

CONSTITUTION

OF

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

OF THE

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

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DENVER, COLORADO

Constitution

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**Constitution and Bylaws
of
The General Council of the Assemblies of God
in the
United States of America and
Selected Territories**

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Constitutional Declaration

WE BELIEVE:

That God's purpose concerning man is (1) to seek and to save that which is lost, (2) to be worshiped by man, and (3) to build a body of believers in the image of His Son.

That these believers, saved and called out of the world, constitute the Body or Church of Jesus Christ built and established upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

That the members of the Body, the Church (*ecclesia*) of Jesus Christ, are enjoined to assemble themselves for worship, fellowship, counsel, and instruction in the Word of God, the work of the ministry, and for the exercise of those spiritual gifts and offices provided for New Testament church order.

That it is evident the early apostolic churches came together in fellowship as a representative body of saved, Spirit-filled believers who ordained and sent out evangelists and missionaries, and under the supervision of the Holy Spirit set over the church pastors and teachers.

That the priority reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God is to be an agency of God for evangelizing the world, to be a corporate body in which man may worship God, and to be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son.

That 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, which enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs, adding a necessary dimension to worshipful relationship with God, and enabling them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ.

That we are a cooperative fellowship of Pentecostal, Spirit-baptized saints from local Pentecostal assemblies of like precious faith throughout the United States to be known as The General Council of the Assemblies of God whose purpose is neither to usurp authority over the various local assemblies, nor to deprive them of their scriptural and local rights and privileges; but to recognize and promote scriptural methods and order for worship, unity, fellowship, work, and business for God; and to disapprove unscriptural methods, doctrines, and conduct, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

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ARTICLE I. NAME

The corporate name is *The General Council of The Assemblies of God*, which refers to the legal entity.

The term *General Council* refers to sessions of the corporation.

The term *Assemblies of God* refers to the entire constituency.

ARTICLE II. NATURE

The General Council of the Assemblies of God is a cooperative fellowship based upon mutual agreements voluntarily entered into by its membership.

ARTICLE III. PREROGATIVES

The prerogatives of The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be:

- a. To encourage and promote the evangelization of the world.
- b. To encourage and promote the worship of God.
- c. To encourage and promote the edification of believers.
- d. To provide a basis of fellowship among Christians of like precious faith.
- e. To respond to human need with ministries of compassion.
- f. To establish and maintain such departments and institutions as may be necessary for the propagation of the gospel and the work of this Pentecostal fellowship.
- g. To approve scriptural teachings and practices, and to disapprove unscriptural teachings and practices. A list of disapproved doctrines and practices is set forth in Articles IX and X of the Bylaws.
- h. To have the right to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of such property as may be needed for the prosecution of its work.

ARTICLE IV. PRINCIPLES FOR FELLOWSHIP

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

ARTICLE V.

STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

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

1. The Scriptures Inspired

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

2. The One True God

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

The Adorable Godhead

(a) Terms Defined

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

(b) Distinction and Relationship in the Godhead

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

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

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

(d) Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead

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

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(e) The Title, Lord Jesus Christ

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

(f) The Lord Jesus Christ, God With Us

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

(g) The Title, Son of God

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

(h) Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ

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

(i) Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord

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

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

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

3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

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

- a. His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31,35).
- b. His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).

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

4. The Fall of Man

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

5. The Salvation of Man

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

a. Conditions to Salvation. Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy 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 (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).

6. The Ordinances of the Church

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

b. Holy Communion. The Lord’s Supper, consisting of the elements—bread and the fruit of the vine—is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers “till He come!”

7. The Baptism in the Holy 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; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent

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to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

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

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

9. Sanctification

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

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

10. The Church and Its Mission

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

Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshiped by man, and to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, 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).

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).

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- 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 (Galatians 5:22-26; 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 threefold purpose of leading the Church in: (1) evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20), (2) worship of God (John 4:23,24), and (3) building a Body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11,16).

12. Divine Healing

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

13. The Blessed Hope

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:51,52).

14. The Millennial Reign of Christ

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

15. The Final Judgment

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

16. The New Heavens and the New Earth

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

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ARTICLE VI. RELATIONSHIPS

The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall prosecute its activities through its general offices.

ARTICLE VII. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The General Council of the Assemblies of God

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

Section 2. Assemblies of God

The membership of the Assemblies of God shall consist of all ministers of the Assemblies of God and all other persons who are members of churches affiliated with The General Council of the Assemblies of God and its district councils.

Section 3. Voting Constituency

The voting constituency at a General Council shall consist of all members of The General Council of the Assemblies of God holding a current fellowship certificate who are present and registered and those delegates chosen by churches affiliated with The General Council of the Assemblies of God who are present and registered, each church being entitled to one delegate.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Sessions

Regular sessions of The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be held biennially, pursuant to a call by the Executive Presbytery.

Section 2. Special Sessions

Special sessions of The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be called by the Executive Presbytery if agreed to by a majority of the general presbyters.

Section 3. Right of Initiative

Special sessions of The General Council of the Assemblies of God may be called by the Executive Presbytery when presented with a written statement signed by at least 15 ordained Assemblies of God ministers setting forth the reasons for a special session, but only if the Executive Presbytery determines that such a special session is advisable.

**ARTICLE IX. OFFICERS AND PRESBYTERIES OF THE
GENERAL COUNCIL**

Section 1. Executive Officers

a. Officers and terms of office. The officers shall consist of the general superintendent, the assistant general superintendent, the general secretary, and the general treasurer, together with such other officers as may be authorized in the future. Their terms of office shall begin 60 days after the date of election, and shall continue for 4 years or until a successor qualifies.

b. Board of Administration. The executive officers shall constitute a Board of Administration.

Section 2. Executive Presbytery

a. Composition and terms of office. The Executive Presbytery shall consist of the general superintendent, the assistant general superintendent, the general secretary, the general treasurer, the executive director of the Assemblies of God World Missions, the executive director of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, together with 11 other persons to bring the number to 17. The terms of office for the executive director of the Assemblies of God World Missions and the executive director of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions shall continue for 4 years or until their successors qualify. The terms of office for all members of the Executive Presbytery, except as stated in this section and Section 1, shall begin 60 days after date of election and shall continue for 2 years or until their successors qualify.

b. Board of directors. The Executive Presbytery shall constitute the Board of Directors of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, performing such functions as are usual and customary for a board of directors. *Executive Presbytery* and *Board of Directors* shall be interchangeable terms.

Section 3. General Presbytery

a. Representation, qualifications, and responsibilities. The General Presbytery shall be composed of individuals of maturity, experience, and ability whose lives and ministry are above reproach, who shall represent the Fellowship in all phases of its work in their respective fields. The General Presbytery shall be the official policy-making body of the Assemblies of God when the General Council is not in session. Each district shall have the privilege of representation on the General Presbytery by three members—the district superintendent together with two others who shall be elected by their district council, one of whom shall be an ordained pastor of a church located in the district. They shall take office immediately.

b. Executive presbyters ex officio members. All members of the Executive Presbytery shall be ex officio members of the General Presbytery.

c. World and U.S. missions representation. The foreign fields shall be represented on the General Presbytery by the regional directors of the Assemblies of God World Missions and by two others from each of the overall areas which the regional directors represent. [See Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph d, (2)] The stateside missions work shall be represented on the General Presbytery by the departmental directors of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions. [See Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph d, (3)]

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d. Endorsed postsecondary schools representation. The duly endorsed postsecondary schools of the Assemblies of God shall be represented on the General Presbytery by their presidents. [See Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph d, (4)]

e. Evangelists representation. The Assemblies of God evangelists shall be represented on the General Presbytery by the national evangelists representative. [See Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph d, (5)]

f. Ethnic fellowship representation. A duly authorized ethnic fellowship shall be represented on the General Presbytery by one of its qualified members. An ethnic fellowship comprised of more than 100 churches shall be represented by two of its qualified members; and, an ethnic fellowship exceeding 150 churches shall be represented on the General Presbytery by three of its qualified members. [See Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph d, (6)]

g. Auditors. Duly qualified auditors may attend the sessions of the General Presbytery. [See Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph d, (7)]

h. Honorary general presbyters. Upon the approval of the General Presbytery, honorary members may be chosen by the General Council from among those ministers who (1) have reached the age of 60 years and (2) have served on the General Presbytery for 20 years or more, or served on the General Presbytery as a General Council executive officer for 8 years or more. The addition of such honorary members shall be in addition to the regular number of presbyters granted each district. [See Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph d, (8)]

ARTICLE X. DISTRICT COUNCILS

Section 1. Membership

Membership of each district council shall be determined by the district's constitution and bylaws.

Section 2. Area of Supervision

The district council shall have supervision over all the ecclesial and sacerdotal activities of the Assemblies of God in its prescribed field, except as provided for in the General Council Constitution and Bylaws or in cooperative agreements between the General Council and the district council.

Section 3. Language Districts

A language group may be recognized as a district of the Assemblies of God in accordance with the provision for district councils in the Bylaws. The territory of such a district is confined to ministry among certain language groups, and its geographical area of operation may therefore overlap or coincide with that of one or more other district councils. (See Bylaws, Article V, Section 5.)

Section 4. Credentialing Authority

The district council shall have the authority to examine and present candidates who qualify as certified ministers, licensed ministers, or ordained ministers in accordance with Article VII of the Bylaws. The applications of such candidates shall be forwarded to the general secretary of The General Council of the

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Assemblies of God for presentation to the General Council Credentials Committee for final review and issuance of the ministerial credential if the qualifications prescribed by Article VII of the Bylaws are satisfied. Any level of formal academic achievement (diploma or degree) shall not be a requirement for credentials, but it shall be required of applicants that they take such courses and pass examinations as shall be prescribed by the General Presbytery unless an exception is provided for in the Bylaws.

Section 5. Areas of Authority

The district council shall elect its own officers and arrange for its own meetings.

Section 6. Relationship With the General Council

The district council shall not violate the Constitution or Bylaws of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. In the prosecution of its work the district council shall keep vigilant watch against any violation of the principles of spiritual unity and cooperative fellowship to which the Assemblies of God Fellowship is unalterably dedicated. It shall be amenable to The General Council of the Assemblies of God in matters of doctrine and the discipline of ministers.

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) Accept the tenets of faith of the Assemblies of God;
- (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 a district council.

b. Relationship to and support of the General Council and district councils. A General Council affiliated assembly should cooperate in the work and support the programs of the General Council and district councils and may send delegates to the General Council and district councils.

c. Right of self-government (sovereign rights). Each General Council affiliated assembly has the right of self-government under Jesus Christ, its living Head, and shall have the power to choose or call its pastor, elect its official board, and transact

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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 a 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 IX of the Bylaws.)

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

Section 2. District Council Affiliated Assemblies

Provision shall be made by the district councils for district council affiliated assemblies which shall be under the supervision of the district council, in accordance with the provisions of the district council constitution and bylaws. These assemblies shall be encouraged to proceed to the status of sovereign General Council affiliated assemblies.

Section 3. Cooperating Assemblies

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

Section 4. 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. DISSOLUTION

The assets of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, a Missouri corporation, are irrevocably dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as stated in its Articles of Agreement and this Constitution. In the event of the dissolution of the corporation, and after providing for the payment of its debts and obligations, the remaining assets will not inure to the benefit of any private person or persons but will be distributed to one or more nonprofit organizations which are organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes and which are exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at any regularly called session of the General Council provided that the proposed amendments have been submitted in writing at least 6 months in advance to the Executive Presbytery. Before the Executive Presbytery may submit proposed amendments for consideration by a session of the General Council, it shall provide written notice of the proposed amendments by regular mail to the office of each district superintendent and each district secretary, and by insertion in the *Assemblies of God Ministers Letter* or any successor publication sent periodically to ministers of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, not later than 60 days prior to said session. Amendments to the Constitution shall require a two-thirds vote of all members present and voting.

