Presbytery, or an elected General Presbyter.

(5) A District Presbyter at Large may only serve in a dual role as an Executive Presbyter at Large or an elected General Presbyter.

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 alternate odd-numbered years 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. One nonresident Executive Presbyter 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. The General Presbyter 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 cast their vote. 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.

e. The Regional Executive Presbyters shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot in their respective regional councils on an odd 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. The Executive Presbyter at Large 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 cast their vote. 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.

g. 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 three 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) and one ordained African American minister (no age requirement). From the nominees the General Presbytery shall select and submit to the General Council four names of ordained ministers under 40 years of age at the time of election and four names of ordained females (no age requirement), and four names of ordained African American ministers (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.

h. 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.

i. Three District Presbyters at Large (one of non-majority ethnicity, one under 40 at the time of their election, and one female) shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot by the District Council in session 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 District Presbyter at Large.

j. No office shall be filled by acclamation.

k. 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.

l. 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 the 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 the office for any other reason, the District Presbytery shall appoint one ordained pastor of a church located in the North Texas District or an ordained minister serving in an Assemblies of God ministry located in the North Texas District 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 or she meets the ordinary requirements for General Presbyter. He or she 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. Executive Presbyter at Large. In the event an Executive Presbyter at Large shall move to another district or shall vacate the office for any other reason, the District Presbytery shall appoint a qualified person to serve as the Executive Presbyter at Large until that office is regularly filled at the next meeting of the District Council.

e. 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 on 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.

j. This office is a full-time position not allowing for the officer to pastor a local church, full or part-time, or be otherwise employed full or part-time, except for temporary ministry specifically approved by 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 or her office, or as may be directed by the District Council, the District Presbytery, the Executive Presbytery, or the District Superintendent.

f. This office is a full-time position not allowing for the officer to pastor a local church, full or part-time, or be otherwise employed full or part-time, except for temporary ministry specifically approved by the Executive Presbytery.

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 or she 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 or her 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. Be responsible to have the district books reviewed annually by a competent auditor and shall have the review published and distributed at the District Council in session; and, in addition to the reviews, there shall be an external audit at least every five years.

l. 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.

m. This office is a full-time position not allowing for the officer to pastor a local church, full or part-time, or be otherwise employed full or part-time, except for temporary ministry specifically approved by the Executive Presbytery.

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 its own meetings and call special business meetings of the District Presbytery when deemed advisable.

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

i. The Executive Officers shall appoint, and the Executive Presbytery approve one of the Executive Officers to serve as a member of the Executive Board of Directors of Pleasant Hills Children's Home.

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 oversight of all district publications.

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

m. The Executive Presbytery shall determine the salaries and allowances of the District Presbyters. A Salaries Committee of three Executive Presbyters shall be appointed to two-year terms by the Executive Officers to make an annual review of such salaries and allowances. It shall present its recommendations to the Executive Presbytery.

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.

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 Officers 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 Officers to conduct business.
- c. Any one-third of the 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 the Executive Officers and Executive Presbyters. A Salaries Committee of three District Presbyters shall be appointed to two-year terms by the Executive Presbytery to make an annual 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.

Section 8. Duties of the Executive Presbyter at Large

- a. They shall serve as members of the Executive Presbytery and the District Presbytery.

- b. They shall fulfill the responsibilities as a member of the Executive Presbyter (Article III, Section 4).
- c. They shall serve the Executive Officers regarding special projects or committees.
- d. They shall assist Regional Executive Presbyters with discipline issues within their region.
- e. They shall serve the Executive Officers as ambassadors of goodwill throughout the district to promote the district's vision.
- f. They shall build relationships with other ministers throughout the district to promote health and unity.
- g. They shall be accountable to the Executive Officers for the fulfillment of duties.

Section 9. Duties of the District Presbyter at Large

(1) In accordance with the Constitution of the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God ARTICLE IX. OFFICERS AND DIVISION DIRECTORS, Section 5. District Presbytery, b. District Presbyters at Large. There shall be three: one of non-majority ethnicity, one under 40 at the time of their election, and one female.

