

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**  
of the  
**ALABAMA DISTRICT COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, INC.**

A Religious Corporation Not For Profit

**PREAMBLE**

Since in the last days, God has been and is pouring out of His Spirit upon all flesh in fulfillment of His promise (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17), resulting in a ministry of Spirit-baptized men and women (Luke 24:49), and the formation of Pentecostal Assemblies of saved and Spirit-filled believers (Acts 11:15-16), and since a representative company of this ministry and Fellowship have associated themselves in general unity under the name of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., for the propagation of the fullness of the Gospel, and since this General Council has made provisions for the local oversight of ministerial matters and the care and development of local assemblies through the agency of District Councils; therefore, we have gladly assumed this solemn obligation that has been committed to us and hereby duly assembling ourselves in scriptural order (June 18-20, 1963), and having recognized ourselves as a District Council of the Assemblies of God in the State of Alabama since 1914, we agree to be governed by the following revised Constitution and Bylaws:

**CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this body shall be the Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc.

**ARTICLE II. TERRITORY**

This District shall include all territory in the State of Alabama, and shall be divided into Sectional fellowships. The boundaries of Sections shall be defined from time to time by the District Presbytery subject to the approval of the District Council in session.

**ARTICLE III. NATURE**

The Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc. is a cooperative Fellowship based on mutual agreement voluntarily entered into by its membership.

**ARTICLE IV. RELATIONSHIP**

1. The Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc. shall recognize itself as an integral part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., whose headquarters is in Springfield, Missouri, and shall recognize and be subject to said General Council as the parent body.
2. The local churches of the District, which are in full fellowship with the District Council, shall recognize and be subject to the District Council as set forth in the District Constitution and Bylaws.

**ARTICLE V. PREROGATIVES**

1. To approve all scriptural teaching, methods, and conduct and to disapprove all unscriptural teaching, methods, and conduct.
2. To encourage and promote the evangelization of our District, our country, and the world by all scriptural means.
3. To set forth a basis of Christian fellowship and provide for counsel and cooperation among those of like precious faith.
4. To establish and develop assemblies in the Fellowship in accordance with New Testament standards and principles.
5. To examine candidates seeking ministerial recognition and recommend to the General Council for certification, licensing, and ordination as ministers those who shall meet the standards of the Scripture (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) and requirements of the General Council Constitution and Bylaws, and to assume the oversight of all ministerial matters in the District that affect the District or General Council.

6. To elect and/or appoint its own officers and committees, to arrange for its own meetings and to govern itself in conformity with the policies of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc.
7. To establish and maintain such departments and institutions as may be necessary for the propagation of the Gospel and the work of God in the Pentecostal fellowship.
8. To have the right to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, rent, lease or otherwise dispose of such property, real or chattel, as may be useful for the prosecution of its work.

## **ARTICLE VI. TENETS OF FAITH**

The Articles of Faith shall be the same as those set forth by the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., which are as follows:

### **STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS**

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us, i.e., that we all speak the same thing (I Cor. 1:10; Acts 2:42). The phraseology employed in this Statement is not inspired or contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to a full gospel ministry. No claim is made that it contains all Biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines.

#### **1. The Scriptures Inspired**

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

#### **2. The One True God**

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

## **THE ADORABLE GODHEAD**

### *(a) Terms Defined*

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

### *(b) Distinction and relationship in the Godhead*

Christ taught a distinction of Persons in the Godhead which he expressed in specific terms of relationship, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but that this distinction and relationship as to its mode is inscrutable and incomprehensible, because unexplained. (Luke 1:35; I Cor. 1:24; Matt. 11:25-27; 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; I John 1:3, 4)

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

Accordingly, therefore, there is that in the Son which constitutes him the Son and not the Father; and there is that in the Holy Spirit which constitutes him the Holy Spirit and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore the Father is the Begetter; the Son is the Begotten; and the Holy Spirit is the one proceeding from the Father and the Son. Therefore, because these three Persons in the Godhead are in a state of unity, there is but one Lord God Almighty and His name one. (John 1:18; 15:26; 17:11, 21; Zech. 14:9).

### *(d) Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead*

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

### *(e) The Title "Lord Jesus Christ"*

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

*(f) The Lord Jesus Christ, God with us*

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

*(g) The Title "Son of God"*

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

*(h) Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ*

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

*(i) Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord*

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

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

Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgment unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on earth to bow the knee, but is an unspeakable joy in the Holy Spirit to ascribe unto the Son all the attributes of deity, and to give him all the honor and the glory contained in all the names and titles of the Godhead (except those which express relationship (see paragraphs b, c, and d) and thus honor the Son even as we honor the Father (John 5:22, 23; I Peter 1:8; rev. 5:6-14; Phil. 2:8, 9; rev. 7:9, 10; 4:8-11).

### 3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

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

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

### 4. The Fall of Man

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

### 5. The Salvation of Man

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

(a) Conditions to Salvation

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

## (b) The Evidences of Salvation

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

## 6. The Ordinances of the Church

## (a) Baptism in Water

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with him to walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47, 48; Romans 6:4).

## (b) Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements — bread and the fruit of the vine — is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (I Cor. 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (I Cor. 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till he come!"

## 7. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; I Cor. 12:131). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 1:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb. 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and more active love for Christ and His Word and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

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

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

## 9. Sanctification

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

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing His identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:1-11, 13; Rom. 8:1, 2, 13; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:12, 13; I Peter 1:5).

## 10. The Church and Its Mission

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

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

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

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

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

### **11. The Ministry**

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the fourfold purpose of leading the Church in:

- (1) evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20),
- (2) worship of God (John 4:23,24),
- (3) building a Body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11,16), and
- (4) meeting human need with ministries of love and compassion (Psalm 112:9; Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

### **12. Divine Healing**

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matt. 8:16, 17; James 5:14-16).

### **13. The Blessed Hope**

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation, together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church (I Thess. 4:16, 17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; I Cor. 15:51, 52).

### **14. The Millennial Reign of Christ**

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zech. 14:5, Matt. 24:27, 30; revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezekiel 37:21, 22; Zephaniah 3:19, 20; Romans 11:26, 27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalms 72:3-8; Micah 4:3, 4).

### **15. The Final Judgment**

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and His angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

### **16. The New Heavens and the New Earth**

*"We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"*  
(II Peter 3:13; Rev-21, 22)

## **ARTICLE VII. MEMBERSHIP**

1. All ministers holding accredited Fellowship certificates from the General Council shall be recognized as members except in such cases where, in the opinion of the Credentials Committee, to do so would disrupt the unity of the Fellowship.
2. Representatives chosen from membership of the local assemblies to represent them at the District Council meeting (each assembly being entitled to one delegate) shall be considered as members.

## **ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS**

### **1. Executive Officers**

(a) The Executive officers shall consist of the District Superintendent, Assistant District Superintendent and District Secretary-Treasurer. They shall be the trustees of the Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., and shall constitute the Executive Committee.

(b) The Executive Committee, who are the trustees, is hereby given and shall have the authority to execute and deliver deeds, mortgages, encumbrances, or any other documents affecting real estate now or hereafter owned or held in trust by said District, as well as any other properties or interest which may revert to said District as hereinafter authorized by the District Constitution and/or Bylaws.

### **2. Other Officers**

(a) Other officers shall be two General Presbyters, the Directors of the District Missions and Men's Department, District Youth Department, and District Christian Education Department, and a Presbyter from each Section of the District.

(b) General Presbyters

i. The District Superintendent shall be a General Presbyter by virtue of his office.

ii. The two additional General Presbyters shall be elected by the district council in session, both of whom shall be ordained Assemblies of God ministers, and at least one of whom shall be a pastor of a church located in the district. They shall take office immediately upon election.

### **3. Presbyters-at-Large**

The two General Council Presbyters, the District Missions and Men's Director (hereafter referred to as the District Missions Director), the District Youth Director and the District Christian Education Director shall be District Presbyters-at-large.

### **4. Executive Presbyters**

The District Superintendent, Assistant District Superintendent, District Secretary-Treasurer, District Christian Education Director, District Youth Director, District Missions Director, and General Presbyters shall be the Executive Presbyters of the District. These Executive Presbyters shall comprise the Camp Grounds or Headquarters Committee.

### **5. Executive Cabinet**

There shall be an Executive Cabinet composed of the District Superintendent, District Secretary-Treasurer, District Christian Education Director, District Missions Director, and District Youth Director.

### **6. District Presbytery**

The District Presbytery shall consist of the District Superintendent, Assistant District Superintendent, District Secretary-Treasurer, Presbyters-at-large, and each of the Sectional Presbyters.