BYLAWS

OF

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

OF THE

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

REVISED AUGUST 5, 2005

DENVER, COLORADO

Bylaws

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BYLAWS

OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

ARTICLE I. PARLIAMENTARY ORDER

The work of the General Council shall be governed by parliamentary procedure as set forth in the current edition of *Roberts' Rules of Order Newly Revised*, in keeping with the spirit of Christian love and fellowship.

ARTICLE II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND PRESBYTERS

Section 1. Officers

The officers of The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be elected at its regular meetings in the manner provided in these Bylaws. They shall be chosen from the membership of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and shall be persons of mature experience and ability, whose life and ministry are above question, and such qualities alone shall determine their eligibility.

Section 2. Nominations and Elections

a. General superintendent and assistant general superintendent. All candidates for the offices of general superintendent and assistant general superintendent shall be nominated by receiving 15 votes or more by secret ballot. A two-thirds vote of all votes cast shall be necessary to constitute an election. 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 election has been declared after the second elective ballot, the 15 candidates having the highest number of votes in the last ballot cast shall be nominees to be further voted upon, and all other names shall be eliminated. If no election has been declared after the third elective ballot, the three candidates having the highest number of votes in the last ballot cast shall be nominees to be further voted upon, and all other names shall be eliminated.

b. Other officers. The general secretary, general treasurer, executive director of Assemblies of God World Missions, and Assemblies of God U.S. Missions shall be elected in the following manner: The General Presbytery, serving as a nominating committee, shall be entrusted with the responsibility of making careful investigation concerning the qualifications and general fitness of available candidates for these offices and shall select by secret ballot one or more names to be presented for each office to the General Council in session for election. The General Presbytery shall submit as nominees to the General Council all qualified candidates who have received at least 15 votes in the General Presbytery. The candidates shall be presented to and voted upon by secret ballot by the General Council in session. In the event that only one candidate receives at least 15 votes in the General Presbytery nomination, the vote distinction by the General Council shall be by selecting "yes" or "no." There shall be no further nominations from the General Council floor. A two-thirds vote of all votes cast shall be required to elect.

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c. Nonresident executive presbyters

(1) *Nominations and elections.* The General Council shall have the right to elect additional officers to serve on the Executive Presbytery as provided in Constitution, Article IX, Section 2.

(a) *By area.* The nominations for 10 area nonresident executive presbyters shall be made as follows: Each district council at its annual meeting prior to the General Council session shall nominate two ministers from its district, one of whom is not an elected full-time district official, to be presented to the General Council as nominees from its area. These nominees shall be presented to and be balloted upon by the General Council in session. A two-thirds vote shall be required to nominate and elect. If no election has been declared after the third elective ballot has been cast, the three candidates having the highest number of votes in the last ballot cast shall be nominees to be further voted upon, and all other names shall be eliminated.

(b) *By ethnic fellowship.* The nominations for one ethnic fellowship nonresident executive presbyter shall be made as follows: Each general presbyter from an ethnic fellowship, serving in the year General Council meets, shall be presented to the General Council as a nominee from the respective ethnic fellowships. These nominees shall be presented to and be balloted upon by the General Council in session. A two-thirds vote shall be required to nominate and elect.

(2) *Divisions for electing nonresident executive presbyters.*

(a) *By area.* For the purpose of electing nonresident executive presbyters, The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be divided into 10 areas, according to district boundary lines in the following manner:

Northwest Area: Alaska, Montana, Northwest, Oregon, Southern Idaho, Wyoming

Southwest Area: Arizona, Hawaii, Northern California-Nevada, Rocky Mountain, Southern California

North Central Area: Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Northern Missouri, South Dakota, Wisconsin-Northern Michigan

South Central Area: Kansas, New Mexico, North Texas, Oklahoma, South Texas, West Texas

Great Lakes Area: Appalachian, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio

Gulf Area: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Southern Missouri, Tennessee

Northeast Area: New Jersey, New York, Northern New England, Pennsylvania-Delaware, Potomac, Southern New England

Southeast Area: Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Peninsular Florida, South Carolina, West Florida

Language Area-Spanish: Central Latin American, Gulf Latin American, Midwest Latin American, Northern Pacific Latin American, Southern Pacific Latin American, Puerto Rico, Southeastern Spanish, Spanish Eastern

Language Area-Other: Brazilian, German, Korean, Second Korean

(b) *By ethnic fellowship.* For the purpose of electing an ethnic fellowship nonresident executive presbyter, only those ethnic fellowships duly recognized (Bylaws, Article V, Section 7) shall be represented.

d. General presbyters

(1) *District representatives.* In addition to the superintendent of each district, who shall serve on the General Presbytery by virtue of office, two others 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.

(2) *Assemblies of God World Missions representatives.* Regional directors of the Assemblies of God World Missions, representing the missionaries from their respective areas, are members of the General Presbytery by virtue of office. Two additional representatives on the General Presbytery from each field fellowship shall be chosen in the following manner: The Assemblies of God World Missions Board shall nominate four missionaries from each general area represented by the regional directors, including international ministries. Nominees will be selected from missionaries who will be in the United States at the time of the General Presbytery meeting and who preferably have had administrative experience in the field fellowship. Ballots shall be sent to all missionaries in each area who shall by vote select two to represent them on the General Presbytery. These shall be mailed to the general secretary who shall prepare a report to the Executive Presbytery. A simple majority vote shall be required to elect.

(3) *Assemblies of God U.S. Missions representatives.* Departmental directors of Assemblies of God U.S. Missions shall be members of the General Presbytery by virtue of their office.

(4) *Endorsed postsecondary school representatives.* Endorsed postsecondary school representatives, as provided for in Constitution, Article IX, Section 3, paragraph d, shall be members of the General Presbytery.

(5) *Evangelists representative.* The national evangelists representative as provided for in Constitution, Article IX, Section 3, paragraph e, shall be a member of the General Presbytery.

(6) *Ethnic fellowship representatives.* Ethnic fellowship representatives, as provided for in Constitution, Article IX, Section 3, paragraph f, shall be elected biennially by their respective ethnic fellowships. A two-thirds vote shall be required to elect. They shall take office immediately upon election.

(7) *Auditors.*

(a) National directors elected by the Executive Presbytery and ratified by the General Presbytery shall serve as auditors of the General Presbytery.

(b) The legal counsel of the General Council shall be granted the privilege of auditing the General Presbytery meetings.

(c) A district may select no more than one auditor for all duly called sessions of the General Presbytery. Any auditor selected by a district shall be one of its full-time executive presbyters or officers. Expenses for the district auditors shall not be the responsibility of the General Council.

(d) Auditors may be added as approved by the Executive Presbytery.

(e) Auditors shall be without vote and shall have voice only at the request of the chairman. They shall absent themselves from any executive session of the General Presbytery.

(8) *Honorary members.* Honorary general presbyters as provided for in Constitution, Article IX, Section 3, paragraph h, shall have the right of voice and vote at all duly called sessions of the General Presbytery.

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Section 3. Vacancies

a. Executive officers. In the event any of the executive offices of The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall become vacant through death or other cause, the Executive Presbytery shall fill the office by appointment until the next meeting of the General Council; with the exception that, in the event of death or incapacity of the general superintendent, the assistant general superintendent shall succeed to the office of general superintendent until the next General Council; or, in the event the offices of general superintendent and assistant general superintendent both become vacant, the succession to the office of general superintendent until the next General Council shall be as follows: first, the general secretary; and second, the general treasurer.

b. Nonresident executive presbyters

(1) By area.

(a) In the event a vacancy shall occur, for any reason, in the office of an area nonresident executive presbyter, the general secretary shall request each district council within that area (see Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph c) to submit two nominees for the office. The General Presbytery shall, at its next meeting, elect one minister from among the nominees submitted to fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the General Council. (See Bylaws, Article II, Section 1, for qualifications.)

(b) Should a vacancy occur so close to the time of the meeting of the General Presbytery that insufficient time remains for district councils to select and submit nominees in the above manner, then nominees shall be obtained by a caucus of the general presbyters of the area involved. Such caucus to be held during the meeting of the General Presbytery.

(c) Nominees shall be voted upon by the entire General Presbytery until one receives two-thirds of all votes cast.

(d) In the event a nonresident executive presbyter moves to a location outside of the boundaries of the area, the Executive Presbytery shall declare a vacancy in that office.

(2) By ethnic fellowship.

(a) In the event a vacancy shall occur, for any reason, in the office of an ethnic fellowship nonresident executive presbyter, the general secretary shall submit as nominees all current general presbyters who represent an ethnic fellowship. (See Bylaws, Article V, Section 7.) The General Presbytery shall, at its next meeting, elect one minister from among the nominees submitted, to fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the General Council. (See Bylaws, Article II, Section 1, for qualifications.)

(b) Nominees shall be voted upon by the entire General Presbytery until one receives two-thirds of all votes cast.

c. General presbyters

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

(2) In the event an elected general presbyter is unable to attend a duly called session of the General Presbytery, by reason of illness or any other emergency, the district executive presbytery or district presbytery shall have the right to select an alternate, provided the alternate meets the ordinary requirements for general presbyters. The alternate shall have all the rights and privileges of a regularly elected general presbyter. The district shall present certification of an alternate to the general secretary not later than the opening session of the General Presbytery.

**ARTICLE III. DUTIES OF OFFICERS, PRESBYTERS,
BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION**

Section 1. Duties of the General Superintendent

The duties of the general superintendent shall include the following:

- a. Emphasize and implement the threefold mission of the church: the evangelization of the world, the worship of God, and the building of a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son; and promote and coordinate efforts directed toward the fulfilling of that mission.
- b. Superintend all work of The General Council of the Assemblies of God.
- c. Act as president of the corporation in all legal matters, and be an ex officio member of all committees and boards.
- d. Preside at the sessions of the General Presbytery and the General Council.
- e. Preside at all meetings of the General Council Credentials Committee and sign all credentials.
- f. Preside at all sessions of the Executive Presbytery and the Board of Administration and receive all communications directed to these bodies.
- g. Administer discipline in all cases when requested to do so by the General Council Credentials Committee.
- h. Sign all official and legal documents (see Section 7 of this Article).
- i. Perform any other functions usual and customary as presiding officer or such as may be directed by the General Council, the General Presbytery, or by the Executive Presbytery.

Section 2. Duties of the Assistant General Superintendent

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

- a. Assist the general superintendent.
- b. Serve as vice-president of the corporation and preside at meetings of the Executive Presbytery and the Board of Administration in the absence of the general superintendent.
- c. Perform any other functions under the supervision of the general superintendent, or such as may be directed by the General Council, the General Presbytery, or the Executive Presbytery.

Section 3. Duties of the General Secretary

The duties of the general secretary shall include the following:

- a. Make and keep true records of the proceedings of the General Council and shall publish the same as approved and directed by the Executive Presbytery.
- b. Serve as the custodian of the official seal and issue credentials under the direction of the General Council Credentials Committee and shall keep a record of all ordained, licensed, and certified ministers, and assemblies of the Fellowship.
- c. Sign all official and legal documents (see Section 7 of this Article).
- d. Serve as secretary of the General Presbytery, Executive Presbytery, the General Council Credentials Committee, and the Board of Administration and keep accurate minutes of the deliberations of these bodies.
- e. Edit and prepare for distribution the minutes of the meeting of the General Presbytery after examination and approval thereof by the Executive Presbytery.