(2) Non-Majority Ethnic Presbyter at Large. The Non- Majority Ethnic Presbyter at Large's primary role will be to serve as a member of the District Presbytery and as a cross-cultural resource person with ethnic ministers and churches. Their specific duties to include the following:

- a. Establish regional relational connections with all the sectional non-majority ethnic committee members to serve them and to leverage their gifts and insights to see our impact in the culturally diverse communities grow.
- b. Promote and personally invite non-majority ethnic pastors/ministers to district and sectional functions.
- c. Work with the NTD Secretary's office to strengthen the credentialing of non-majority ethnic ministers.
- d. Collaborate with district credentials specialist to be a liaison to English as a Second Language (ESL) applicants to the district.
- e. Work with our LEAD Initiative to provide training and relationship-building opportunities for non-majority ethnic pastors and churches as well as more traditional churches to have greater outreach with their culturally diverse neighbors.

(3) Female Presbyter at Large. The Female Presbyter at Large's primary role will be to serve as a member of the District Presbytery and as a resource person to our female ministers.

- a. Strengthen relationships between district leaders and female pastors/ministers.
- b. Establish regional relational connections with all the sectional female committee members to serve them and to leverage their gifts and insights to see our impact among our female ministers grow and flourish.

c. Promote and personally invite female pastors/ministers to district and sectional functions.

d. Be a resource for the NTD Secretary's office to strengthen the credentialing of female ministers.

e. Work closely with the NTD Women's Ministries Director to provide training and relationship building opportunities for female ministers.

(4) Under 40 Presbyterian at Large. The Under 40 Presbyterian at Large's primary role will be to serve as a member of the District Presbytery and as a resource person to our under 40 ministers.

a. Strengthen relationships between district leaders and under 40 pastors/ministers.

b. Establish regional relational connections with all the sectional under 40 committee members to serve them and leverage their gifts and insights to see our impact among the next generation of ministers grow.

c. Promote and personally invite under 40 pastors/ministers to district and sectional functions.

d. Be a resource for the NTD Secretary's office to strengthen the credentialing of under 40 ministers.

e. Work with the NTD leader designated by the District Superintendent to provide training and relationship-building opportunities for under 40 ministers.

Section 10. Duties of the Sectional Presbyterian

The duties of the Sectional Presbyterian shall include:

a. Promote and supervise the work of the Fellowship in his or her section.

b. Lead the Sectional Committee in interviewing and processing all sectional candidates for ministerial credentials.

c. Supervise the missions' program in his or her 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 Presbyterian.

e. Assist the Regional Executive Presbyterian 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 Superintendent, the Executive Officers, or 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 Officers or the Executive Presbytery shall be authorized to fill such vacancies.

b. **Credentials Committee.** The district Regional Presbytery shall constitute the Credentials Committee. It shall examine all applications for credentials and interview all ordination candidates. The Regional Presbytery may delegate the routine work of the Credentials Committee to the Sectional Committees. The Executive Presbytery shall ratify the actions of the Regional Presbytery and shall provide for an ordination and dedication service for all accepted candidates.

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 digital or printed form and mail or email 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 digital or printed form and mail or email 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 spokesperson 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.

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 XI. 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) Committee persons 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) Committee persons 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 committee persons shall be for two years and shall be affected by approximately one-half of the committee being elected annually.
- (5) No office shall be filled by acclamation.

- c. **Vacancies.** Vacancies on 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 assemblies.

(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 tithe 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) It is recommended that each member church 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 an officer of the North Texas District.

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 by displaying the Assemblies of God logo as a part of its official church publications, signage, and media.

(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 or her 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 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 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 provide organizational assistance to the church, 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) 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 assure the local church that this is designed for its protection.

(2) The church should first consult the District Executive Officers and the Sectional Presbyter for recommendations.

(3) It is recommended that no candidates be considered and voted upon unless endorsed by the District Executive Officers.

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

(5) It is recommended that the pastor's initial election be by a two-thirds majority 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 under shepherd 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 5:1-3).

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. **Church Mergers.** Assemblies shall 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 with the highest possible degree of Christian ethics and integrity.