## **ARTICLE IX. DEPARTMENTS**

Provision is hereby made for the organization and operation of a Youth Ministries Department, Christian Education Department, Missions and Men's Department (hereafter referred to as the Missions Department), Women's Ministries Department, Stewardship Department, and Music Department. These departments shall be considered a part of the District Council and shall be amenable thereto. Each department shall be governed by its own policy manuals, which shall be approved by the District Presbytery, and which shall be in harmony with the General Council and District Council Constitution and Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE X. MEETINGS**

1. Regular sessions of the District Council shall be held annually pursuant to a call by the District Presbytery.

2. Special sessions of the District Council may be arranged if agreed to by a two-thirds majority of the District Presbytery.

3. The right of initiative in the matter of calling special sessions shall be granted to any ordained minister of the District Council when occasion demands. A statement setting forth the reasons for the special session of the council, signed by not less than twenty-five percent of all ordained ministers of this District Council, may be considered sufficient reason for calling a special session, such statement to be filed with the District Presbytery, who may, if deemed advisable, respond to the summons and issue the call for a special session.

## ARTICLE XI. LOCAL ASSEMBLIES

### Section 1. General Council Affiliated Assemblies

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

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

- (1) Subscribe to Article V. Statement of Fundamental Truths in the General Council Constitution;
- (2) Adopt a standard of membership that may be determined either by the local assembly or by agreement with the District council;
- (3) Have a minimum active voting membership of 20 persons who shall accept responsibility to maintain scriptural order in the local body;
- (4) Adopt Articles of Incorporation, a Constitution or Bylaws compatible with models recommended by the District council, or District approved governance models that provide for adequate accountability, amenability, and safeguards so that a pastor and/or governing body cannot directly or indirectly exert dictatorial control over a church;
- (5) Have an adequate number of spiritually qualified members to fill the offices of the church called for in its Constitution or Bylaws; and
- (6) Make provision for a pastor who is a credentialed minister in good standing with the General Council and District Council.

**(b) Relationship to and support of the General Council and District Council.** A General Council affiliated assembly should cooperate in the work and support the programs of the General Council and District Council and may send delegates to the General Council and District Council. They shall be amenable to the District in all matters that affect the peace and harmony of the Fellowship.

**(c) Right of self-government (sovereign rights).** Each General Council affiliated assembly has the right of self-government under Jesus Christ, its living Head, and shall have the power to choose its own pastor and officers (by appointment, co-optation, or other means), and transact all other business pertaining to its life as a local unit. It shall have the right to administer discipline to its members according to the Scriptures and its Constitution or Bylaws. It shall have the right to acquire and hold title to property, either through trustees or in its corporate name as a self-governing unit. The fact it is affiliated with The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall in no way destroy its rights as above stated or interfere with its sovereignty. The governance model adopted by the local assembly shall conform to the guidelines of Constitution, Article XI, Section 1, paragraph a, subparagraph (4).

**(d) Subordinate in matters of doctrine and conduct.** A General Council affiliated assembly shall recognize that the District Council or The General Council of the Assemblies of God has the right to approve scriptural doctrine and conduct and to disapprove unscriptural doctrine and conduct and the authority to withdraw its Certificate of Affiliation if deemed necessary. (See Article VI, Section 4, of the General Council Bylaws.)

**(e) Right of appeal.** When in need of counsel or advice, the General Council affiliated assembly may appeal to the Sectional Committee, District Officers, or District Presbytery for help. It may appeal from a decision by the District Presbytery to the Executive Presbytery of The General Council of the Assemblies of God when there is a question as to whether or not the assembly has received proper help from the District. When exceptions are taken to the decisions of the Executive Presbytery, either by the General Council affiliated assembly or by the District Presbytery, appeal may be made to the General Presbytery.

### Section 2. District Council Affiliated Assemblies

A church that the District Executive Committee, according to policies approved by the District Presbytery, has granted recognition as an Assemblies of God church, but that has not yet been granted recognition as a General Council affiliated assembly, shall be a District Council affiliated assembly. Such assemblies shall be in organizational assistance status with the District Executive Committee and the appropriate Sectional Committee, which may provide for pastoral care until such assemblies proceed to General Council affiliated status. These assemblies shall be encouraged to proceed to the status of

sovereign General Council affiliated assemblies. When they meet the qualifications for such recognition, the District shall initiate and guide the application process.

### **Section 3. Parent Affiliated Churches**

Parent Affiliated Churches (PACs) are local assemblies that have been parented or planted by an existing church in a location other than the parent church's home campus. The requirements for creating and maintaining a PAC shall be described in the appropriate District CPD policy manuals, and shall include the following:

- a. A potential parenting church must follow the same new church planting procedures which any other minister or group of believers would follow. Before announcing, promoting, or acting toward creating a PAC, the parenting church must make the appropriate applications to, and be granted approval by, the District CPD Board. If the CPD Board denies application for a PAC, the parenting church may appeal to the District Presbytery, whose decision shall be final.
- b. A PAC and its parent shall provide the same financial and other reporting to the CPD Board as any other approved church plant.
- c. If the parent church is located within the Alabama District, the parent church shall be accountable to the District on behalf of the PAC for all activities of the PAC. If the parent church is located outside of the Alabama District, the PAC shall be subject to the Alabama District as specified in the District CPD policy manuals.
- d. As is the case with all other assemblies, PACs shall be encouraged to proceed to the status of sovereign General Council affiliated assemblies. When they meet the qualifications for such recognition, the District shall initiate and guide the application process. Granting of sovereign General Council affiliation status ends the assembly's status as a PAC, and permanently places the assembly in the same relationship to the Alabama District as any other sovereign assembly. Failure to proceed to General Council status when directed to do so by the District may result in the District's ceasing to recognize the PAC as an Assemblies of God church.
- e. These requirements apply to all PACs planted in the Alabama District, whether or not the parent church is located within the Alabama District.

### **Section 4. Cooperating Assemblies**

A Non-Assemblies of God local church may be granted the status of Cooperating Assembly at the discretion of the District Presbytery. The requirements for the granting and maintenance of such recognition shall be described in the appropriate policy approved by the District Presbytery, and shall include the following:

- a. The church shall subscribe to Article V. Statement of Fundamental Truths of the General Council Constitution.
- b. The relevant Sectional Committee shall ensure that there are no legitimate objections from our existing ministers and churches in the Section or nearby, and shall make a recommendation to the District Presbytery.
- c. The District Presbytery shall have final authority to approve or disapprove applications for Cooperative status within the District.
- d. The Presbytery's recommendation shall be made to the General Council Executive Presbytery, which shall act in cooperation with the District in granting or denying the applying church Cooperative status with the General Council.
- e. Cooperative status is granted on a temporary 4-year term, renewable by request of the local church at the discretion of the District Presbytery and the General Council Executive Presbytery.
- f. The ultimate goal of Cooperative status is that the local church will officially affiliate with the District Council and the General Council as an Assemblies of God church.

### **Section 5. Assemblies of God Total Giving Participation**

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

## **ARTICLE XII. PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1. All District property, real or chattel, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred or conveyed in the corporate name of the District, i.e., Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc.
  2. When approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the District Presbytery, the District Presbytery shall have and is hereby given the authority to purchase any and all such property that they deem advisable for the growth and development of the District Council program; and they shall be authorized to provide such finances as shall be necessary for the purchasing of said property.
3. (a) No real property of the Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., which is held for use of the entire District, such as District headquarters or campground property, shall be sold without the same shall have been first authorized by a two-thirds vote of the membership present at any regular or special session of the District Council, which has been properly called.
- (b) Such property may be leased, rented or mortgaged as the need arises, when authorized by a two-thirds vote of the District Presbytery present at any regular or special meeting thereof.
1. Other property acquired for the purpose of promoting and establishing home missions churches may be sold, transferred, leased, rented, conveyed or mortgaged in the corporate name of the Alabama District Council when authorized by a two-thirds vote of the District Executive Committee. All proceeds received from such property shall be placed in the appropriate Reserve Fund to be used for home missions at the discretion of the District Church Planting and Development Board.
  2. Church property reverting to the Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc. because of a local assembly ceasing to function as a church body may be sold, transferred, leased, mortgaged, rented or conveyed in the corporate name of the Alabama District Council when authorized by a two-thirds vote of the District Executive Committee and the applicable Sectional Committee. All proceeds received from such property shall be used at the discretion of the above-named committees in furtherance of the Gospel of Christ.
  3. When requested to do so, the District Secretary or any other member of the Executive Committee shall attach a certified copy of the minutes of the meeting in which authorization for the conveyance, lease, contract or mortgage was duly authorized by the proper vote of the membership, or by the proper vote of the District Presbytery, or by the proper vote of the District Executive Committee, as the case may be. Such certificate shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.
  4. In the event the Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc. ceases to function as a church body, property, real or chattel, owned by said church body shall thereupon revert to the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., whose home address is Springfield, Missouri. Thereafter, the said General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc. shall have full authority to use or dispose of said reverted property at its discretion. However, in the event of sale, the proceeds derived therefrom shall be used in furtherance of the Gospel of Christ.