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f. Perform such other functions as are customary or as may be directed by the General Council, the General Presbytery, or the Executive Presbytery.

Section 4. Duties of the General Treasurer

The duties of the general treasurer shall include the following:

a. Serve as custodian of all funds of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements according to generally accepted accounting principles.

b. Provide budgets and financial reports as periodically requested by the General Council, the General Presbytery, or the Executive Presbytery.

c. Provide oversight of an internal auditor, who shall be appointed by the Executive Presbytery and shall be directly accountable to the Board of Administration and the Executive Presbytery.

d. Provide oversight of the preparation of an annual audit of the financial records of The General Council of the Assemblies of God by an independent auditor, prepared in conformity with generally accepted auditing standards.

e. Give fidelity and such other bonds in amounts periodically determined by the Executive Presbytery.

f. Perform such other functions as are customary for the office of the general treasurer as may be directed by the General Council, the General Presbytery, or the Executive Presbytery.

Section 5. Duties of the Executive Director of Assemblies of God World Missions

The executive director of Assemblies of God World Missions, under the supervision of the Executive Presbytery, shall perform the following duties and render the following services:

a. Direct the world missions activities of the Fellowship.

b. Represent The General Council of the Assemblies of God in all relationships with governments or authorities where our world missions work is involved.

c. Distribute all world missions funds as directed by the World Missions Committee.

d. Keep such records of all funds received and disbursed as will safeguard the funds from loss en route to the field.

e. Serve as chairperson of the World Missions Committee and World Missions Board.

f. Keep a record of all official acts of the World Missions Board and other committees of the division.

g. Serve as an executive officer of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and thus serve on the Board of Administration.

h. Perform such other functions as may be directed by the General Council, the General Presbytery or the Executive Presbytery.

Section 6. Duties of the Executive Director of Assemblies of God U.S. Missions

The executive director of Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, under the supervision of the Executive Presbytery, shall perform the following duties and render the following services:

ARTICLE III

a. Direct the home missions activities of the Fellowship, insofar as such activities are not already directed within and by the respective district councils of the General Council.

b. Represent The General Council of the Assemblies of God in all relationships with governing authorities where U.S. missions work is involved.

c. Distribute all home missions funds as directed by the U.S. Missions Committee.

d. Serve as chairperson of the U.S. Missions Board and U.S. Missions Committee.

e. Keep a record of all official acts of the U.S. Missions Board and other committees of the division.

f. Serve as an executive officer of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and thus serve on the Board of Administration.

g. Perform such other functions as may be directed by the General Council, the General Presbytery or the Executive Presbytery.

Section 7. Duties of the Executive Presbytery

The Executive Presbytery is authorized to perform the following functions and duties:

a. Serve as the Board of Directors of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. They shall be empowered to supervise and have general oversight of all departments. They shall be authorized to act for the corporation in all matters that affect its interests while the General Council is not in session, subject to the provisions of paragraphs h and k of Section 7 and paragraph a of Section 9 of this Article.

b. Interpret policy originating in the legislation of the General Council or the General Presbytery. Such interpretations shall be final unless reversed at the next meeting of the body in which the legislation originated.

c. Buy, take, lease, or otherwise acquire, own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of real property, personal and mixed, tangible and intangible of whatsoever kind; to borrow monies as deemed necessary and to issue bonds of whatsoever kind, trust deeds, mortgages, debentures, and notes; and to enter into contracts; all as may seem expedient and proper in the furtherance of the work of The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

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

e. Issue annuity bonds or contracts, and to protect the same by judicious investments.

f. Purchase or dispose of securities as need requires in an effort to strengthen the financial position of the corporation.

g. Arrange for and announce the meetings of the General Council, with consideration for the interests of the Fellowship as a whole. The decision of time and place for such meetings shall rest in their hands.

h. Call business meetings of the General Presbytery when deemed advisable.

i. Make a report to the General Council of their activities on behalf of the Fellowship as may be directed.

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

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k. Be amenable to the General Presbytery. It shall communicate with the members of the General Presbytery before final action shall be taken on all matters of great importance.

Section 8. Duties of the Board of Administration

The Board of Administration shall be responsible to the Executive Presbytery and is authorized to perform the following functions and duties:

- a. Serve as the executive arm of the Executive Presbytery.
- b. Provide for general services as required for the various operations at general Headquarters.
- c. Execute those matters delegated to it by the Executive Presbytery.

Section 9. Duties of the General Presbytery

The General Presbytery is authorized to perform the following functions and duties:

- a. Act in all matters pertaining to world missionary and ministerial relationships, and all matters which pertain to the proper functioning of divisions, departments, and institutions in the Fellowship. Should an irreconcilable difference arise between the General Presbytery and the Executive Presbytery, the decision of the General Presbytery shall prevail until such time as the issue may be submitted to the General Council. All decisions pertaining to constitutional order or fundamental doctrines shall be referred to the General Council for ratification in the manner provided in the constitution.
- b. Act as a court of final appeal for a disciplined minister.
- c. Determine the salaries and allowances of all elected officers of the General Council. A committee of five general presbyters shall be appointed annually by the Executive Presbytery for the purpose of making a review of such salaries and allowances. It shall report its recommendations to the General Presbytery for final action.
- d. Ten percent or more of the members of the General Presbytery shall have the prerogative of calling a special session of the General Presbytery by presenting a signed request to the general superintendent who shall determine the time of such meeting in consultation with the Executive Presbytery.
- e. Any district council by the action of its district presbytery or any three or more general presbyters may have a matter added to the General Presbytery agenda at any time during any duly called General Presbytery meeting.

ARTICLE IV. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

Standing committees shall be appointed as 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 Executive Presbytery shall be authorized to fill such vacancy.

Section 2. Credentials Committee

The Executive Presbytery shall constitute the credentials committee of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, and said credentials committee shall be referred to in these Bylaws as the General Council Credentials Committee. It shall have the authority to issue certificates of ordination, licenses to preach, specialized ministries licenses, and certified ministers certificates, and to issue annual fellowship cards to those persons whose renewal questionnaires have received district endorsement. It may delegate the routine work of the credentials committee to the Board of Administration.

Section 3. Roster Committee

A Roster Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Presbytery prior to each meeting of the General Council. This committee shall be expected to open the roster on the morning of the day preceding the convening of the General Council. It shall be entrusted with the responsibility of examining credentials of all ministers and delegates. Ordained ministers shall identify themselves by fellowship cards of the current year; delegates from assemblies shall obtain letters from their church secretary or pastor certifying to their appointment by the assembly to represent it in the General Council. Badges shall be issued by the committee to all qualified delegates and ministers, and any other relevant status.

Section 4. Resolutions Committee

a. Procedure for presentation of resolutions. A Resolutions Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Presbytery. All resolutions for presentation to the General Council, except emergency measures, shall be presented to the general secretary's office at least 100 days prior to a General Council session. The Resolutions Committee shall prepare the resolutions in printed form and mail them to the General Council ministers and churches at least 30 days prior to the General Council, with the understanding that this does not apply to business growing out of Executive Presbytery and General Presbytery meetings just prior to the General Council, and that resolutions of an emergency nature shall be decided by a two-thirds vote of the General 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 General Council in session the author, sponsor, or a spokesperson appointed by the author or sponsor shall be expected to be the first speaker on behalf of the resolution.

c. Scriptural Interpretation. Except for resolutions submitted by the Executive Presbytery, the General Presbytery, or a district council, resolutions that involve scriptural interpretation shall be forwarded to the Commission on Doctrinal Purity when in the judgment of the Resolutions Committee such an action is needful.

d. Appropriateness of resolutions. The Resolutions Committee shall, by a two-thirds vote, determine the appropriateness of proposed resolutions. Inappropriate resolutions may include those that, if adopted, would conflict with the Constitution or Bylaws; or whose substance is not in keeping with appropriateness for discussion by the General Council. A resolution passed by a district council in session shall always be deemed appropriate.

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e. Right of sponsor. If the Resolutions Committee determines that a resolution is inappropriate, it shall so advise the author and shall apprise the author of his or her right to present the proposed resolution to the General Council in session for a determination as to appropriateness.

f. Format of presentation. The Resolutions Committee shall:

- (1) Put resolutions in proper form.
- (2) Eliminate duplication of similar resolutions relating to a specific subject.
- (3) Present resolutions in a logical sequence.

Section 5. Spiritual Life Committee

A Spiritual Life Committee shall be appointed by the general superintendent in consultation with the Executive Presbytery, selected from a cross section of the Fellowship. The committee shall function for a 2-year period and report to the biennial meeting of the General Council and to the Executive Presbytery as feasible.

Section 6. Other Committees

Other committees may be appointed by the General Presbytery or the Executive Presbytery.

ARTICLE V. DISTRICT COUNCILS

Section 1. Formation of New Districts

a. Conference status. In isolated geographical areas where there is development potential, the first step may be the establishing of a conference status that would provide assistance of an existing district until the new district is capable of independent operation.

b. Guidelines. Guidelines for the establishing of new districts shall include:

- (1) A minimum of 40 Assemblies of God churches.
- (2) Size and maturity of the churches as to membership, leadership, and program ministries.
- (3) The location, size, and potential growth of the geographical area under consideration.
- (4) The effect the establishment of the proposed new district will have on other districts.

c. Boundaries. The boundaries of the new district shall be determined by cooperative agreement between the district or districts geographically affected and the Executive Presbytery of The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 2. Officers

Each district council shall elect a superintendent, together with such other officers as may be deemed advisable by the district membership, such as, assistant superintendent, secretary-treasurer, and presbyters. A district superintendent or any other elected officer may serve other than full time at the discretion of the district council.

Section 3. Voting Constituency

The voting constituency shall consist of all ordained and licensed ministers, and accredited delegates from affiliated churches, and such other persons as may be prescribed by the district constitution and bylaws, who are present and registered at district meetings.

Section 4. Presbyters

District are encouraged to organize in such a way that the presbyter may focus on ministering to ministers, providing encouragement, prayer, leadership development, by modeling spiritual maturity and leadership to the pastors, ministers, and churches assigned to the responsible presbyter.

Section 5. Ethnic/Language Districts

a. Recognition qualifications. In order to become a district of the Assemblies of God, an ethnic/language group must have a minimum number of 40 churches. Any ethnic/language group consisting of less than 40 Assemblies of God churches may be authorized by the Executive Presbytery to form a fellowship of churches. The fellowship shall exist for the purpose of exchanging information facilitating evangelism, and establishing churches. Until such time as it is qualified to form a district, it shall be part of the geographic or language district. Leadership for fellowship groups shall be approved by the Executive Presbytery.

b. Equality with geographical districts. An ethnic/language district shall have the same privileges and responsibilities which are accorded district councils within the framework of the Constitution and Bylaws.

c. Cooperative relationship. Both the ethnic/language district and the geographical district shall seek to promote a spirit of fellowship and cooperation. The ethnic/language district officers and the geographical district officers should inform or consult with each other concerning the opening of new language works or institutions of any kind, in a given area. It is strongly recommended that the ethnic/language district and the geographical district appoint representatives(s) to serve with their respective presbyteries to provide and encourage cooperative strategies and relationships. The language churches, whether members of a geographical or ethnic/language district, are encouraged to unite where possible, in fellowship activities.

d. Sponsorship and affiliation of an ethnic/language group. Should an English-speaking church desire to initiate sponsorship of an ethnic/language group, it shall consult with its district officials for counsel and guidance. The geographical district should inform or consult with language district officers concerning the beginning of an ethnic/language group within churches belonging to the geographical district. The sponsoring church may provide facilities and support to such a work through its district U.S. missions department. Such an effort may be initiated with the objective in mind that it will develop into an Assemblies of God church. When such a church reaches as many as 20 adult members, it may then seek affiliation with a district of its choice following prescribed guidelines as outlined in these Bylaws.