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, certificate of formation, and/or constitution and bylaws the following dissolution clause: Upon dissolution, all Corporation assets shall be distributed to North Texas District Council Assemblies of God, a Texas nonprofit corporation with Texas Secretary of State Filing Number 3494201, as long as it is qualified as exempt form income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (hereinafter the "Code"). If the North Texas District Council Assemblies of God no longer qualifies, all Corporation assets shall be distributed to General Council of the Assemblies of God as long as it is qualified as exempt from income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. If the General Council of the Assemblies of God no longer qualifies, all Corporation assets shall be distributed to an organization qualified as exempt form income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, that serves similar purposes as the Corporation. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located,

exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations (or to the federal government, or a state or local government, for a public purpose), as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

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 Sectional Committee where the assembly is located (Article XII. Section 2 of the constitution). 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 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. 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. A credentialed minister in cooperation with the North Texas District and Sectional Committee.
- b. The North Texas District Church Planting and Development Department.
- c. Established General Council Affiliated churches in cooperation with their Sectional Committee and the Church Planting and Development Department.

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 officer, 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 District Affiliated 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.

a. Pastor

(1) The pastor shall be appointed by the Sectional Presbyter and Sectional 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.

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

(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.

b. **Management.** The Sectional Presbyter and Sectional Committee shall function in a supervisory role 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, overseeing its financial responsibilities, and conducting special business meetings. In every case, the pastor and Advisory Committee will seek the guidance of the Sectional Committee before entering into any type of financial agreements, which obligate the church or its assets.

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 an 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. No specific level of formal academic achievement (diploma or degree) shall 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; unless an exception is granted by the General Council Credentials Committee or permitted by the General Presbytery policy; 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 is recognized under one of the following biblical categories:

- (1) Recognition of preconversion divorce (2 Corinthians 5:17);
- (2) Recognition of abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 7:10-15);
- (3) Recognition of spousal infidelity (Matthew 19:9);
- (4) Recognition of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Psalms 11:5, 146:5-9; Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 1:16-17; Ephesians 4:1-3, 31-32; Ephesians 5);
- (5) Recognition of ecclesiastical annulment – a pronouncement declaring a marriage invalid as hereinafter provided (Proverbs 12:22; Matthew 19:6; 1 Corinthians 7:5) in such cases there must be clear and satisfactory evidence of deception or fraud, unknown to the applicant at the time of marriage. Additionally, the lack of communication or other conditions which have a profound impact preventing the creation of a valid marriage union can constitute an ecclesiastical annulment.

Each case requiring a recognition of divorce or ecclesiastical annulment shall be decided by the Executive Presbytery on an individual basis as to whether the termination of that marriage is consistent with the scriptural position of the Fellowship relating to the granting or holding of ministerial credentials. Appeals from the decisions of the Executive Presbytery may be made to the General Presbytery.

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) Pass the credential examination.
- (6) Complete such courses as may be prescribed by the General Presbytery for ministers transferring from other credentialing bodies.
- (7) Meet with the district 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 credentials shall relinquish their ministerial credentials with any other credentialing organization, unless an exception is granted by the General Council Credentials Committee upon recommendation of a District Council Credentials Committee for good cause shown and a clear understanding of the priority of the Assemblies of God credential.

Section 3. Specific Qualifications

a. **Residency requirements of applicants.** 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 or her 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's Secretary's office. They will then be forwarded for further processing to the appropriate Presbyter.

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

c. **Senior Retired Ministers.** In respect and honor to those ministers who have given years of service to the Fellowship, the term senior retired shall be used for those who are 65 years of age or older and who have ceased to engage in any regular appointed ministry. Senior retired status shall be granted only to those ministers who filed a request for such status with their district office. The District Secretary shall forward annually to the general secretary a list of those ministers who have made these requests.

d. **Support of General Council Headquarters.** 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.)

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 and the minister's credentialed spouse moving to serve at the Assemblies of God national office and/or affiliated entities.

(2) Those who have attained the age of 60 and are no longer engaged in active ministry and those who have attained the age of 65 and are not pastoring a church.

(3) Those who are in the Armed Forces currently on active duty.

(4) Those who are serving on the staff 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 minister's 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 minister's letter as resigned.

b. On the initiative of the district.