### **ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS**

(a) Substantive changes to the Constitution must be made in the form of amendments. Amendments to the Constitution may be made at any regular or special meeting of the District Council by a two-thirds majority vote provided they have been processed through the Resolutions Committee, and provided the proposed amendments have then been submitted in writing to the voting constituency at least 30 days prior to the District Council.

(b) When the need arises for non-substantive Constitution changes without a formal amendment, a Constitution and Bylaws Editorial Committee shall be appointed by the District Presbytery from the membership of the District Council. Members should be selected on the basis of their familiarity with the Constitution and Bylaws and their editorial skills. The editorial committee shall have the power to recommend such revisions to this Constitution as are, in its judgment, non-substantive modifications or clarifications, reorganization or renumbering, or revisions made necessary because of punctuation, spelling, or other errors of grammar or expression. The recommended revisions must be approved by the District Presbytery by a two-thirds majority vote, after which they become effective immediately and shall be permanent subject to revocation by the membership of the District Council at any duly called meeting.

### **BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I. PARLIAMENTARY ORDER**

In order to expedite the work of the District Council and avoid confusion in its deliberations, the official meetings of the District Council shall be governed by the accepted rules of parliamentary procedure as set forth in the most current edition of Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised, in keeping with the spirit of Christian love and fellowship.

## **ARTICLE II. VOTING CONSTITUENCY AND QUORUMS**

### **Section 1 – District and Sectional Council Voting Constituency**

The voting constituency shall consist of all accredited members present and registered at the District Council or Sectional Councils. This shall include all ordained, licensed and certified ministers, all credential categories of senior ministers, and one duly selected (by appointment, co-optation, election or other means) delegate from each assembly.

### **Section 2 - District and Sectional Council Quorums**

Ministers and delegates who shall respond to the announcement of the time and place of the District Council and/or Sectional Council meetings as given out under the general supervision of the District Presbytery shall constitute a quorum.

### **Section 3 - District Presbytery Quorum**

The majority of the District Presbytery assembled for a duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE III. OFFICERS**

### **Section 1 - Qualifications**

#### **a. Executive Officers**

They shall be ministers who have been ordained to the ministry with the Assemblies of God for a period of at least three Council years and of mature experience and ability, whose lives and ministry are above question and who faithfully contribute to the District treasury according to our Bylaws. They must have been members of the District Council for at least three years at the time of election.

#### **b. Honorary Presbyters**

They shall consist of former members of the District Presbytery who are at least sixty years of age and who have been members of the District Presbytery at least twenty years, and all former District Superintendents. These individuals shall be presented a plaque of recognition by the District Presbytery for their faithful services to the Alabama District Council. They shall not be members of the District Presbytery.

#### **c. Other Officers**

They shall be members of the District who are of mature experience and ability, whose lives and ministry are above question and who have faithfully contributed to the District treasury according to our Bylaws. They must have been members of the District for at least one year at the time of election. With the exception of the District Women's Ministries Director and Assistant Director, they shall be ordained.

### **Section 2 - Nominations and Elections**

#### **a. Nominations**

All candidates for District offices shall be nominated by secret ballots, except the District Secretary-Treasurer and the District Women's Ministries Director and Assistant Director. The District Presbytery shall serve as a nominating committee for these offices. All names thus presented shall be balloted upon until a candidate shall have received a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. In the event two-thirds of the votes cast are received by a qualified candidate on the nominating ballot, an election shall be declared. If no such majority shall have been received by the first three electoral ballots taken, the two candidates having the highest number of votes in the third electoral ballot shall be the only nominees to be further voted upon and all other names shall be eliminated.

#### **b. Elections**

##### **1. Executive Officers**

- (a) The District Superintendent shall be elected at the District Council for a four-year term.
- (b) Other Executive officers shall be elected at the District Council for four-year terms.

##### **2. General Presbyters** shall be elected at the District Council for four-year terms.

##### **3. Sectional Presbyters** shall be elected at their respective Sectional Councils for three-year terms.

4. **Christian Education Department officers** shall be elected at the District Council for four-year terms.
5. **Youth Ministries Department officers** shall be elected at the District Council for four-year terms.
6. **Women's Ministries Department officers** shall be elected at the District Council for four-year terms.-
7. **Missions Department officers** shall be elected at the District Council for four-year terms.
8. **Other Sectional officers** shall be elected at their respective Sectional Councils for three-year terms.

**c. Effective Date of Taking Office**

All District officers whose elections are provided for in these Bylaws shall assume the duties of office within sixty days after election unless other arrangements can be worked out which would be acceptable to the District Presbytery.

**Section 3 - Order of Elections**

The order of elections of officers of the District Council shall be as follows:

- a. The District Superintendent shall be elected for a period of four years in years in which the last figure of the year is an odd number, such as 2001, 2003.
- b. In those years in which the last figure of the year is an odd number, such as 2001, the District Youth Director, District Missions Director, one General Council Presbyter, the Assistant District Christian Education Director, and the Women's Ministries Department Assistant Director shall be elected for terms of four years.
- c. In those years in which the last figure of the year is an even number, such as 2002, the Assistant District Superintendent, the District Secretary-Treasurer, the District Christian Education Director, the Women's Ministries Department Director, one General Council Presbyter, the Assistant District Youth Director and the Assistant District Missions Director shall be elected for terms of four years.

**Section 4 - Vacancies**

- a. When there is a vacancy in a full-time office of the District, there shall always be an election.
- b. A special election shall be called to fill a vacancy in a full-time office unless the vacancy occurs within thirty days of the next session of the District Council, in which case the election shall be held at the regularly scheduled District Council.
- c. All Assistants' offices shall be filled by election at the next regularly scheduled District Council following the vacancy.
- d. In the event the Superintendent's office is vacated, the Assistant Superintendent shall perform the duties of the Superintendent until the election is held.
- e. If the unexpired term is more than one year, the elected officer shall fill the unexpired term. If the unexpired term of the office is one year or less, he may fill the unexpired term of office and one full term of office.
- f. In the event a District Sectional Presbyter's office becomes vacant for any reason, the Assistant Sectional Presbyter shall assume that office until the next Sectional Council.

**ARTICLE IV. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**Section 1 - Duties of the Superintendent**

- a. To act as president of the corporation in all legal matters.
- b. To preside at the meetings of the District Council.
- c. To be the Executive head of the District and to supervise the work of the District through the departments heads during the interim between the sessions of the District Council.
- d. To preside at all meetings of the District Presbytery and to receive all communications directed to that body.
- e. To preside at all meetings of the District Credentials Committee.
- f. To administer discipline in all cases when requested to do so by the District Presbytery.
- g. To perform any of the functions usual and customary for the presiding officer, or such as may be directed by the District Presbytery or District Council. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
- h. To conduct those conferences or retreats for the ministers or laity that he deems beneficial. The churches shall not expect a regular visit from the Superintendent, since the conferences, retreats, Sectional Councils, fellowship meetings, and other special services are for all the constituency of the District.
- i. To preside over regular Executive Cabinet meetings.
- j. To be a General Presbyter by virtue of his office.
- k. To provide consultation with the department heads, and counsel regarding all ministries, projects, endeavors, special speakers, and honoraria.

l. To have authority to sign checks in behalf of and for the Alabama District Council, Inc. in case the District Secretary-Treasurer should become incapacitated or the Secretary-Treasurer's office should become vacant, said authority being granted only until such time as the District Secretary-Treasurer should become able to assume his/her duties or until a District Secretary-Treasurer could be duly appointed or elected, as the case may be.

m. To have authority to perform any function of the Secretary-Treasurer related to the ministers and churches of the District in the absence of the Secretary-Treasurer.

### **Section 2 - Duties of the Assistant District Superintendent**

- a. To act as vice-president of the corporation in all legal matters.
- b. To assist in the work of the District as directed by the Superintendent.
- c. To assume the duties and responsibilities of the Superintendent's office if for any reason it is vacated.