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e. Church transfer procedure. When a church desires to transfer from an ethnic/language district to the geographical district in which it is located or from a geographical district to an ethnic/language district, a church business meeting shall be called and the minutes of said meeting shall reflect the action authorized by the congregation. This action shall be submitted to the officers of the ethnic/language district and the geographical district. If either district has objections, the church shall have the right of appeal to the Executive Presbytery of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution (Article XI).

Section 6. Dissolution of District

a. Loss of recognition. In the event an existing district shall have less than 40 churches, General Council or district affiliated, its recognition shall cease, unless an exception is granted by the General Presbytery.

b. General Presbytery prerogative. Dissolution of a district shall be the prerogative of the General Presbytery of The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Section 7. Ethnic and Language Fellowships

Ethnic or language groups may be authorized by the Executive Presbytery to form a fellowship of churches. The fellowship shall exist for the purpose of exchanging information, facilitating evangelism, and establishing churches. Although functioning as a fellowship, the ethnic churches shall remain affiliated with the appropriate district. When an ethnic or language group recognized by the Executive Presbytery functions as a fellowship and represents a specific number of churches determined by and within a district, a presbyter shall be appointed or elected from the ethnic or language fellowship to represent the ethnic or language fellowship within a district.

ARTICLE VI. ASSEMBLIES

Section 1. Procedure for Affiliation

It shall be the responsibility of the district presbytery to determine when an assembly has reached a state of growth, stability, and maturity qualifying it for affiliation with The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Qualifications shall include a minimum active voting membership of 20 persons. The assembly shall have matured to a point where a sufficient number of qualified persons are available for the offices called for in its constitution and bylaws.

The procedure for affiliation shall be:

a. A church desiring affiliation shall forward its request to the office of the district in which it is located. The district council shall provide an approved application form and procedural instructions.

b. The meeting in which an assembly shall be set in order shall be presided over by an officer of the district who shall assist the assembly in the adoption of a constitution and bylaws acceptable to the district.

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c. An existing, mature church that desires to affiliate with The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall apply to the office of the district council for guidance and assistance.

d. Upon approval by the district presbytery, the application for affiliation shall be forwarded to the general secretary of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Recognition of affiliation shall occur upon receipt by the assembly of an official Certificate of Affiliation issued by the general secretary.

Section 2. Annual Report and offerings From Assemblies

a. Annual Church Ministries Report. Each church of the Assemblies of God is requested to keep a current record of its membership and to report this information annually, on forms provided, to the office of the district secretary and the General Council secretary.

b. Fellowship Partners Offering. It is recommended that each church send to the General Council at least one offering for each calendar year toward the support of the administrative offices of the General Council. This offering shall be called Fellowship Partners offering, and shall be included with the Annual Church Ministries Report. It is suggested that each church's minimal offering be based upon its average Sunday morning attendance. A church averaging less than 50 is asked to send \$25 for the year; less than 100 but more than 50, \$50; less than 250 but more than 100, \$100; less than 500 but more than 250, \$250; less than 1,000 but more than 500, \$500; less than 2,000 but more than 1,000, \$1,000; over 2,000, \$2,000.

c. Assemblies of God Total Giving

(1) *Participation.* In order to support and develop the work and ministries of the Assemblies of God at home and abroad, all its churches are encouraged to send offerings at regular intervals.

(2) *Combined report.* A combined report of all offerings that are designated for departments shall be given under the caption of Assemblies of God Total Giving. The intent is to provide recognition for contributions to all ministries of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, to place each appeal and ministry on an equal basis, and to lend encouragement to churches and individual contributors to determine the appeal to which they will respond under the leading of the Spirit.

(3) *Credit.* Assemblies of God Total Giving recognition shall provide credit to Assemblies of God churches for contributions to the Fellowship Partners plan for support of the General Council; the Assemblies of God World Missions, Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, Benevolences Ministries, Christian Higher Education (including educational institutions), Church Ministries (including men's, women's, music, youth, and senior adults), General Administration (including executive and Spiritual Life offices), other General Council, regional, and district-sponsored or approved projects. Contributions from districts other than where a district-approved project is located can be granted Assemblies of God Total Giving credit only if the district where the contribution originates gives its approval and if the contribution is channeled through that district or the national Headquarters. It is expected that the national division or department related to a given project will be notified of approved projects. It is also understood that no district or region may receive Assemblies of God Total Giving credit for projects specifically disapproved by the General Council.

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Section 3. Safeguarding the Assemblies

a. Pastors and leaders of assemblies should make proper investigation of persons who seek to gain entrance to teach, minister, or pastor. Use of the platform should be denied until spiritual integrity and reliability have been determined. It is recommended that Assemblies of God churches use Assemblies of God ministers since the use of non-Assemblies of God ministers may bring confusion and problems detrimental to the Fellowship.

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

Section 4. Relationships Between Churches, District Councils, and the General Council

a. **Nature.** General Council affiliated churches are deemed to be sovereign, autonomous, self-governing, and self-determining bodies which have, by their sovereign, self-determining action in making application for and receiving recognition as a General Council affiliated church, entered into an agreement with the Fellowship to be amenable to the General Council and district council in matters of doctrine and conduct. (See Constitution, Article XI, Section 1, paragraph d.)

b. **Relationships.** Cooperative fellowship describes both the relationship that exists between local churches and their relationships with the district councils and the General Council.

c. **Organizational assistance.** The services of both the General Council and district council are available to assist the General Council affiliated church in dealing with any of its problems, either internal or external, when requested by the pastor or a majority of the official board of the church or a petition signed by 20 percent of the voting members.

d. **Preservation of affiliation.** In the event the termination of affiliation with The General Council of the Assemblies of God is under consideration by an affiliated assembly, the pastor or board shall invite the district officers to participate in a specially called business meeting for the express purpose of giving the district officers the opportunity to present the case for continued General Council affiliation. Final disposition of the matter may then proceed in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the local church.

Section 5. Guidelines for Minimal Membership for General Council Affiliated Assemblies

If a General Council affiliated church is unable to meet any of the criteria for affiliation as set forth in the Constitution, Article XI, Section 1, paragraph a, it shall seek the assistance of the district officers for help in maintaining the minimal requirement for General Council affiliation. The district may use any means prescribed by its bylaws to assist the church in returning to a position of strength. If the minimal requirements have not been attained, the church shall revert to district affiliated status until the minimal requirements for General Council affiliation have been attained.

Section 6. New Assemblies

The planting of new churches shall be a priority goal of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Resources at all levels shall be aligned to accomplish this purpose. Initiative for establishing new churches and the oversight of those churches may emanate from local assemblies, sections, and district councils. District presbyteries, sectional committees, or the authorities within a district charged with the responsibility of approving new churches shall not prohibit the planting of new churches unless a compelling reason exists. If it is determined that a compelling reason exists, a minister or local church desiring to plant the church shall have the right to appeal to their district presbytery or authorities within a district charged with the responsibility of approving new churches, and the decision of the district may be appealed to the General Council Executive Presbytery, whose decision shall be final.

Section 7. Assemblies Resulting From a Division

a. Status of assembly. When efforts to maintain unity and harmony in an assembly have failed, and a division results in a new congregation being formed, the district should exercise strong and wise leadership in ascertaining the facts and seek to preserve Assemblies of God adherents for the Fellowship. Within the bounds of ethical principles, sound doctrine, and district policy, all districts should seek to retain any meritorious group within the Assemblies of God.

b. Status of minister. Circumstances in each case will determine whether the minister should be disciplined or denied ministry in either the original church or the dissident group, or even residency in the area where the division occurred. If a minister is guilty of inappropriate conduct resulting in a division, the district presbytery shall deal appropriately with the minister as provided in Article X, Section 3, of the Bylaws.

Section 8. Transfer of Local Church Membership

a. Letter of introduction. It is recommended that members request a letter of introduction from the church of which they are a member to be sent by mail to the church with which they desire to affiliate.

b. Acknowledgment of transfer. It is recommended that the receiving church shall give an acknowledgment of transfer to the former church.

ARTICLE VII. MINISTRY

Section 1. Ministry Described

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

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

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

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

Section 2. Basic Qualifications

The following qualifications pertain to all applicants for ministerial recognition:

a. Salvation. Testimony to having experienced the new birth (John 3:5).

b. Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Testimony to having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues according to Acts 2:4. The Spirit-filled life will enable a minister to fulfill the threefold mission of the church (Constitution, Article V, paragraph 10).

c. Evidence of call. Clear evidence of a divine call to the ministry, evidenced by a personal conviction, confirmed by the work of the Spirit and the testimony of fellow ministers.

d. Christian character. A blameless Christian life and a good report of those who are without (Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:7).

e. Doctrinal position. A thorough understanding of and agreement with our doctrinal position as contained in the Statement of Fundamental Truths.

f. Assemblies of God polity. A satisfactory working knowledge of the principles, practices, and purposes of the Fellowship through a study of the General Council and district council Constitution and Bylaws

g. Voluntary cooperation and commitment to the Fellowship. An active loyalty to our constitutional agreements, a cooperative spirit, and a readiness to seek and receive the counsel of older mature Christians and those in positions of authority.

By voluntary it is meant that, upon learning the principles, doctrines, and practices of the Assemblies of God, and by seeing the benefits to be derived from being associated with such an organization, persons of their own free choice decide to become members, thus subscribing to all that for which the organization stands.

For the minister, by cooperation, it is meant, to the best of one's ability, complying with all decisions setting forth and defining duties and responsibilities incumbent upon members of the organization. It includes active participation and respect for the will of the majority expressed through constitutional processes.

Hence, for the minister, voluntary cooperation means that when the minister decides to become a cooperating member of the Assemblies of God, this cooperation and participation thereby becomes obligatory and not optional.

h. Commitment to the Fellowship. An active loyalty to our constitutional agreements, a cooperative spirit, and a readiness to seek and receive the counsel of older mature Christians and those in positions of authority.