(1) *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 minister's 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. 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. **Universalism.** 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. **Denial of the Imminent Return of Jesus.** 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. All credentialed ministers should teach the imminent coming of Christ, warning all to be prepared for that coming, which may occur at any time, and not lull their minds into complacency by any teaching that would cause them to feel that specific Tribulation events must occur before the rapture of the saints.

d. **Denial of the bodily reign of Christ.** The General Council of the Assemblies of God disapproves of the any teaching which denies the literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth, following His bodily return and substitutes for it the theory that this present age is the spiritual millennium.

e. **Intent to lead others astray.** A credentialed minister who embraces any of these teachings must refrain from, they refrain from intentionally leading other people to adopt the positions. 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) *Common-law marriage.* We recommend that in no case shall persons be accepted into membership who are known to be living in a common-law state of matrimony.

b. **Remarriage.** Low standards on marriage and divorce are very hurtful to individuals, to the family, and to the cause of Christ. Therefore, we discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. We positively disapprove of Christians getting divorces for any cause except fornication and adultery (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15), or in the case of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Matthew 18:6; Ephesians 5:28-33; Colossians 3:19), or an annulment (Proverbs 12:22; Matthew 19:6; 1 Corinthians 7:5). Where these exceptional circumstances exist, we recommend that the question of remarriage be resolved by the believer in the light of God's Word (Matthew 19:3-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-28).

c. **Local church leadership**

(1) *Standard for offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon.* Since the New Testament restricts divorced and remarried believers from the church offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon, we recommend that this standard be upheld by all our assemblies (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:12), except when the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15) or in the case of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Psalms 11:5; 146:5-9; Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 1:16-17; Ephesians 4:1-3, 31,32; Ephesians 5). 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 or she may not perform ceremonies for persons who, in the minister's opinion, approach marriage without proper forethought, wisdom, and sobriety.

e. **Ministerial credentials.** We disapprove of any married minister of the Assemblies of God holding credentials if either minister or spouse has a former spouse living unless the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17), or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (I Corinthians 7:10-15) or in the case of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Psalms 11:5; 146:5-9; Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 1:16-17; Ephesians 4:1-3, 31-32; Ephesians 5), or an ecclesiastical annulment (Proverbs 12:22; Matthew 19:6; I Corinthians 7:5).

Section 6. Worldliness

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

In its teaching regarding worldliness, the 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 minister ought to be an example.

(2) We recognize the duty of tithing and urge all our people to pay tithes to God. It is recommended that arrangements satisfactory to the pastor and the church be made by all pastors and churches, so that the pastor may receive regular and adequate support. We disapprove, however, of the teaching that all tithes necessarily should belong to the pastor for his or her support.

b. Solicitation of funds

(1) It is considered improper and unethical for ministers or missionaries to solicit funds, by letter or otherwise, for anything or any reason whatsoever without proper authorization.

(2) The purpose of this section is not to hinder or discourage legitimate projects but to protect the Fellowship from those who employ methods not in harmony with Assemblies of God principles or policies.

Leaders in local projects shall have unquestioned freedom in local churches or communities.

Projects of general interest to the district must have authorization of the district officer.

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. Violations 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 discipline.

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

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

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

We recommend therefore that our ministers confer with District 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 subject to discipline.

Section 10. An Improper Attitude Toward Those Removed from the Fellowship

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

Section 11. Interdenominational or Ecumenical Relationships

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

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

Section 12. Divine Healing and Professional Medicine

The General Council of the Assemblies of God disapproves of any credentialed minister counseling a believer to exclude medical advice and/or treatment when seeking prayer for physical healing. Assemblies of God ministers shall not represent medical advice and/or treatment as a lack of faith in God's healing power.

Section 13. Accountability in Educational Attribution

a. Attribution. In order to maintain our testimony of quality and integrity in educational 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 by ministers.* Our ministers shall refrain from listing, promotion, or attribution to themselves or others any degrees or titles conferred by institutions or organizations having, at the time of conferral, a formal accreditation status less than that of our appropriately corresponding Assemblies of God institutions (whether our institute, regional university, or seminary levels.).