### **Section 3 - Duties of the Secretary-Treasurer**

- a. To act as Secretary of the meetings of the District Council, District Presbytery, and those committees of which he is a standing member.
- b. To make and keep records of the proceedings of the District Council and District Presbytery, and publish the same as directed by the District Presbytery.
- c. To be custodian of:
  1. The official seal of the District;
  2. All official, legal, and financial documents, records, and correspondence of the District office relating to the District Council as a corporate entity, and of all official District office executive interaction with the ministers and churches of the District;
  3. All the District Council funds.
- d. To distribute the ministerial credentials issued by the General Council, and keep records of all ministers in the District.
- e. To be authorized to sign all official and legal documents and to perform such other functions as are customary, or as may be directed by the District Council or Presbytery. He/she shall be considered an ex-officio member of all committees.
- f. To contact pastors of the District in arranging dates with them for ministering to their assemblies concerning any phase of the District work he/she shall choose to promote.
- g. To make his/her ministry and counsel available to all pastors, ministers, and churches of the District, and they shall feel free to invite him/her when his/her services are desired.
- h. To edit the Alabama District Messenger and yearbook.
- i. To make and keep an accurate record of all disbursements and receipts, and to conduct the work of his/her office according to accepted standards of business.
- j. To give financial reports from time to time as may be requested by the District Presbytery. The District books shall be closed at least one calendar month prior to the District Council, and they shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant.
- k. To perform such other functions as are customary to this office, or as may be directed by the District Council or District Presbytery.

### **Section 5 - Duties of District Presbytery**

- a. To have the general oversight of the corporation during the interim between District Council sessions.
- b. To act for the Fellowship in all matters that affect its interest while the Council is not in session, and to make a report to the District Council as requested.
- c. To provide for its own meetings, and its decision shall be final unless reversed by the District Council.

### **Section 6 - Duties of Sectional Presbyters**

- a. To become acquainted with the needs of their Sections.
- b. To cooperate with the District office by keeping the District Superintendent informed of the interests, activities and developments in their Sections and to execute the instructions given them by the District Superintendent and the Executive Presbytery for the welfare and development of the Sections.
- c. To cooperate with the District program on the District, Sectional, and area levels.
- d. To preside over church business meetings when called to arbitrate differences between congregations and pastors or to assist with other problems requiring outside help.

**Section 7 - Duties of the General Presbyters**

- a. To represent the District in all meetings of the General Presbytery.
- b. To attend the District Presbytery meetings and to have a voice and vote in same.
- c. To serve with Sectional Credentials Committee when requested to do so.
- d. To prepare a joint report of the General Presbytery meetings to be shared with the District Presbytery.

**Section 8 - Executive Cabinet**

To hold regular meetings for the purpose of coordinating the operation of the various District departments.

**Section 9 - Sectional Committees**

- a. Credentials
  1. To consider with the District Superintendent and available District Executive Officers, initial applications for Certified, Licensed, and Ordained credentials, approve or disapprove those initial applications, with the District Secretary-Treasurer sending approved Certified and Licensed applications on to the General Council Credentials Committee for the issuing of credentials.
  2. Approved applications for Ordination are sent to the District Presbytery to then approve or disapprove, with the District Secretary-Treasurer sending applications for Ordination approved by the District Presbytery on to the General Council Credentials Committee for the issuing of credentials.
  3. All renewals of all credential levels are simply processed through the offices first of the District Secretary-Treasurer, then forwarded to the General Council General Secretary's office for the issuing of credential renewals.
- b. To promote all District interests in their respective Sections.
- c. To serve with the church planting and development Director as the CPD Committee for their respective Sections.
- d. To relieve the Executive officers of the preliminary hearing of local church issues until such matters have been presented to the appropriate Sectional committee for solution.

**ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES****Section 1 - Standing Committees**

Standing committees shall be appointed when necessary. They shall serve for the designated time or until their purpose is accomplished. In the event a vacancy shall occur in a standing committee, the District Superintendent shall be authorized to fill such vacancy.

**Section 2 - Credentials Committee**

The District Presbytery shall constitute the District Credentials Committee. With respect to initial applications for Ordained credentials, they shall have authority to approve or reject the recommendations of the Sectional Credential Committees, with the District Secretary-Treasurer sending applications approved by the District Presbytery on to the General Council Credentials Committee for the issuing of Ordained credentials.

**Section 3 - Finance Committee**

There shall be a finance committee consisting of the Assistant District Superintendent as chairman, two members of the District Presbytery, and two other ordained ministers who are not Presbyters. Each member, other than the chairman, shall serve for a four-year term, and the District Superintendent shall appoint one member each year. This committee shall be expected to review annually the salaries, expenses, etc., of all District officials and make their recommendations to the District Presbytery. They shall be requested to make a study of the overall financial program of the District with respect to the ultimate budgeting of all finances.

**Section 4 - Resolutions Committee**

- a. **Procedure for presentation of resolutions.** A Resolutions Committee shall be appointed by the District Superintendent. All resolutions for presentation to the District Council, except emergency resolutions, shall be presented to the District Secretary's office at least 30 days prior to a District Council session. All resolutions affecting the Constitution shall be presented to the District Secretary's office at least 45 days prior to a District Council session, except those resolutions coming out of the District Presbytery session prior to the District Council. Resolutions of emergency nature shall be decided by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

- b. **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 thereof shall be expected to be the first speaker on behalf of the resolution.
- c. **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:
  1. Possible conflict with the corporate charter, Constitution, or Bylaws.
  2. Those proposals absurd in substance.
- d. **Right to sponsor.** If the Resolutions Committee determines that a resolution is inappropriate, it shall so advise the author(s) and shall apprise them of their right to present the proposed resolution to the house for determination as to appropriateness.
- e. **Format of presentation.** The Resolutions Committee shall:
  1. Put resolutions into proper form.
  2. Eliminate duplication where similar resolutions relating to a specific subject will be offered in a logical sequence.

### **Section 5 - Scholarship Committee**

- a. The District scholarship program shall be funded from 5% of ministers tithe income, local church contributions, individual contributions, business contributions, grants from various sources, interest income from the endowment portion of the scholarship fund, and so forth.
- b. The scholarships awarded annually shall be the Superintendent's scholarships (students pursuing degrees designed for pastoral/preaching ministry), the Pastor's Dependent scholarship (children of Alabama credentialed ministers), the Church Ministry scholarship (students pursuing ministries such as Youth, C.E., music, leadership, church administration, etc.), the Distance Education scholarship (students pursuing online/correspondence degrees at the institute, college, or graduate level).
- c. The committee will be composed of the District Superintendent, District Secretary-Treasurer, and District Youth Director as permanent members, and other members as described in the Scholarship Committee policy manual.
- d. The committee policy manual will be revised as needed by the committee, subject to District Presbytery approval, and will guide the committee in awarding scholarships in a methodical, professional manner. The manual will contain the original resolution passed by the District Council in session as a guideline for the committee in its future revisions.
- e. For reasons of sound stewardship of the General Fund, the District Presbytery may at any time temporarily reduce or suspend designation of 5% of the ministers' tithe income to fund the district scholarship program, and require that the program be funded from its other sources, including interest or principle from the scholarship endowment fund, until the District Presbytery deems it prudent to resume funding the district scholarship program with a percentage of the ministers' tithe income up to the normal 5%.

### **Section 6 – Student Loan Partnership Committee: The Timothy Initiative**

- a. The Alabama District Council will invest in new ministers by partnering with them in the repayment of their student loans through the Student Loan Partnership Program, called the Timothy Initiative. This program will be administered by the Student Loan Partnership Committee, or Timothy Committee.
- b. The Alabama District will partner with qualifying new ministers for up to the first five years of their ministry in this District. Funds for this repayment will come from two sources:
  1. Each year in which a minister qualifies, the District will pay an amount toward his or her student loan equal to the amount paid by the minister, up to 100% of the tithe paid to the District by that minister that year.
  2. Each year the District will also take 2.5% of its total income from all remaining ministers' tithe and use it to help repay the student loans of these same qualifying ministers, over and above the amount in sub-paragraph 1, according to the equitable formulas created by the committee and the District Presbytery.
- c. Ministers must apply annually, and must meet the conditions in the Timothy Initiative policy and procedure manual. This manual will be created and maintained by the committee, subject to District Presbytery revision and approval. The manual will contain the original resolution passed by the District Council in session as a guideline for the committee in its future revisions.

### **Section 7 - Special Committees**

Special committees may be created by the appointment of the District Superintendent as may be required.

## **ARTICLE VI. MINISTRY**

All provisions of this District Council Bylaw article shall be subject to, and in accordance with, the more detailed provisions of the General Council Bylaws, Article VII. Ministry.

### **Section 1 - Ministry Described**

- a. Ordained ministers** - Men and women of mature experience and qualifications, able to undertake the responsibilities of the full gospel ministry.
- b. Licensed ministers** - Men and women who give evidence of being divinely called of God and who intend to devote their lives to the preaching of the Gospel or to a specialized ministry.
- c. Certified ministers** - Men and women who are beginners in the Gospel ministry or specialized ministry or who do not devote their entire time to the work of the ministry.