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

(1) All applicants are required to be interviewed by the district credentials committee and, in preparation for the interview, pass a standard exam approved by the General Presbytery whereby they demonstrate knowledge of the Bible, Assemblies of God doctrines, and ministerial practices; and either

(2) Successfully complete equivalent training to that indicated in paragraph (3) below, preferably, in an endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary school; or in a seminary, college, Bible college, or school approved by the district credentials committee consistent with criteria established by the General Council Credentials Committee; or

(3) Successfully complete courses, prescribed by the General Presbytery, offered in correspondence through Global University of the Assemblies of God, or pass the final examinations in the prescribed courses; or

(4) Be recommended by a district credentials committee as qualifying for credentials through self-study and ministerial experience. Such candidates shall have a proven and fruitful ministry of substantial duration. Requests from a district for such a candidate shall be presented to the General Council Credentials Committee and may be granted on a case by case basis.

j. Mandatory screening. All applicants for ministerial credentials shall be screened through a designated screening agency established by the Executive Presbytery. Said screening shall be done by the district council prior to the submission of the application to the office of the general secretary.

k. Marriage status. We disapprove of any married persons holding ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God if either marriage partner has a former spouse living, unless the divorce occurred prior to his or her conversion except as hereinafter provided.

l. Ecclesiastical annulments and marriage dissolutions. The Executive Presbytery shall have the authority to determine whether an applicant qualifies for an ecclesiastical annulment. In such cases there must be clear and satisfactory evidence of deception, fraud, or other conditions which have a profound impact preventing the creation of a valid marriage union, unknown at the time of marriage by the applicant. The Executive Presbytery shall have the authority to determine whether an applicant qualifies regarding a former marriage when the termination of that marriage is consistent with the scriptural position of the Fellowship relating to the granting or holding of ministerial credentials; or if a former marriage ended prior to conversion. In those cases involving preconversion divorce they shall be decided on an individual basis just as those that deal with ecclesiastical annulments. Appeals from the decisions of the Executive Presbytery may be made to the General Presbytery.

m. Eligibility of women. The Scriptures plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word (Joel 2:29; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5). Women who meet the qualifications for ministerial credentials are eligible for whatever grade of credentials their qualifications warrant and have the right to administer the ordinances of the church and are eligible to serve in all levels of church ministry, and/or district and General Council leadership.

n. Ministers from other organizations. If a minister from another reputable body desires to affiliate with the Assemblies of God, the credentials committees of

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both the General Council and the district councils are under no obligation to accept the applicant's previous ministerial status, but will judge each candidate on his or her own merits as to the level of credentials to be granted. Such applicants shall be required to:

- (1) Conform to Assemblies of God criteria for recognition.
- (2) Complete an application for ministerial recognition.
- (3) Submit a letter of recommendation from a neighboring Assemblies of God minister or the sectional presbyter for the applicant's area.
- (4) Submit a recommendation from the body with which the minister was formerly affiliated. If such is not available, letters of recommendation should be sought from three reputable ordained ministers who are familiar with the applicant's ministry, two of whom should be with the applicant's former credentialing body.
- (5) Take the credential examination.
- (6) Complete such courses as may be prescribed by the General Presbytery for ministers transferring from other credentialing bodies.
- (7) Meet with the district credentials committee for an oral interview.
- (8) Be recommended by the district credentials committee for action by the General Council Credentials Committee.
- (9) All previously ordained ministers so approved shall receive recognition as ordained Assemblies of God ministers with the laying on of hands by the district presbytery. All other applicants so approved shall receive the appropriate level of credential recognition.
- (10) Ministers who receive Assemblies of God recognition shall relinquish their ministerial credentials with any other organization, unless an exception is granted by the General Council Credentials Committee upon recommendation of a district council credentials committee for a minister serving as a missionary in this country who holds a credential with a member body of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship.

Section 3. Specific Qualifications

a. Residency requirements of applicants. Applicants for all credentials must be residents of or hold credentials in the district where they make application and appear before its credentials committee.

b. Local church credential. A local church credential shall be administered by the local church pursuant to basic guidelines adopted by the General Presbytery and such additional guidelines adopted by the district council. It shall be non-transferable (limited to the issuing local church).

c. Certified minister.

(1) *General requirements.* They shall show promise of usefulness in the gospel work. They shall devote a part of their time to Christian ministry and, at the discretion of the district credentials committees, remain under the supervision of a pastor or a designated supervisor. They shall preach at least 12 times a year or be actively engaged in some other aspect of ministry except in case of ill health or advanced age.

(2) *Pastoral requirements.* In the event a certified minister is serving in a position as the pastor, he or she shall be expected to advance to license to preach within 2 years of acceptance of the pastorate. This shall not apply to any minister who has reached the age of 65 or older, or whose certificate has been issued on a provisional basis. Any exceptions shall be at the discretion of the district credentials committee.

(3) *Exception for provisional issuance.* A Certificate of Ministry may be issued on a provisional basis to a person who has not met all the credentialing

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requirements but who is deemed by the district credentials committee to be essential to the continuity of a church or a ministry. The reason for such a provisional issuance must be ministry driven, and the justification for its use is terminated when the minister ceases to be involved in the ministry for which it was initially granted unless the minister accepts another qualifying assignment. Other limitations are:

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

(b) A person who has been granted the Certificate of Ministry on a provisional basis must meet the qualifications for a ministry certificate within a 3-year period.

d. Licensed minister. Qualifications for license shall be in two categories:

(1) *Preaching ministry.* Clear evidence of a divine call, a practical experience in preaching, together with an evident purpose to devote one's time to preaching the gospel. Licensed ministers shall preach at least 15 times a year, except in case of ill health or infirmity.

(2) *Specialized ministry.* An evident purpose to devote one's time to a specialized ministry such as Christian education, music, church-related ministry by a minister's spouse, or other full-time ministries. The same qualifications as outlined in Section 2 of this article shall apply.

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

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

(2) They must have met all the requirements in making application and in completing the prescribed application form.

(3) No person may be ordained to the ministry until he or she has held a license to preach and has been engaged in active work as a pastor, evangelist, or some other recognized and proven full-time preaching ministry for at least 2 full consecutive years immediately prior thereto.

(4) *Residency requirements of applicants.* Applicants must be residents of or hold credentials in the district where they make application and appear before its credentials committee. District councils are required to refrain from approving any applicant for ordination who may have been licensed in another district, until such licensed minister shall have been a member of the district in which he or she is seeking ordination at least 1 year. Applicants who have not been a member of the district where they apply for ordination for 2 full consecutive years must meet the requirements and secure the endorsement of the officers of the district in which they were previously licensed, as well as the district of their residence.

(5) *Exceptions to requirements.* The General Council Credentials Committee, upon request by a district credentials committee and where exceptional circumstances exist, may waive the requirements for an applicant holding a license to preach for 2 full consecutive years or being a member of the district in which he or she is seeking ordination for at least 1 year.

(6) In order to maintain active status, ordained ministers must preach at least 15 times each year.

Section 4. Action of Credentials Committee

The General Council Credentials Committee delegates to the district councils the authority to examine, approve, and recommend candidates who qualify as certified ministers, licensed ministers, and ordained ministers. Final approval and issuance of the ministerial credential shall be made by the General Council Credentials Committee. All ordination services, with the laying on of hands, shall take place under the auspices of the district councils.

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Section 5. Certificates

The General Council Credentials Committee is authorized to issue ordination certificates, licenses to preach, specialized ministries licenses, and certificates of ministry, together with the accompanying annual fellowship card, to all properly qualified and approved candidates.

Section 6. Official List

a. Active ministers. The official list of all credential holders shall be compiled by the General Council Credentials Committee and published for the convenience of the Fellowship, with the understanding it is not to be used for purposes of solicitation. This official list shall be revised annually and shall contain the names of those who are engaged in active ministry and whose credentials have been renewed by the issuance of a fellowship card for the current year.

b. 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 of which said person is a member requests otherwise by letter.

(1) *Definition.* All ordained and licensed ministers who shall have preached less than 15 times, and certified ministers who shall have preached less than 12 times, within a period of 1 year or have not been actively engaged in some other aspect of ministry shall have their names placed upon the inactive list for the following year.

(2) *Removal of inactive ministers from ministerial list.* When a minister is inactive for 2 or more consecutive years, his or her name shall be eliminated from the ministerial list, unless the credentials committee of the district of which said person is a member requests otherwise by letter.

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

(4) *Ministers with disabilities.* Ministers with permanent disability or illness which prevents them from engaging in active ministry, shall be indicated as disabled.

c. 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 upon application bearing endorsement by the district officary.

Section 7. Senior Ministers

In respect and honor to those ministers who have given years of service to the Fellowship, senior status shall automatically be given to all credential holders who have reached the age of 65, whether or not they continue in full-time ministry.

a. Terminology

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

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

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

b. Application for retired category. Senior-semiretired and senior-retired status shall be granted only to those ministers who filed a request for such status with their district office. The district secretary shall forward annually to the general secretary a list of those ministers who have made these requests.

c. Guidelines

(1) *Reports.* Senior-active and senior-semiretired ministers shall continue to file their annual reports and pay the General Council portion of their tithes in the regular manner. Senior-retired ministers shall file an abbreviated report to maintain a correct address file for mail and insurance purposes.

(2) *Sources of income.* These designations and guidelines shall apply regardless of whether the senior minister's income is from ministry, from retirement plans or Social Security payments, or from investments or other employment.

(3) *Designation in publications.* No distinguishing mark shall accompany the listing of senior-active in the official publications of the Assemblies of God, but may be so indicated in the working lists used for insurance and retirement purposes. Senior-semiretired and senior-retired ministers shall have this status indicated in the *Official List of Assemblies of God Ministers*.

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

d. Aged Ministers Assistance. It is recommended that all Assemblies of God churches contribute regularly to provide assistance to aged ministers who are in need of financial assistance. Assistance shall be made available to ordained ministers of the Assemblies of God and to their widows, because of age or physical infirmity, and for whom no other means of support is available. Eligibility shall be determined on the following basis:

(1) *Ministerial requirement.* The applicant shall have been an ordained minister in good standing and have held credentials for at least 10 years immediately prior to retirement.

(2) *Age requirement.* The applicant shall have reached the age of 65 in the case of an ordained minister, or 60 in the case of a spouse of a minister.

(3) *Disability requirement.* Ministers who have been disabled to the extent that they cannot perform their ministerial duties shall also be eligible to make application.

(4) *Financial cooperation requirement.* The record of the applicant shall indicate that he or she has complied with the approved financial plans of the district council and The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

(5) *District endorsement requirement.* Unqualified endorsement must be given by the district officers.

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e. Limitations of this Section 7

(1) *For General Council usage only.* The definitions and decisions included in Section 7 apply only to General Council usage and are not binding upon the various districts, nor to the official legislation under which their members serve.

(2) *Other financial responsibility not circumvented.* No part of Section 7 is intended to modify the responsibility of ministers to their districts nor to terminate the biblical responsibility for tithing.

Section 8. Ministerial Relations

a. Amenability. All certified, licensed, and ordained ministers shall be amenable to both the district council and The General Council of the Assemblies of God in matters of doctrine and discipline. (See Bylaws, Article X.) All local church credential holders shall be amenable to their local church under guidelines established by the General Presbytery and district council in matters of doctrine and discipline. (See Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1.)

b. Affiliation with district of residence. All credential holders shall be expected to affiliate with the district council within the boundaries of which they reside and work in cooperation with the same.

(1) *Exception.* Ministers who reside in one district but pastor or serve on the staff of a church located in another district shall be required to be a member of the district in which the church is located.

(2) *Nationally appointed U.S. missionaries.* Nationally appointed U.S. missionaries shall become members of the district in which they serve and shall be listed on the ministerial roster of that district by the office of the general secretary. They may also retain honorary membership in their home district, be listed as a missionary under national appointment in the home district's yearbook, and be extended voice and vote in their home district while on official furlough.

(3) *Church-planting ministries.* Ministers who serve in a transdistrict ministry related to church-planting efforts may do so provided:

(a) They have a scope of ministry which reaches beyond district boundaries; and

(b) Both districts agree to the assignment; and

(c) If the assignment involves a language group, they follow the guidelines provided by the Executive Presbytery of the General Council and adhere to these Bylaws governing interdistrict relations. (See Bylaws, Article V, Section 5.)