(2) *Attribution by the General Council.* No media, ministry, department, arm, or employee of the General Council shall list, attribute, or promote for any person, any degree or title conferred by an institution or organization having, at the time of conferral, a formal accreditations status less than that of our appropriately corresponding Assemblies of God institutions (whether our institute, regional university, or seminary levels.).

(3) *Attribution by local churches.* We strongly encourage our ministers, boards, and churches to take great care to ensure that all ministers and church employees have actually earned the legitimately accredited education, training, and certification as defined above, which they claim by their titles or degrees (such as counselor, therapist, doctor, and so on).

(4) *Attribution accepted.* All previously earned or conferred degrees prior to August 2007, from any institution whatsoever shall be fully accepted and grandfathered in.

b. Intentional failure to comply. Intentional refusal to comply with this ethical standard for educational credentials constitutes perpetrating a fraud upon the church and the world, personally and in the good name of the Assemblies of God, and the General Council disapproves of such practices.

Section 14. Substance Usage

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

ARTICLE X. 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, whether committed in person or on social media platforms, shall be:

- a. Sexual Misconduct
 - (1) Moral transgression involving sexual misconduct
 - (2) Moral transgression involving pornography
- b. Financial Misconduct
 - (1) Immoral, unethical, or illegal practices related to personal finances
 - (2) Immoral, unethical, or illegal practices related to church or ministry finances
- c. Relational/Ethical Misconduct
 - (1) Blatant misrepresentation of our Pentecostal testimony
 - (2) A declared open change in doctrinal views

- (3) A contentious or noncooperative spirit
 - (4) An assumption of dictatorial authority over an assembly
 - (5) An arbitrary rejection of counsel from district leadership
 - (6) Violations of ministerial courtesy or ethics (See Article VIII, Section 8. a.)
 - (7) An improper attitude toward those dismissed from the Fellowship (See Article VIII, Section 8. c.)
 - (8) General inefficiency in the ministry
 - (9) Moral or ethical transgression other than sexual misconduct
 - (10) Ministry in a non-Assemblies of God church without proper approval from district leadership (See Article VIII, Section 8. b.)
 - (11) A marriage in violation of our standards for either a recognized divorce or a biblical marriage (See Article IX, Section 5.)
- d. Substance Use and Abuse
- Violations of General Council Bylaws Article IX. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED, Paragraph B, Section 14. Substance Usage, including:
- (1) Use or abuse of alcohol or recreational drugs
 - (2) Abuse or addiction involving other legal substances
 - (3) Use, abuse, or addiction involving other illegal substances

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

Section 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. Subsequent dismissal. Should evidence come to light following a minister's termination of credentials (whether by lapse, resignation, or not renewed), of conduct occurring prior to said change of credential status that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action under Article X of these Bylaws, the district, at its discretion, may request the General Council Credentials Committee to change that minister's credential status 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 XI. 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 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 and Life Insurance Benefit Program

a. **Ministerial Retirement.** For those making the full contribution (tithes/dues) as noted in Article XII. Section 3 (b), six percent (6%) 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 six percent (6%) may be placed in a district reserve fund for benevolence and be distributed at the discretion of the Executive Presbytery.

Furthermore, for those making the full contribution (tithes/dues) as noted in Article XII. Section 3 (b), four percent (4%) of the amount received by the North Texas District shall be contributed to a life insurance and benevolence fund chosen by the Executive Presbytery to provide a death benefit to all credentialed ministers.

ARTICLE XIII. BENEVOLENCES AND INSURANCE

A. BENEVOLENCES

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

The district shall provide 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. There shall be a Division of Executive Officers that shall consist of the following:

(1) **The Office of the Superintendent.** The Superintendent shall provide oversight and direction to the various departments and ministries of the district that serve the churches and constituents.

(a) **Leadership.** The District Council shall elect a Superintendent in accordance with the North Texas District Bylaws, Article II, Section 3, paragraph a. That person shall be charged with the overall operation of this Division.

(2) **The Office of the Assistant Superintendent.** The Assistant Superintendent shall assist in accomplishing the purposes of the Offices of the Administration within the district and around the world.

(a) **Department of Missions.** The Assistant Superintendent shall also be tasked with giving oversight and leadership to the Department of Missions.