### **Section 2 - Qualifications**

#### **a. General Qualifications**

1. A Scriptural born-again experience and the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4.
2. A willingness to conform to such provisions as made for them by the General and District Councils in reading courses and other training.
3. An application personally submitted to the proper committee for their consideration.
4. A written examination as required by General Council Bylaws to be administered at the District headquarters concurrent with the fall meeting of the District Presbytery. The District Secretary-Treasurer may approve additional sites and times for the administration of the written examination as he/she deems justified in any particular case, subject to any relevant General Council requirements.
5. Fulfillment of all requirements found in the General Council Bylaws, Article VII. Ministry, relevant to the level of credential for which an applicant has applied.

#### **b. Specific Qualifications**

##### **1. Certified Ministers**

Certified ministers credentials may be issued to those who meet the general qualifications outlined above and who have complied with the following requirements:

- (a) Read the Bible through.
- (b) Studied the prescribed course in Section 3, Paragraph a, unless equivalent accredited Bible school training has been acquired.

##### **2. Licensed Ministers**

License to preach may be issued to those who have met the general qualifications mentioned above, and have complied with the following:

- (a) Read the Bible through.
- (b) Have an active ministry.
- (c) Have certified completion of study course requirements as outlined in Section 3, Paragraph b, by the time of their respective Sectional Councils, unless equivalent accredited Bible school training has been acquired.

##### **3. Ordained Ministers**

The rites of ordination may be issued to those who have complied with the following:

- (a) Must have fulfilled the requirement as outlined in the New Testament Scriptures (I Tim. 3:17; Titus 1:7-9). We understand these scriptures to require ability and leadership as well as maturity of experience and Christian character sufficient to enable the candidate to be unquestionably qualified as an example of the believer in all matters of life and conduct. Having effected a useful previous ministry, good conduct and experience will be considered as evidence of such attainment.
- (b) Must be 23 years of age or over.

- (c) Must have held license for at least two consecutive years.
- (d) Must have had an active ministry for at least two consecutive years.
- (e) Must have resided in the District for at least one full year.
- (f) Must have cooperated with the area, Section and District programs in attitude, service and stewardship.
- (g) Must have certified completion of study courses as outlined in Section 3, Paragraph c, by the time of their respective Sectional Councils, unless equivalent accredited Bible school training has been acquired.

**c. Exceptions**

1. Any exception from the preceding stipulated requirements shall be left to the discretion of the District Credentials Committee.
2. We disapprove of the granting of credentials to a married person in cases where either the applicant or the married partner has a former companion living, except in those cases where such is permitted by the General Council Constitution and Bylaws.
3. **Annulment.** The Credentials Committee of the Alabama District Council may give consideration as to whether an applicant's annulment of a former marriage is consistent with the Scriptural position of the Fellowship relating to the holding of ministerial credentials; or, in the case of a divorce or dissolution, whether the circumstances would more appropriately be classified as calling for annulment. The application must be accompanied by clear and satisfactory evidence of an illegal marriage through deception or fraud and shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Presbytery of the General Council. Appeals from the decisions of the Executive Presbytery may be made to the General Presbytery.

**Section 3**

**a. Study Courses for Certified Ministers**

1. Christ in the Synoptic Gospels
2. Introduction to Pentecostal Doctrine
3. Acts: the Holy Spirit at Work in Believers
4. Prison Epistles: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon
5. Introduction to Hermeneutics: How to Interpret the Bible
6. The Local Church in Evangelism
7. Assemblies of God History, Missions, and Governance
8. Relationships and Ethics in Ministry
9. Beginning Ministerial Internship

**b. Study Courses for License**

1. Introduction to theology: A Pentecostal Perspective
2. New Testament Survey
3. Old Testament Survey
4. Romans: Justification by Faith
5. Introduction of Homiletics
6. Eschatology: A Study of Things to Come
7. Effective Leadership
8. Conflict Management for Church Leaders
9. Intermediate Ministerial Internship
10. Introduction to A/G Missions

**c. Study Courses for Ordination**

1. Prayer and Worship
2. Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
3. The Corinthian Correspondence
4. The Poetic Books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Songs of Solomon
5. Preaching in the Contemporary World
6. Church Administration, Finance and Law
7. Pastoral Ministry
8. Advanced Ministerial Internship

**Section 4 - Credentials**

- a. Ordination certificates, license to preach, and certified ministers credentials with accompanying annual Fellowship certificates will be issued by the General Council office in Springfield, Missouri.
- b. Ministerial credentials shall be considered valid only when accompanied by an up-to-date Fellowship certificate. All Fellowship certificates are renewed annually, and are valid only until December 31st.

### **Section 5 - Inactive or Disabled Ministers.**

All credentialed ministers who shall withdraw from active ministry or shall cease to engage in pastoral, evangelistic, or other full-time ministry, shall be expected to notify the District office, which shall inform the general secretary who shall then be authorized to transfer the names of such persons to the inactive list, unless the District officary requests otherwise by letter.

- a. *Definition.* All ministers who have not been actively engaged in viable ministry and proclamation of the gospel over a period of 1 year shall have their names placed upon the inactive list for the following year.
- b. *Removal of inactive ministers from ministerial list.* When a minister is inactive for 2 or more consecutive years, his or her name shall be eliminated from the ministerial list, unless the District officary requests otherwise by letter.
- c. *Exceptions.* This shall not apply to those whose inactivity has been caused by infirmity; or those engaged in other aspects of full-time ministry such as the National Leadership and Resource Center or district workers, educators, ministers of music, ministers of youth, and ministers of Christian education; or those who have reached the age of 60 years; or those ministers who have had 25 years of approved service as credentialed ministers, or those whose spouse is disabled or has retired giving them little opportunity for public ministry.
- d. *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 the District office shall not have further obligation of financial support to the General Council.
- e. *Restoration to active status.* Should the minister at any time return to active ministry, his or her name may be restored to the active list by the general secretary upon application bearing endorsement by the District officary.

### **Section 6 - Performing Marriage Ceremonies**

- a. *Ministerial guidelines.* We discourage any Assemblies of God minister performing a marriage ceremony for anyone who has been divorced and whose former spouse is still living, unless the case is included in the exceptional circumstances described in General Council Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 5, paragraph b.
- b. *Violation of conscience not required.* We realize that the remarrying of such persons included in the exceptive circumstances in General Council Bylaws, Article IX, B, 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.
- c. *Same-sex ceremonies.* No minister shall perform any type of marriage, cohabitation, or covenant ceremony for persons who are of the same sex, or who were of their own volition surgically transgendered. 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.
- d. *Counsel.* An Assemblies of God minister is urged to counsel applicants for marriage ceremonies with scriptural guidelines for Christian marriage prior to performing the ceremony. A minister may not perform ceremonies for persons who, in the minister's opinion, approach marriage without proper forethought, wisdom, and sobriety.

### **Section 7 - Ministers' Participation in Local Assemblies**

- a. The Senior Pastor of an assembly shall have full authority to decide the extent of participation which any credentialed ministers may have in that assembly, including joining as members, voting, holding office of any kind, and so forth.
- b. All credentialed ministers are required to accept and support the Senior Pastor's position in this matter. All assemblies are requested to cooperate with this requirement.

### **Section 8 - Ministerial Relations**

- a. All ministers shall be amenable to the District Council in matters of doctrine, conduct and practice.
- b. All ministers moving from another District into this District to reside shall automatically come under the jurisdiction of this District. In order to establish membership, they shall be required to register their credentials within 60 days with the District Secretary by a letter of transfer from their former District.
- c. No pastor should leave an assembly without advising the District Superintendent, the Presbyter in that Section, and the local assembly at least one month prior to his/her departure.
- d. Ministers who pastor churches in our Fellowship shall be required to seek credentials with our District and to attend the annual Sectional Councils in the Sections where their churches are located.

### **Section 9 - Ministerial Courtesy and Ethics**

- a. All discourteous conduct is disapproved and all ministers are advised against interfering with pastors in charge of assemblies, whether it be by communicating with their members without consent, or by such communications with members of the assembly as will hurt the influence of the leader. All communications which concern the assembly as a whole shall be addressed to the pastor and not to private members. Where there is no pastor, letters concerning the work shall be addressed to the officers of the assembly.
- b. No minister shall attempt to begin a new assembly in any given location by communicating with persons in the established assembly in the community for the purpose of building with its members who may be out of harmony with the local church. In the event such a group desires leadership, NO communication or organizational attempt shall be made without first consulting with the local pastor and the church planting and development Director. Every effort must be made to work out a satisfactory agreement. In the event such an agreement cannot be reached, decision in such matters shall be made by the Sectional Committee together with the District CPD Board.
- c. Any minister who shall willfully offend in these matters shall be subject to discipline by the District Presbytery.