Church planters holding credentials may obtain affiliation with the district they intend to serve and retain honorary membership in their home district, be listed in the home district's yearbook, and be extended voice and vote in their home district for such time as they serve in another district. The financial responsibilities shall be the same as those of a nationally appointed U.S. missionary. [See Bylaws, Article VII, Section 8, paragraph c, subparagraph (3).]

c. Cooperation with other districts. Ministers shall be expected to cooperate with other district councils in which they may labor temporarily. It is recommended as a standard of proper practice that all ministers conform to the financial policy of the district with which they are affiliated with the following exceptions:

(1) *Financial responsibility of world missionaries.* World missionaries will be obligated to pay \$25 per month to their home district when resident in the U.S. and \$10 per month when resident on their fields.

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(2) *Financial responsibility of chaplains.* All chaplains, military and institutional, will be obligated to their home district in the amount of 10 percent of their tithes from income earned from the chaplaincy. All chaplains are also encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the district in which they fulfill their assignments.

(3) *Financial responsibility of nationally appointed or approved U.S. missionaries.* Nationally appointed or approved U.S. missionaries shall contribute 25 percent of their tithe to their member district where they serve and 25 percent of their tithe to their home district if they are listed as honorary members. Missionaries who minister in their home district shall contribute a minimum of 50 percent of their tithe to that district.

Section 9. Transfer of Credentials

a. Certificate of transfer. When a member minister takes up residence in another district, a certificate of transfer shall be issued within 60 days by the district of which he or she is a member, unless there are charges pending against the minister. The certificate of transfer shall be accepted by the district into which the minister moves. Exceptions may be made for the following:

- (1) Ministers moving to serve at the Assemblies of God Headquarters.
- (2) Those who have attained the age of 60 and are no longer engaged in active ministry and those who have attained the age of 65 and are not pastoring a church.
- (3) Those who are in the Armed Forces currently on active duty.
- (4) Those who are serving on the staffs of schools affiliated with the General Council and district council or nonaffiliated schools acceptable to the General Council and the district council in which the school is located.
- (5) Those who are appointed U.S. missionaries or world missionaries who are on furlough or on temporary assignment in the United States and reside in a district other than their home district.
- (6) Ministers having membership in one district and a mailing address only in another district.
- (7) Students in schools outside their home districts.
- (8) Those who are serving in a non-Assemblies of God institution providing:
 - (a) They have a regular scope of ministry which reaches beyond district boundaries.
 - (b) Both districts agree to the exception.
 - (c) The institution is acceptable to both districts.
- (9) Church planters involved in transdistrict ministry.

b. Transfers from Assemblies of God World Fellowship. A minister holding ordination (or equivalent) with a member group of the Assemblies of God World Fellowship, may transfer his or her ordination to The General Council of the Assemblies of God if the following criteria are met:

- (1) A letter of recommendation from the executive committee of the national church or equivalent letter of recommendation.
- (2) A course on history and polity of U.S. church.
- (3) A completed ministerial application.

c. Transcript. In order to assist a member minister who is transferring into another district, a transcript giving helpful information concerning the minister and his or her spouse should accompany the certificate of transfer.

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Section 10. Credential Renewals and Reinstatements

a. Terminology

(1) *Renewed.* The term renewed shall apply to all ministers who have met the annual deadline for renewal including those who are delinquent but who renew by January 15.

(2) *Reinstated.* The term reinstated shall apply to the persons whose names have been deleted from the official ministerial list, who upon application, are approved for restoration of credentials.

b. Expiration date. All fellowship certificates are valid only until December 31 of each year and must be renewed annually. The renewing of credentials is the responsibility of the individual minister. Ministers who do not receive an annual renewal form by December 1 should notify their district office.

c. Grace period until January 15. All who have not renewed their fellowship certificates by mail postmarked on or before December 31 shall be considered delinquent. They shall be required to pay a late fee of \$25 up until January 15, to be divided equally between the district and General Council.

d. Reinstatement of lapsed minister. Ministers whose renewal applications are not postmarked by January 15 shall be recorded as lapsed as of December 31. They must make application for reinstatement and pay a nonrefundable fee of \$50, to be divided equally between the district and the General Council. These ministers shall not be subject to the minimal time-lapse required of those whose credentials have been terminated for other causes.

e. Reinstatement of other than dismissed minister. When a minister who is a member of our Fellowship is removed from our rolls for any cause, except failure to renew and dismissal, and shall apply for reinstatement, he or she shall not be eligible for reinstatement until at least 6 months have elapsed after his or her name has been stricken from our list of ministers. The application must be made in the district where the minister resides and be accompanied with a nonrefundable fee of \$50 to be divided between the district and the General Council (See Bylaws, Article X, Section 12, paragraph b, for reinstatement of dismissed minister.)

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

f. Support of Headquarters. The work of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, in its program of developing the spirit of cooperation and fellowship in U.S. and world missions fields, incurs considerable expense, including the financial support of the executive officers and offices.

Ordained ministers should recognize their obligation to contribute \$20 per month (\$240 per year) from their tithes, or as an offering. Licensed ministers should contribute \$15 per month (\$180 per year), and certified ministers should contribute \$7.50 per month (\$90 per year). All who can are strongly urged to give more than the suggested amount, either personally or through the assemblies they pastor.

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Compliance with the above requirements shall be a prerequisite for renewal of credentials of all active ministers. If their contributions are in arrears, they shall be given opportunity to meet this deficit with their renewal.

The general treasurer's office shall submit to the respective district offices a semiannual report of ministers' contributions for the support of Headquarters. Each district shall make this information available to its ministers by any of the following methods:

- (a) Collectively, through district publications.
- (b) Individually, through personal letters.
- (c) Through any other media selected by the district.

The districts shall carefully analyze the annual report of each minister and, in their knowledge of local situations, determine if he or she has been voluntarily cooperating with the General Council financial program.

Section 11. Nondisciplinary Credential Terminations

a. On the initiative of the minister.

(1) *Lapsed.* Ministers who do not renew their credentials shall be listed as lapsed, provided there is no cause for disciplinary action. Their names shall be published as lapsed in the *Assemblies of God Ministers Letter*, hereinafter referred to as the ministers letter.

(2) *Resigned.* Ministers who elect to remove themselves from the Fellowship shall submit a letter of resignation to the district with which they are affiliated. If there is no cause for disciplinary action, their resignation shall become effective after having been approved by both the district council and General Council credentials committees. Their termination shall be listed in the ministers letter as resigned.

b. On the initiative of the district. (See Article X, Section 4.)

(1) *Inactive.* When a minister becomes inactive for 2 consecutive years, according to the stipulations set forth in Bylaws, Article VII, Section 6, paragraph b, his or her name shall be published as inactive in the ministers letter.

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

c. As a result of affiliation with another church organization. In the event a minister shall identify with another organization granting ministerial credentials, and shall have received such credentials, his or her credentials with The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be terminated. An investigation shall be made to determine the proper category of termination.

d. Surrender of credentials. In all cases the minister shall be requested to surrender his or her credential (Certificate of Ordination, License to Preach, Specialized Ministries License, Certificate of Ministry) and current fellowship card to the district office. The district shall forward these to the office of the general secretary of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Refusal to surrender his or her credential and current fellowship card shall be considered insubordination and may result in placing a charge against the minister.

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Section 12. Ministerial Status Changes

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

Section 13. Privileged Communications

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

ARTICLE VIII. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Section 1. Christian Marriage

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

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

Section 2. Children

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

ARTICLE IX. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED

A. COMMISSION ON DOCTRINAL PURITY

a. Authorization and purpose. A Commission on Doctrinal Purity shall be established for the purpose of giving careful attention to preventing deviations from the Statement of Fundamental Truths and proliferation of unscriptural teachings. The commission shall receive its assignments from and make its reports to the Executive Presbytery.

b. Appointments and terms of office. The commission shall be appointed by the Executive Presbytery and shall consist of 10 members representing, insofar as possible, the area divisions of the Assemblies of God. Members shall be recognized authorities in biblical knowledge. Their terms of office shall be for 4 years.

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c. Vacancies and terminations. The Executive Presbytery shall be empowered to declare the office of any commission member vacant should it deem such action advisable. A decision to declare a vacancy and to fill such vacancy may be made at any meeting of the Executive Presbytery.

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 disapproves of those who hold to matters of conscience, such as eating or not eating meats, who press their opinions on others.

b. Adding conditions to salvation. The Assemblies of God also disapproves of those who hold to issues which seem to add conditions to salvation, such as keeping the seventh day, who press their opinions on others.

Section 3. Eschatological Errors

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

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

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

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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

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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).

(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 exceptive 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. (See also Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2, paragraphs k and l.)

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).

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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.

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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.

ARTICLE X. DISCIPLINE

Section 1. The Nature and Purposes of Discipline

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

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

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

The Executive Presbytery of the General Council is the Credentials Committee of The General Council of the Assemblies of God (Constitution, Article X, Sections 4 and 6). It shall have the final authority in matters of doctrine and the personal conduct of all certified, licensed, and ordained ministers. District actions related to the termination of credentials or the remedial discipline of rehabilitation are to be in the form of recommendations to the General Council Credentials Committee. All references to the discipline of ministers within this article of the Bylaws relate solely to certified, licensed, and ordained ministers.

Section 3. Causes of Disciplinary Action

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

- a. Moral failure involving sexual misconduct.
- b. Moral failure involving pornography.
- c. Any moral or ethical failure other than sexual misconduct.
- d. General inefficiency in the ministry.
- e. A failure to represent our Pentecostal testimony correctly.
- f. A contentious or noncooperative spirit.
- g. An assumption of dictatorial authority over an assembly.
- h. An arbitrary rejection of district counsel.
- i. A declared open change in doctrinal views.
- j. A habit of running into debt which brings reproach upon the gospel.
- k. A marriage in violation of our stand on marriage and divorce. (Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 5, paragraphs d and e.)
- l. Violations of ministerial courtesy. (See Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 8.)
- m. Ministry without prior approval in a non-Assemblies of God church. (See Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 9.)
- n. An improper attitude toward those dismissed from the Fellowship. (See Bylaws, Article IX, B, Section 10.)

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

Section 4. Right of Initiative

a. Authority. Occasions sometimes arise which make it necessary to deal with ministers who for some reason seem to have reached the place where, in the opinion of the leaders, endorsement can no longer be given. Credentials committees which have the authority to ordain ministers and to recommend them for credentials also have the right to withdraw their approval and to recommend the recall of credentials.

b. Prior right of district. The officers of the district in which an alleged offense is reported to have occurred shall be recognized as having the prior right of initiative in matters of discipline.

c. Responsibility of district of affiliation. If the district in which an alleged offense is reported to have occurred for some reason cannot take action, the General Council Credentials Committee shall refer the matter, together with the facts and supporting instruments, to the district with which the minister is affiliated.

d. Responsibility of General Council Credentials Committee. In the event a district fails to take action within 90 days after a matter has been referred to it, it shall be the responsibility of the General Council Credentials Committee to see that action is initiated.

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

a. Within the Districts of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Reports or complaints of alleged violations of Assemblies of God principles (Bylaws, Article X, Section 3) or confessions of such by a minister shall be investigated. The superintendent of the district in which the alleged offense is reported to have occurred, or an appointed representative, shall conduct the investigation to determine their source and validity. It is the responsibility of the district superintendent to safeguard the church, the minister, the district, and the Fellowship. In the event such reports or complaints against a minister are filed with the General Council Credentials Committee, they shall be referred to the district in which the offense occurred for investigation. A copy shall be sent to the district with which the minister is affiliated.

(1) *Interview with complainants.* The persons involved shall be interviewed to ascertain the facts in the case and the reasons underlying the persistence of the reports or complaints.

(2) *Interview with accused minister.* The accused minister shall be given an opportunity to be interviewed to discuss the complaints received in the hope that the matter can be resolved.