(b) **Leadership.** The District Council shall elect an Assistant 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 Office.

(c) **Departments.** The Executive Officers shall be authorized to establish departments and select leaders for those departments within the Office of the Assistant Superintendent with the approval 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

(3) **The Office of the Secretary and Treasurer.** There shall be an Office of the Secretariat and Treasury that shall serve the North Texas District Council.

(a) **Purpose.** The primary purpose of this office is to conduct the corporate record keeping and the corporate fiduciary responsibilities of the North Texas District with accuracy and integrity.

(b) **Leadership.** The District Council shall elect a Secretary-Treasurer in accordance with the North Texas District Bylaws, Article II, Section 3, paragraph a. That person shall be charged with the overall operation of this Office.

(c) **Departments.** The Executive Officers shall be authorized to establish departments within the Office of the Secretary and Treasury with the approval of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the guidelines of the District Council Policy Manual. They shall include, but not limited to the following:

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

(4) **Departments of District Ministries.** The Executive Officers shall be authorized to establish departments of ministry and select leaders for those departments with the approval of the Executive Presbytery to serve the churches and constituents of the North Texas District. Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the District Council Policy Manual.

ARTICLE XV. 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 District Superintendent, together with those persons chosen annually to serve as either members or auditors by the Executive Presbytery shall represent the district on the Board of Regents in harmony with the Southwestern Assemblies of God University Bylaws.

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 Executive Officers, 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 XVI. 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

The District Secretary Treasurer shall prepare an annual District Yearbook to be accessed electronically through the district website or in printed form by request only, 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 XVII. 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 interests which may impair his or her 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 deem necessary to be done by either of the parties relating to the matters in dispute. Costs of the arbitration shall be assessed at 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 XVIII. 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 XIX. 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.

ARTICLE XX. EMERGENCY BYLAW

- A. Emergency defined. An emergency exists for the purposes of this section if a quorum of any official body of the North Texas District Council, to include but not limited to, the members of the North Texas District Council, District Presbytery, Regional Executive Presbytery, Executive Presbytery, Regional Presbyters, and directors cannot readily be assembled because of any of the following events:
 - 1) A natural catastrophe, including, but not limited to, a hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption,

landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, or drought, or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood, or explosion.

- 2) An attack on this state or nation by an enemy of the United States of America, or upon receipt by this state of a warning from the federal government indicating that an enemy attack is probable or imminent.
 - 3) An act of terrorism or other manmade disaster that results in extraordinary levels of casualties or damage or disruption severely affecting the infrastructure, environments, economy, government functions, or population, including, but not limited to, mass evacuations.
 - 4) A pandemic.
 - 5) A state of emergency proclaimed by The Governor of the State of Texas.
- B. Interim authority. During an emergency, the District Presbytery shall have the maximum authority possible to run the district's interim affairs in the manner they deem best.
- C. Meetings in a declared emergency. In the event of an emergency or other sufficient cause as determined by the District Presbytery, or in the event it is not possible to assemble the District Presbytery, the Executive Officers including the Superintendent Assistant Superintendent, and Secretary-Treasurer, meetings of any official body of the North Texas District shall take place utilizing any available format (including electronic) that allows the greatest accessibility and the most active participation of attendees by communicating simultaneously with each other as determined by the District Presbytery, or in the event it is not possible to assemble the District Presbytery, the Executive Officers including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Secretary-Treasurer.
- D. Procedures for calling a meeting. A meeting may be called by any available means including but not limited to U. S. mail, email, phone, or text giving the maximum possible notice.
- E. Quorum. All members present and voting shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.
- F. All provisions of the regular bylaws consistent with the emergency bylaw remain in effect during the emergency. The emergency bylaws are not in effect after the emergency ends.
- G. Binding action. Corporate action taken in good faith in accordance with the emergency bylaws binds the district and may not be used to impose liability on a corporate director, officer, employee, or agent.
- H. Relocation of the principal office. Should it be necessary due to the emergency to relocate the principal office of district operations, the District Presbytery, or in the event it is not possible to assemble the District Presbytery, the Executive Officers including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Secretary-Treasurer shall make that determination.