### **Section 10 - Ministry in a Non-Assemblies of God Church**

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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 11 - Discipline**

- a. Occasions sometimes arise which make it necessary to deal with ministers who are affiliated with us who for some reason seem to have reached the place where, in the estimation of the brethren, endorsement can no longer be given to their ministry. It is obvious that the District Credentials Committee which has the authority to recommend to the General Council Credentials Committee that a minister receive credentials, also has the right to recommend withdrawal of said credentials. General inefficiency in the ministry, a failure or inability to correctly represent our Pentecostal testimony, a record of assembly breaking instead of making, a contentious, non-cooperative spirit, an assumption of dictatorial authority over an assembly, arbitrary rejection of District counsel, declared open change in doctrinal views, a habit of running into debt which brings reproach upon the cause of Christ, a marriage in opposition to our Constitutional stand on marriage and divorce, etc., may give cause for action of the Credentials Committee.

If, after repeated counsel and warnings, there has been no change of character or attitude on the part of the minister, the officary of the District Council may withdraw their endorsement and recommend to the General Council Credentials Committee that his/her Fellowship certificate be not renewed or that his/her name be dropped from the official list of ministers of the General Council.

Such action shall be set forth in writing, satisfactory reasons shall be given for the procedure taken, and a copy of the action shall be placed in the hands of the minister.

**b. Request for trial**

1. Ordained Ministers - See General Council Bylaws, Article X, B, Section 1.
2. Licensed Ministers and certified ministers - those who carry license or certified ministers credentials, and are under charges, may have the right of trial upon written request to the District office within thirty days of receipt of registered letter declaring action taken.

**Section 12 - Attitude Towards Those Removed From Council Fellowship**

In order to render effective decisions made in the interest of proper discipline and for the protection of our assemblies, after investigation and consideration of all facts by those qualified to act in such cases according to our cooperative agreements, such decisions shall be by all considered just and final, and all who hold credentials shall refrain from taking any attitude towards offenders that would tend to nullify or set at naught the solemn verdict of the brethren entrusted with the responsibility.

In the event of a violation of this agreement, the offender shall be subject to reprimand, or such other discipline as shall be agreed upon by the officary of the District with which he is affiliated. In the event that the agreement shall be violated outside of his/her District, the officary of the District in which the offense is committed may communicate with the General Secretary, and it shall be his/her duty to notify the offending minister that a repetition of the offense will seriously affect his/her standing as a Council minister and, if persisted in, may result in his/her suspension or severance from our Fellowship.

**Section 13 - Reinstatement**

**a. Authorization.** Applications for reinstatement of credentials may be made by any minister whose name has been removed from our Fellowship by presenting his/her application to the District Executive Committee, addressed to the District Superintendent. The District Executive Committee shall examine the application, and if it has been properly filled out by his/her answering every question completely, and if it meets the minimal time-lapse requirement as set forth in Paragraph b, the Executive Committee shall present this application to the appropriate Sectional Committee for recommendation and then present it to the District Presbytery for final action. All District procedures shall be in accord with the relevant current provisions of the General Council Bylaws.

**b. Minimal Time-Lapse.** When a minister who is a member of our Fellowship shall have been removed from our rolls for any cause, except failure to renew, and shall apply for reinstatement, he/she shall in no case be eligible for reinstatement until at least six months shall have elapsed after his/her name has been stricken from our list of ministers. For a minister who is listed as "dismissed, the minimal time-lapse required before he/she is eligible to apply for reinstatement shall be one year, except that a minister who is dismissed because of conduct unbecoming to a minister or indiscretions involving morals, the minimal time-lapse shall be two years. The time-lapse shall be computed from the date of the District Presbytery action.

**ARTICLE VII. ASSEMBLIES**

**Section 1 - Government**

**a. Local Church Governance**

1. It is recommended that each local assembly adopt Bylaws modeled after one or more of the approved Pastor-Led, Elder-Led, and Congregational examples available from the District office and file incorporation papers with their local probate judge as part of the process of being recognized as an Assemblies of God church.
2. CP&D assemblies shall follow the guidelines found in the CPD policy manuals.
3. A copy of the Bylaws chosen at the church's inception shall be kept in the church's file in the District office, and its affairs conducted in harmony with this copy, should the church's own copy of its Bylaws ever be lost. Should nothing be found in that church's file, the combined District Executive Committee and Sectional Committee shall choose the Bylaws model by which the church's affairs shall be conducted.
4. It is required that whenever a local assembly amends its Bylaws an updated copy be sent to the District office to be placed in its file.

**b. District Assemblies.** All District assemblies shall be in organizational assistance status with the District Executive Committee. Also, any other assembly shall enter organizational assistance status in the event that any of the following conditions prevail:

1. Financial indebtedness to the District Council or General Council.

2. Inability to maintain Scriptural order.
3. Conducting the assembly's business affairs improperly.
4. Bringing reproach upon the Assemblies of God by being in a state of confusion.

## **Section 2 - Safeguarding the Assemblies**

**a. Unreliable and Unsafe Teachers and Preachers.** Many unreliable and unsafe teachers and preachers go about seeking entrance into assemblies without any recommendation from the District. Therefore, all pastors, workers and leaders of assemblies should make proper investigation regarding people not known to them, and those who are no longer credentialed with us, and refrain from inviting them for ministry, until proper recommendation be forthcoming. The advice and counsel of the District Presbytery should be sought in such cases, and in all matters of importance when at all possible. Pastors and Presbyters should notify each other, reciprocally, as to such persons when any unreliability becomes manifest.

**b. Calling Non-Assemblies of God Ministers as Senior Pastors.** All of our assemblies shall refrain from calling as senior pastor any person not having up-to-date ministerial credentials with the General Council of the Assemblies of God. Any assembly desiring to call as senior pastor someone without such credentials must follow the following procedure.

1. Before calling a non-credentialed person to candidate, the assembly's leadership shall consult both the Sectional and District officials and apply for a non-credentialed pastor exemption. The assembly shall supply the officials with the person's name and contact information.
2. The appropriate Sectional or District officials shall interview the person in accord with whatever protocols the District Presbytery has established, obtaining the same kind of background information, references and commitments to our doctrine, practice and to the Fellowship normally required of credentialed ministers.
3. The Presbytery shall consider all relevant information and circumstances, and either grant or deny the assembly permission to call the person as a candidate. They shall communicate their decision to the person and to the assembly's leaders, apprising both of the reasons for the permission or the denial.
4. The assembly's leaders shall have the right, if they so choose, to appear once personally before the District Presbytery to either explain their application during the original process, or to appeal should the Presbytery deny their application.
5. If the Presbytery grants the exemption, and the person could potentially qualify for credentials with the Assemblies of God, then at the discretion of the Presbytery credentials must be pursued according to the protocols established by the Presbytery.

### **c. Failure to Follow Proper Procedure**

1. Any assembly that calls a non-credentialed person to candidate for senior pastor without following this procedure shall immediately enter organizational assistance status with the District Executive Committee.
2. Any assembly whose application for a non-credentialed pastor exemption is denied by the Presbytery, but which calls the non-credentialed person to candidate anyway, shall immediately enter organizational assistance status with the District Executive Committee.

## **Section 3 - Names of Churches**

We recommend that the names of churches in the Alabama District include "Assembly of God and that the words "Assembly of God" be properly displayed in such a way as to make clear our identification.

## **Section 4 - Membership Transfer**

To insure proper church fellowship throughout the District and to insure adequate records of our constituency, it is recommended that none of our assemblies shall receive members from sister churches without a proper transfer.

## **Section 5 - Classifications**

### **a. District Assemblies**

The basis for recognizing District assemblies shall be as follows:

1. Church planting and development efforts that have, in the opinion of the Church Planting and Development Board, developed to the extent that they would merit District recognition.
2. Churches joining our Fellowship from other organizations or from an independent status, who have an active adult voting membership of less than twenty people.

### **b. Sovereign Assemblies**

Sovereign assemblies are those organized groups of believers who have met the requirements set forth in the Alabama District and General Council Constitution and Bylaws.

### **Section 6 - Privileges**

#### **a. District Assemblies**

Each recognized District assembly shall be given a certificate of affiliation by the District Council which shall entitle them to representation in Sectional and District Councils by one lay delegate selected (by appointment, co-optation, election or other means) prior to such meetings.

#### **b. Sovereign Assemblies**

Each recognized sovereign assembly will be given a certificate of affiliation by the General Council which shall entitle them to representation in Sectional, District, and General Councils by one lay delegate selected (by appointment, co-optation, election or other means) prior to such meetings.