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(3) *Signed complaints.* In the event the investigation so warrants, a signed complaint shall be filed with the district office by each complainant describing the alleged offense.

(4) *Conditions for ministry during investigation.* Conditions of continuing ministry may be subject to restriction during the time of investigation at the discretion of the appropriate district officers on the basis of evidence at hand and the nature of the alleged offense. Such conditions are subject to review in 3-month intervals until such investigation has been completed resulting in either clearing the person of the allegations or filing formal charges.

b. Outside United States. In case the alleged misconduct occurs outside the United States in an area under the general oversight of the Assemblies of God World Missions, that division shall take the initiative to file complete data with the district of the minister's affiliation. Any hearing or trial affecting that individual's ministerial credentials shall be held in the district of the minister's affiliation. The Assemblies of God World Missions shall convey all information available to the said district as follows:

(1) *Report to district of affiliation.* At the earliest date after the Assemblies of God World Missions receives a report of misconduct, such report shall be conveyed by telephone and by letter to the superintendent of the district with which the minister is affiliated.

(2) *Confidential file.* A confidential file shall be submitted to the superintendent, conveying all information as it becomes available to the division. A final complete file shall be prepared under the direction of the field director of the field involved and shall be presented to the district superintendent for use in any action the district may take.

(3) *Additional information.* When in the judgment of the Assemblies of God World Missions or the district involved, basic information is lacking (which information may be available at the site of the alleged misconduct), arrangements may be made for the gathering of such.

Section 6. Preparation and Filing of Charges

If after due investigation it is determined that charges should be made, proper charges shall be prepared and filed in the district office. If no one appears to sign the charges, the district officers making the investigation may file charges based on the evidence in their possession. The person against whom charges have been filed shall be informed in writing by certified mail, at the last address furnished to the district, of the charges made in keeping with Bylaws, Article X, Section 3.

Section 7. District Hearing and Discipline

a. District hearing. In the event the reports or complaints cannot be dealt with privately to the satisfaction of all concerned, the superintendent of the district in which the alleged offense is said to have occurred, or the superintendent of the district with which the minister is affiliated, shall arrange for a hearing by the district credentials committee for the accused minister. The minister shall be required to appear at the hearing in the hope the matter can be resolved.

b. Forfeiture of rights of accused. A hearing shall not be considered as final disposition of the case until the accused be present and be allowed all rights and privileges granted herein. However, an accused member may be found guilty of charges and disciplined for failure to appear at the hearing, or if proof is found of willful neglect to take advantage of rights and privileges provided in these Bylaws.

c. Discipline

(1) *Cause for discipline.* A minister who has been found guilty of violating any of the Assemblies of God principles set forth in Bylaws, Article X, Section 3, either by a confession of the minister involved or by deliberation of the district presbytery, shall be subject to disciplinary action.

(2) *Determination of discipline.* It shall be the responsibility of the credentials committees to determine whether the circumstances of the case merit rehabilitation or dismissal. The credentials committees shall weigh decisions on: (a) the basis of the offense itself, (b) the manner and thoroughness of repentance, (c) the attitude of the offending minister toward the discipline, and (d) the willingness manifested to cooperate.

(3) *Administering discipline redemptively.* If the district determines that guilt has been established, discipline shall be administered prayerfully and in the fear of God, in accordance with the Scriptures, and as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of this ecclesiastical body (Bylaws, Article X, Sections 8 and 9).

d. Surrender of credentials. Disciplined ministers shall be required to surrender their ministerial credentials and their current fellowship card to the district office. In the event of rehabilitation the credentials shall be held in the district office. In the event of dismissal the district shall forward the credentials to the general secretary of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Refusal to surrender ministerial credentials and current fellowship card may result in placing an additional charge against the minister.

Section 8. Rehabilitation

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

a. Basis. Those found to have violated any of the Assemblies of God principles (Bylaws, Article X, Section 3) may request a program of rehabilitation as an alternative to dismissal. Rehabilitation is a privilege granted out of mercy and not a right to be expected or demanded. The primary purpose is to restore a person to God, spouse, and family, with the results leading to possible restoration to ministry. Granting such request shall be at the discretion of the district and General Council credentials committees.

b. Procedure and requirements. The following procedure shall be used by the district presbytery in determining the specific requirements for rehabilitation for the individual minister.

(1) *Rehabilitation requirements.* The specific terms and conditions of the rehabilitation program as recommended by the district credentials committee are to be forwarded to the General Council Credentials Committee for approval. After such approval they shall be given to the minister.

(a) *Suspension.* The minister shall be considered to be under suspension during the entire period of rehabilitation.

(b) *Terms and Conditions*

(1) *Period of Time.* The program for rehabilitation shall continue for not less than 1 year except when the violation involves misconduct defined in Bylaws, Article X, Section 3, paragraph a, in which case it shall continue for not less than 2 years.

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(2) *Authority.* The General Presbytery shall be authorized to establish guidelines and policy in regard to terms and conditions of rehabilitation. Such guidelines and policy shall be consistent with provisions of the bylaws.

(c) *Extent of ministry.* The extent to which ministry may be permitted, if any, shall be determined by the district presbytery, subject to the approval of the General Council Credentials Committee and compatible with the guidelines and policy established by the General Presbytery.

(d) *District membership.* The minister shall not be permitted to transfer his or her membership to another district during the period of rehabilitation.

(e) *Publication.* While the minister's credentials are in a state of suspension, the minister's name shall not be removed from the ministerial roster, nor shall the minister's disciplinary status be published in either the General Council or district council official publications.

(f) *Credentials renewal.* The minister shall renew his or her credentials annually in the regular manner.

(g) *Supervision.* In the event his or her ministerial activity has been terminated, the minister must become established in a local church working under the supervision of a pastor or presbyter.

(h) *Reports.* The minister must submit reports quarterly to the district superintendent.

(i) *Ministerial benefits.* During the program of rehabilitation the minister shall continue to be eligible for benefits such as the ministers group insurance and Ministers Benefit Association.

(j) *Program administration.* The approved rehabilitation program shall be administered by the district presbytery.

(2) *District progress reports.* The credentials committee of the district shall submit to the General Council Credentials Committee on February 1 and August 1 of each calendar year a progress report relative to the rehabilitation of ministers under discipline.

(3) *Completion of rehabilitation.* When the rehabilitation program has been satisfactorily completed, the suspension shall be lifted and the minister shall be restored to good standing.

(4) *Transfer of information.* A rehabilitation information form for district use, prepared and distributed by the general secretary, shall be completed by the district in which the rehabilitation occurred when the rehabilitated minister requests a transfer to a new district. The completed rehabilitation form shall accompany the Certificate of Transfer to another district. A disciplined minister shall, as a condition of entering a rehabilitation program, sign a Limited Disclosure Agreement approved by the General Presbytery allowing the basis of his or her rehabilitation program to be disclosed by the district superintendent or district secretary of a transferring district. The information shall be preserved for future reference in the files of the district in which the rehabilitation occurred and the General Council.

c. Eligibility of previously dismissed. In the event a minister who has been dismissed requests reinstatement, the district shall first obtain permission from the General Council Credentials Committee before submitting an appropriate rehabilitation program as prescribed in Section 8 of this article. The dismissed minister shall not be eligible for reinstatement until the requirements for rehabilitation have been completed. Consideration may also be given to a minister if in the opinion of the credentials committees he or she has satisfactorily fulfilled the remedial requirements of such rehabilitation.

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

a. District recommendation

(1) *Rehabilitation.* When a minister is to be placed in a rehabilitation program in accordance with Section 8 of this article, the district shall forward to the General Council Credentials Committee the specific charges and recommended terms of rehabilitation. The district shall inform the minister involved of its action and, where applicable, the superintendent of the minister's district of affiliation.

(2) *Dismissal.* When a minister has been found guilty of violating any of the Assemblies of God principles as set forth in Bylaws, Article X, Section 3, and it is determined that rehabilitation is not feasible or fails, a minister's credentials are to be terminated by dismissal. The district shall forward to the General Council Credentials Committee the specific charges and its recommendation for dismissal. The district shall inform the minister involved of its action and, where applicable, the superintendent of the minister's district of affiliation.

b. General Council Credentials Committee action. The General Council Credentials Committee shall consider the recommendation of the district and shall concur if in its judgment the district was justified in the action taken. If the General Council Credentials Committee does not concur, it may remand the case, together with its recommendations, back to the district for review and reconsideration. The district shall report the results of its recommendation to the General Council Credentials Committee for final disposition.

c. General Council to hold information. All pertinent information relating to the disciplinary action taken against a minister shall be preserved for future reference in the office of the General Council Credentials Committee.

d. Final disposition. The general secretary shall notify the minister and the district(s) involved of the final disposition of the case.

Section 10. Right of Appeal

a. Filing of appeal to the General Council Credentials Committee. The right of appeal applies to all actions of discipline and termination of credentials other than lapsing or resigning on the initiative of the minister. An accused minister shall have 30 days from the date notification of the General Council Credentials Committee decision was mailed to appeal to the General Council Credentials Committee. The minister shall be apprised officially of this right at the time notification is given to the minister of the decision of the General Council Credentials Committee. The appeal is to be sent to the office of the general superintendent, and should include any new or exculpatory information not previously considered, with copies sent to the superintendent of the minister's district of affiliation and any other districts involved.

b. Consideration of appeal by the General Council Credentials Committee. The General Council Credentials Committee may respond to the appeal in one of the following ways:

(1) *Remanding of case to the district.* If in the judgment of the General Council Credentials Committee, justice has not been served, the case shall be remanded to the district presbytery for review and reconsideration. The district shall report the results of its review to the General Council Credentials Committee for final disposition.

BYLAWS

(2) Denial of appeal.

(a) *Forfeiture of right of appeal.* No appeal shall be granted by remanding the case to the district presbytery if proof is found of willful neglect on the part of the accused to take advantage of available rights and privileges during the district hearing (see Section 5, 6, & 7 of this Article).

(b) *Insufficient grounds.* The General Council Credentials Committee shall have the prerogative to determine whether there is sufficient cause to grant an appeal, and remand the case to the district.

c. Right of appeal to the General Presbytery. A disciplined minister whose appeal has been denied by the General Council Credentials Committee may appeal to the General Presbytery. An accused minister shall have 30 days from the date notification of the General Council Credentials Committee decision was mailed to appeal to the General Presbytery. The appeal is to be sent to the office of the general superintendent, and should include any new or exculpatory information not previously considered, with copies sent to the superintendent of the minister's district of affiliation and any other districts involved. The decision of the General Presbytery shall be final.

Section 11. Publication of Dismissal

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

Section 12. Reinstatement of Credentials

a. Authorization. Application for reinstatement may be made through the district council within which territory the applicant resides. The application shall be considered subject to the approval of the district in which the termination was made.

b. Minimal time-lapse for dismissed ministers. The minimal time-lapse required before a minister who has been dismissed is eligible for reinstatement shall be 1 year, except it shall be 2 years for a minister who has been dismissed because of charges as stated in Bylaws, Article X, Section 3, paragraph a. The time-lapse shall be computed from the date of the district presbytery action as it appears on the ministerial status report filed with the General Council Credentials Committee. (See Bylaws, Article VII, Section 10, for other renewals and reinstatements.)

c. Rehabilitation obligatory. When a minister has been dismissed from our Fellowship and applies for reinstatement, he or she shall comply with the procedures for rehabilitation outlined in Section 8, paragraph c, of this Article

d. Option to refer to General Presbytery. The General Council Credentials Committee may also hold the reinstatement of a minister's credentials in abeyance until the next session of the General Presbytery in order that the General Presbytery may have the opportunity to review the case, in which event the matter of reinstatement of such minister may be left entirely with that body.