### **Section 7 - Distances Between Churches**

In seeking and securing property for church buildings, the following guidelines will apply:

**a. Rural areas and cities of less than 10,000 in population:** not less than a two-mile radius separation from an existing Assemblies of God church will be observed.

**b. Cities of 10,000 to 20,000 in population:** not less than a two-mile radius separation from an existing assembly will be observed unless approved by the existing church and the Sectional committee.

**c. Cities of more than 20,000 in population:** not less than a one-mile radius separation from an existing assembly will be observed.

**d.** In the event a local assembly desires to relocate because of unusual circumstances for the furtherance of the kingdom of God, the assembly may appeal to the District Presbytery for the waiving of the distance limits specified in paragraphs a, b, and c above. In such cases the District Presbytery shall be authorized to make the final decision.

### **Section 8 - Continuing Education Partnership: The Apollos Initiative**

**a.** Continuing education, spiritual formation, and equipping for ministry is something taught and practiced as a priority in Scripture, and therefore incumbent upon all ministers of Christ who long to grow deeper in the Word and more effective in ministry.

**b.** We recommend that all of our local assemblies help meet this need by paying for not less than half (50%), and if possible all (100%), of the cost of all continuing education and equipping which their pastor and staff choose to pursue, from informal seminars to formal education.

**c.** The Apollos Initiative partnership between a local church and its pastor and staff should be a budgetary priority for the local church, and should be over and above the minister's normal remuneration.

**d.** At an appropriate time of each year, the District Superintendent shall communicate in a letter to our local churches the importance of the Initiative, the great blessing it brings to ministers and churches, and encourage each local church to provide this priority service for their pastors and staffs.

**e.** Any local church making the District Secretary-Treasurer aware in writing before the fiscal year's end of the amount of their participation in the Apollos Initiative will receive World Ministries Credit of that amount.

## **ARTICLE VIII. FINANCES**

### **Section 1 - Obligations of Churches**

**a.** Each assembly shall be expected to faithfully cooperate with the District Council and General Council financial program.

**b.** Each assembly shall be expected to receive an expense offering for each District official who may visit the assembly on official business.

**c.** Each assembly should accept their responsibility to provide a retirement income for their pastor and ministerial staff and their families by contributing an amount equal to 5% of the pastor's salary (over and above salary) To the minister's MBA retirement account.

### **Section 2 - Obligations of Ministers**

**a.** All ministers shall be required to remit on a monthly basis 7.5% of their income earned from Gospel ministry and from secular work for the support of the District general fund.

**b.** The following exceptions are permitted:

1. Ministers who receive wages strictly from secular employment and regularly attend a local assembly shall be required to support the local assembly with 5% of their income, and shall also be required to support the District general fund on a monthly basis with 5% of their income.
2. Evangelists shall be required to support the local assembly of which they are a member with 5% of their income, and shall also be required to support the District general fund on a monthly basis with 5% of their income.
3. Financial obligations of missionaries, military and industrial chaplains, and nationally appointed home missionaries are as outlined in Article VII, Section 8c of the General Council Bylaws.

c. Compliance with the above requirements shall be a prerequisite for membership in the Alabama District Council and for the renewal of credentials of all active ministers. Any minister whose obligation falls into arrears shall be required to appear before his/her respective Sectional committee at the time of the Sectional Councils, and his/her credentials will be withheld until such time as his/her financial obligation is brought up-to-date.

d. All ordained ministers shall recognize their obligation to support our General Council headquarters office in Springfield by contributing from their tithes or as an offering, the sum of twenty dollars (\$20.00) per month. Licensed ministers shall contribute the sum of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per month, and certified ministers shall contribute the sum of seven and one half dollars (\$7.50) per month.

e. Each minister should accept the responsibility to provide a retirement income for himself and his/her family by contributing an amount equal to 5% of the minister's salary to the MBA minister's account.

### **Section 3 - Salaries and Expenses**

a. The salaries, expenses and privileges of all District officials shall be determined by the District Presbytery after considering the recommendations of the Finance Committee.

b. The need for other employees, their salaries, etc. shall be determined by the Executive Cabinet.

c. The Alabama District shall accept its responsibility to provide a retirement income for its ministers and their families by contributing an amount equal to 5% of each minister's tithe paid to the District during each fiscal year to the minister's MBA retirement account.

### **Section 4 - Ministers' Emergency Relief**

Disbursement for ministers' emergency relief are to be made from the general fund at the discretion of the District Executive Committee.

### **Section 5 - Obligation to Southeastern University**

The District Council shall support Southeastern University with five percent (5%) of all ministers' tithes.

## **ARTICLE IX. MISSIONS**

### **Section 1 - Missions Plan**

Recognizing our privilege and obligation to fulfill the Great Commission (Mark 16:15), we shall endeavor by all proper and Scriptural means to promote Missions beginning at home and extending to all the earth. It is customary to consider gospel work in our nation as U.S. missions, and ministry in other lands as World missions. For convenience we make that distinction. Hereinafter, the term "missionaries" refers to appointed U.S. or World missionaries, and the terms "Missions" or "missions" refers to U.S. missions, World missions, or both.

### **Section 2 - Missions Promotion**

#### **a. District and Sectional Promotion**

1. The District Missions Director shall be responsible for assisting missionaries in planning itineraries, arranging for missionary conventions, and fostering the interest of Missions.

2. The Assistant Presbyter or another minister selected by the District Missions Director in each Section of the District shall serve as the Sectional Missions Representative to work with the District Missions Director in implementing the District missions program.

3. A strong missionary emphasis shall be provided in such District meetings as District Council, ministers' institutes, etc.

**b. Local Church Promotion**

Each local church is encouraged to promote missions in the following ways:

1. Schedule missionary speakers in the local assembly regularly as they are available.
2. Conduct a missions convention at least once a year.
3. Show missionary multimedia promotions frequently. (Resources are available from Assemblies of God U.S. Missions and Assemblies of God World Missions in Springfield).
4. Secure faith promises.

**Section 3 – World Missions**

- a. The District Missions Director shall proactively facilitate the ministries of appointed World missionaries from the Alabama District in every feasible way.
- b. The District Missions Director shall maintain active communication with all Alabama World missionaries, and serve whenever necessary as a liaison and communication link between them, District departments, the District Presbytery, and local churches.
- c. He/she shall resource the District and local churches with information, expertise, and the planning of World missions trips of various kinds.
- d. He/she shall maintain active communication with the General Council offices of World Missions, regarding the status of Alabama World missionaries, policies, and whatever other information is necessary to resource the District officials, local churches, and World missionaries.

**Section 4 – U. S. Missions: District Church Planting and Development (CPD)**

**a. Church Planting and Development Board**

1. There shall be a District Church Planting and Development Board consisting of the District Executive Committee, District Missions Director, Assistant District Missions Director, and other members as described in the CPD policy manual of the Missions Department.
  2. The District Missions Director shall be chairman of the CPD Board and shall serve as the CPD Director by virtue of his/her office.
  3. The CPD Board is charged with two primary functions:
    - (a) To initiate action to establish new churches.
    - (b) To develop and lead to maturity existing churches that give evidence of need for help and willingness to receive help.
  4. The CPD Board shall create and revise as needed, subject to approval by the District Presbytery, a policy manual to define and to guide the purview, policies, and operations of CPD.
  5. CPD and the CPD Board shall be subject to, shall report to, and shall operate under the authority of, the District Presbytery.
- b. The District Superintendent, the CPD Director, and the respective Sectional Committee shall serve as the CPD Committee for each section of the District.
- c. The respective CPD committees must be informed of and shall have the privilege of attending all Board meetings that affect their particular Sections.
- d. All Assemblies of God churches in the District shall be requested to send 2 percent of their general fund income to the District each month to be used for church planting and development at the discretion of the CPD Board.

**Section 5 – U. S. Missions: Chi Alpha College Ministries**

**a. District Chi Alpha Committee**

1. There shall be a District Chi Alpha Committee consisting of no more than nine members.
2. The ex-officio members shall be the District Chi Alpha Representative, District Superintendent, District Missions Director, District Secretary-Treasurer, and District Youth Director. The remaining members shall be supportive local pastors appointed by the District Missions Director and approved by the District Executive Committee.
3. There shall be a District Chi Alpha Representative.
  - (a) He/she shall be appointed by the District Missions Director, with the prior approval of the District Superintendent and the District Presbytery.
  - (b) Qualifications:

- (1) He/she shall be a graduate of a CMIT program approved by the National Chi Alpha office.
  - (2) He/she shall have served at least three years on a single secular university campus as lead campus missionary-pastor.
  - (3) He/she shall have served at least two years in the Alabama District at some point in time.
4. The District Chi Alpha Committee shall create and revise as needed, subject to the approval of the District Presbytery, a District Chi Alpha policy manual to define and to guide the purview, policies, and operations of the District Chi Alpha College Ministries.
- b. All District Chi Alpha policies, operations, and personnel shall be in accordance with the policies of the National Chi Alpha office. Where the District Chi Alpha policy manual is unclear or silent on any matter, the policy manuals of the National Chi Alpha office shall serve to guide the District Chi Alpha Committee and District Presbytery.

## **ARTICLE X. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED**

**Section 1.** In accord with its constitutional prerogatives, the Alabama District Council disapproves of those doctrines and practices listed in the General Council Bylaws, Article IX – Doctrines and Practices Disapproved, Sub-Article B. List of Doctrines and Practices Disapproved. That Article is duplicated in the following Section.

**Section 2. General Council Bylaws, Article IX – Doctrines and Practices Disapproved, Sub-Article B.**

### **B. LIST OF DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED**

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

#### **Section 1. Unconditional Security**

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

#### **Section 2. Legalism**

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

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

#### **Section 3. Eschatological Errors**

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

**b. Setting a date for the Lord's return.** It is unwise to teach that the Lord will come at some specified time, thereby setting a date for His appearing (Mark 13:32,33; Luke 12:37-40; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). It is also unwise to give out from the platform, or publish, visions of numbers and dates fixing the time of the

second coming of the Lord.

**c. Post-Tribulation Rapture.** The General Council of the Assemblies of God has declared itself in the Statement of Fundamental Truths that it holds to the belief in the imminent coming of the Lord as the blessed hope of the Church; and since the teaching that the Church must go through the Tribulation tends to bring confusion and division among the saints, it is recommended that all our ministers teach the imminent coming of Christ, warning all to be prepared for that coming, which may occur at any time, and not lull their minds into complacency by any teaching that would cause them to feel that specific Tribulation events must occur before the rapture of the saints.

**d. Amillennialism.** The General Council of the Assemblies of God disapproves of the amillennial teaching and its attendant erroneous philosophy which denies the fact of a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth, and substitutes for it the theory that this Christian or Church dispensation is the spiritual Millennium of which, its proponents say, the Bible writers prophesied.

**e. Credentials jeopardized if made an issue.** We recommend that those ministers who embrace any of the foregoing eschatological errors refrain from preaching or teaching them. Should they persist in emphasizing these doctrines to the point of making them an issue, their standing in the Fellowship will be seriously affected (Luke 21:34-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:9,10; 2 Thessalonians 1:4-10; Revelation 3:10,19,20).

#### Section 4. Membership in Secret Orders

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

The nature of such organizations demands secrecy (John 18:20; Acts 26:26) reinforced by religious oaths (Matthew 5:34) and strong attachment by binding obligations to persons who are for the most part 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 the Assemblies of God should refrain from identifying themselves with any of the secret orders that the General Council recognizes as essentially of the world, worldly; and the General Council advises any who may have identified themselves with such orders to sever their connections with them (2 Corinthians 6:17). Furthermore, Assemblies of God ministers are requested to use their good influence among our lay members to dissuade them from such fraternal affiliations (1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:24-26).

#### Section 5. Divorce and Remarriage

##### a. Membership

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

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

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

##### c. Local church leadership

(1) *Standard for offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon.* Since the New Testament restricts divorced and remarried believers from the church offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon, we recommend that this standard be upheld by all our assemblies (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:12), except when the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).

(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 spouse is still living, unless the case is included in the exceptional circumstances described in Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 5, paragraph b.

(2) *Violation of conscience not required.* We realize that the remarrying of such persons included in the exceptional circumstances in Bylaws, Article IX, B, 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 urged to counsel applicants for marriage ceremonies with scriptural guidelines for Christian marriage prior to performing the ceremony. A minister may not perform ceremonies for persons who, in the minister's opinion, approach marriage without proper forethought, wisdom, and sobriety.

**e. Ministerial credentials.** We disapprove of any married minister of the Assemblies of God holding credentials if either minister or spouse has a former spouse living unless the divorce occurred prior to conversion 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). (See also Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2, paragraphs j and k.)

**Section 6. Worldliness**

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

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

**Section 7. Abuses of Stewardship**

**a. Tithing**

(1) According to the Scriptures, tithes should be used for the support of the active ministry and for the propagation of the gospel and work of the Lord and not be given to charity or used for other purposes. In tithing, the ministers ought to be examples.

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

**b. Solicitation of funds**

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

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

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

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

Projects or institutions of national scope that plan to solicit funds from Assemblies of God churches must have the authorization of the Executive Presbytery of The General Council of the

Assemblies of God.

Promotion of all projects of a missions character must have the authorization of the Executive Presbytery.

(3) The obtaining and use of mailing lists for promotional purposes not having proper authorization or which are not in keeping with policies of The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be considered improper and unethical, whether it be under the name of a prayer chain beyond a local scope, chain letters, or appeals to the constituency for the support of ventures of strictly local or personal character. All offenders guilty of the practices expressed in the foregoing paragraphs shall be subject to discipline.

**c. Private ownership of religious institutions.** The General Council of the Assemblies of God approves the holding of title to all church buildings, schools, or other institutions that are supported by funds solicited for the work of God by properly constituted corporations. It disapproves the holding of title to such properties by the ministers of the Assemblies of God, through private ownership, corporations sole, or closed corporations. In the event a local congregation is not incorporated or set in order by the district council, title should be vested in properly qualified trustees. Where private ownership exists, a properly incorporated body shall be formed and title to the property shall be transferred to the corporation.

A disregard of this principle and recommendation shall seriously affect the relation of the Assemblies of God members involved in such ownership.

### **Section 8. Violations of Ministerial 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, promoting, or attributing to themselves or others any degrees or titles conferred by institutions or organizations having, at the time of conferral, a formal accreditation status less than that of our appropriately corresponding Assemblies of God institutions (whether our institute, regional university, or seminary levels).

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

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

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

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

## ARTICLE XI. SECTIONAL BOUNDARY LINES

**Andalusia Section** — Counties: Butler, Covington and Crenshaw

**Anniston Section** — Counties: Calhoun, Cherokee, Cleburne, Etowah and St. Clair

**Baldwin County Section** — County: Baldwin

**Birmingham Section** — Counties: Jefferson and Shelby

**Cullman Section** — Counties: Blount, Cullman, Walker, and Winston

**Demopolis Section** — Counties: Choctaw, Clarke, Greene, Hale, Marengo, Sumter and Washington

**Dothan Section** — Counties: Dale and Geneva (east of Choctawhatchee river), Henry and Houston

**Enterprise Section** — Counties: Dale and Geneva (west of Choctawhatchee river), Coffee, and Pike (churches in Troy and Brundidge only)

**Mobile Section** — County: Mobile

**Monroeville Section** — Counties: Conecuh, Escambia, Monroe and Wilcox

**Montgomery Section** — Counties: Autauga, Chilton, Dallas, Elmore, Lowndes, Montgomery and Perry

**Phenix City Section** — Counties: Barbour, Bullock, Lee, Macon, Pike (except churches in Troy and Brundidge), and Russell

**Sylacauga Section** — Counties: Chambers, Clay, Coosa, Talladega, Tallapoosa and Randolph

**Tennessee Valley Section** — Counties: Colbert, DeKalb, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Marshall, Madison and Morgan

**Tuscaloosa Section** — Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Lamar, Marion, Pickens and Tuscaloosa

## ARTICLE XII. ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

1. Report of District Superintendent

2. Report of Assistant District Superintendent
3. Report of District Secretary-Treasurer
4. Report of District Youth Ministries Director
5. Report of District Missions and Men's Director
6. Report of District Christian Education Director
7. Report of District Women's Ministries President
8. Report of District Stewardship Director
9. Committee Reports
10. Report of Roster Committee
11. Unfinished Business
12. Election of Officers
13. New Business
14. Adjournment

All business sessions shall commence with prayer.

### **ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS**

a. Substantive changes to these Bylaws must be made in the form of amendments. Amendments to the Bylaws may be made at any regular or special meeting of the District Council by a majority vote provided they have been processed through the Resolutions Committee.

b. When the need arises for non-substantive Bylaws changes without a formal amendment, a Constitution and Bylaws Editorial Committee shall be appointed by the District Presbytery from the membership of the District Council. Members should be selected on the basis of their familiarity with the Constitution and Bylaws and their editorial skills. The editorial committee shall have the power to recommend such revisions to these Bylaws as are, in its judgment, non-substantive modifications or clarifications, reorganization or renumbering, or revisions made necessary because of punctuation, spelling, or other errors of grammar or expression. The recommended revisions must be approved by the District Presbytery by a majority vote, after which they become effective immediately and shall be permanent subject to revocation by the membership of the District Council at any duly called meeting.