ARTICLE XI

e. Reinstatement fee. When applying for reinstatement the minister must include a \$50 reinstatement fee with the application to be divided equally between the district council and the General Council.

Section 13. Notice

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

ARTICLE XI. NATIONAL MINISTRIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

In addition to the divisions provided for in Article XIII, Assemblies of God World Missions; and Article XIV. Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, the Board of Directors of The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall establish such national ministries, including commissions, divisions, and departments as may from time-to-time be needed to carry out the threefold mission of the church.

The organization and establishment of these ministries shall be provided for in *The General Council of the Assemblies of God Organizational Manual* (See Bylaws, Article XII. *The General Council of the Assemblies of God Organizational Manual*.)

ARTICLE XII. THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD ORGANIZATIONAL MANUAL

The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall develop and maintain a set of documents referred to as *The General Council of the Assemblies of God Organizational Manual*. This document shall set forth in detail the organization of commissions, divisions, departments, and ministries of The General Council of the Assemblies of God as from time-to-time may be established to carry out the threefold mission of the church.

The General Council of the Assemblies of God Organizational Manual shall be administered by the Board of Administration as approved by the Executive Presbytery. The Executive Presbytery shall submit annually to the General Presbytery for approval all proposed additions, deletions, and modifications to *The General Council of the Assemblies of God Organizational Manual*. *The General Council of the Assemblies of God Organizational Manual* shall be available to all General Council affiliated churches and ordained or licensed ministers.

ARTICLE XIII. ASSEMBLIES OF GOD WORLD MISSIONS

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

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

BYLAWS

b. Purpose. The primary responsibility of this division in its field of activity shall be to act as an agency of the church in fulfilling its threefold mission.

c. Strategy. The missions strategy of the division shall be:

(1) The widest possible evangelization of the spiritually lost through every available means;

(2) The establishment of indigenous churches after the New Testament pattern;

(3) The training of national believers to proclaim the gospel to their own people in an expanding mission to other people; and

(4) The showing of compassion for suffering people in a manner representing the love of Jesus Christ

d. Indigenous principle. The Pauline example shall be followed as far as possible by seeking out neglected regions where the gospel has not been preached and by establishing self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating national churches in all regions.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Executive director. There shall be an executive director of the Assemblies of God World Missions who shall be elected in the manner described in Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph b.

b. Administrator. The Executive Presbytery shall elect an administrator who shall serve under the executive director in the administration of the division.

c. Departments. The General Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery. Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the *General Council Policy Manual*.

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

e. World Missions Board

(1) *Composition.* The activities of the Assemblies of God World Missions shall be under the supervision of the World Missions Board which shall consist of the executive director of the division; the general superintendent (ex officio); two executive presbyters; the administrator; the regional directors; eight pastors of proven world missions zeal and accomplishments, each from a different area of the nation; and eight laypersons, endorsed by their pastors, each from a different area of the nation and from churches other than those whose pastors serve concurrently on the World Missions Board.

(2) *Elections.* The members of the World Missions Board shall be nominated by the executive director of the Assemblies of God World Missions, and elected by the Executive Presbytery subject to ratification by the General Presbytery.

(3) *Term of office.* The term of office of the appointed pastors and laypersons shall be for 3 years, rotated so some of the pastors will be elected each year to maintain continuity. Upon completion of a term they shall not succeed themselves in office.

ARTICLE XIII

(4) *Authority and amenability.* The responsibilities of the World Missions Board shall be to establish and evaluate policies, to offer guidance and counsel in the areas of its supervision, to establish and uphold standards for appointed world missionaries and world missions candidates for world missions appointment. The decisions of the board shall be subject to review by the Executive Presbytery and the General Presbytery.

(5) *Board of Appeals.* Those members of the World Missions Board who are not members of the World Missions Committee shall sit as a Board of Appeals to act upon any appeal from decisions of the division. In such an appeal, members of the World Missions Committee may present the case for the Assemblies of God World Missions' decision to the Board of Appeals, but shall not be present at the time of deliberation or voting. The missionary or World Missions Committee may appeal to the Executive Presbytery or General Presbytery from the decision of the Board of Appeals.

(6) *Vacancies.* The Executive Presbytery may fill a vacancy on the World Missions Board by appointment until the term is expired.

f. Regional directors. There shall be regional directors who shall direct the missions activities in their assigned geographical regions. They shall be appointed by the Executive Presbytery on the basis of nominations by the missionaries in the respective areas, subject to the ratification of the General Presbytery.

g. Creation of new region. With the creation of a new region, the World Missions Board shall have the discretion of nominating a regional director, to be appointed by the Executive Presbytery and ratified by the General Presbytery. The normal cycle of missionary endorsement will follow.

h. Area directors. There shall be area directors who shall serve under the regional directors, directing and coordinating missions activities in their assigned areas. They shall be appointed by the World Missions Board on the basis of nominations by the World Missions Committee and regional director in their respective areas.

i. World Missions Committee. The general administrative work of the division shall be conducted by a World Missions Committee consisting of the executive director as chairperson, the administrator as vice-chairperson, the regional directors, the leaders of major departments of the division, and other personnel as determined by the Executive Presbytery. The responsibilities of the World Missions Committee shall be the general supervision and direction of the work of the division and its missionaries in conformity with the established policies and principles of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the World Missions Board.

j. General Presbytery representatives. Each of the regions shall be represented on the General Presbytery by its regional director and two others. [See Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph d, (2).]

k. World missions policies. All appointed world missionaries shall be required to work in accord with the published policies of the division as authorized by the World Missions Board.

BYLAWS

Section 3. Support of Assemblies of God World Missions

The administrative expenses and emergency field needs of the Assemblies of God World Missions and its missionaries shall be provided from:

- a. Offerings designated for office expense.
- b. One-half of the tithes of missionaries under appointment receiving funds through the division.
- c. Undesignated funds.
- d. Five percent of all missionary offerings (with the exclusion of special personal designations) received shall be transferred to the General Emergency Fund.

Section 4. Missionary Candidates

a. Appointment. The selection and appointment of missionaries shall be the prerogative of the World Missions Board on recommendation of the World Missions Committee.

b. Examination criteria. The World Missions Board shall be governed in its selection and appointment of missionaries by examining each applicant as to:

- (1) Personal experience of full New Testament salvation.
- (2) Definite experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4.
- (3) Definite call to missions work.
- (4) Physical, mental, and spiritual fitness to work.
- (5) Christian standing and general qualifications.

It is required that all applicants receiving appointment shall have the unqualified endorsement of their district councils, particularly in regard to effective ministry and Christian character. Applicants shall not be granted general missionary appointment until they have first qualified for ordination by The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Candidates shall prove their ministry and stability of character by a qualifying period of service in the United States.

c. Specialized service. Candidates for world service of a specialized character, such as nurses and teachers, may be granted appointment for such types of work, if properly qualified, without the necessity of being ordained. Nevertheless, such candidates shall have the endorsement of their respective district councils in regard to their Christian experience and local church activity.

Section 5. Support of Missionaries

a. A faith mission. The world missions program of the Assemblies of God is a faith mission. Missionaries are urged to place their faith in God for supplying their needs. Thus missionaries itinerate among the churches to solicit prayer and financial support.

b. Church support. Every local church shall be encouraged to assume responsibility for support of duly appointed missionaries and approved ministries in cooperation with the Assemblies of God World Missions.

ARTICLE XIII

c. Undesignated and general emergency funds. Undesignated funds and general emergency funds may be used to meet the emergency needs of missionaries who raise their prescribed pledge and cash support and submit required financial reports to the division.

d. District support. It is recommended that districts endorsing candidates for missionary appointment assume responsibility for their support as far as practicable.

Section 6. Ordination of Missionaries

The ordination of persons for or under appointment of the Assemblies of God World Missions shall be determined on the basis of their qualifications for ordination rather than on the basis of their appointment.

Section 7. Field Organizations

a. National church organization. Missionaries shall make every effort to establish indigenous Assemblies of God national church organizations in the countries they serve. Organizational patterns shall conform to practical, cultural forms acceptable to the body of believers. Close fraternal relationships with Assemblies of God organizations in other countries shall be encouraged without infringement affecting the autonomy of each national organization.

b. Missionary fellowships. Missionary fellowships, composed of all appointed missionaries assigned permanently to a region of the Assemblies of God World Missions, may be formed in each political or geographical area as circumstances may indicate. These missionary fellowships are to be considered as the direct creation of and amenable to the Assemblies of God World Missions since missionary appointment automatically confers membership in the missionary fellowship. The missionary fellowships shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Assemblies of God World Missions in matters of policy and missionary personnel relative to their respective fields.

In those areas where there are insufficient personnel to make the organization of a missionary fellowship practical, the Assemblies of God World Missions may appoint a representative(s) to act for the missionaries and the Assemblies of God World Missions in matters normally handled by the missionary fellowship.

Section 8. Property

a. Investment principles. All possible precautions shall be taken to safeguard funds invested in foreign properties so that they shall continue to advance the cause of the Assemblies of God in those countries. No funds shall be made available for the purchase of property until arrangements have been made to comply with the laws of the respective countries concerning the legal holding of the title, and in order to maintain a proper relationship between these missions projects and the Assemblies of God World Missions, these principles shall be followed:

(1) *Title to missionary residences.* All missionary residences shall be held in the name of The General Council of the Assemblies of God wherever legally possible.

BYLAWS

(2) *Title to institutional properties*

(a) *General policy.* It shall be a general policy to hold institutional properties in the name of The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

(b) *Exceptions.* The Assemblies of God World Missions shall be authorized to transfer title to the local national Assemblies of God organization when it deems such action to be in the best interests of the work. Church buildings or pastors' residences that are procured solely for the benefit of the local church with either local or foreign funds shall be held in the name of its national Assemblies of God organization or by a local church that is fully established and competent to hold property in its own name.

(3) *Title policy on General Council loans.* In all cases where the Assemblies of God World Missions has advanced funds on a loan basis, The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall hold title to the property or receive other adequate security until the loan is fully paid

b. Missionary fellowship project endorsement. Missionaries contemplating the purchase of property or erection of buildings shall cooperate with the missionary fellowship on the field and must secure its endorsement before requesting the approval of the division.

c. Legal documents. A certified copy of the property deeds, titles, and other legal papers relating to all missions properties which have been purchased shall be forwarded to the Assemblies of God World Missions for filing.

ARTICLE XIV. ASSEMBLIES OF GOD U.S. MISSIONS

Section 1. Authorization and Purpose

a. Authorization. The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall assume responsibility and do all within its power to spread the gospel to the homeland. In keeping with this obligation, there shall be an Assemblies of God U.S. Missions.

b. Purpose. The primary responsibility of this division shall be to act as an agency of the church in fulfilling its threefold mission. The essential functions are promoting the establishing of indigenous churches representing all cultural, socioeconomic, and other identifiable groups requiring specialized understanding and methods; and facilitating the evangelization and discipleship of individuals within these groups. All such activities shall be conducted in full cooperation with the district councils. The division shall provide coordination, promotion, assistance to motivate action, and shall receive and disburse funds.

Section 2. Organization and Governance

a. Executive director. There shall be an executive director of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions who shall be elected in the manner described in Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, paragraph b.

b. Administrator. The Executive Presbytery shall elect an administrator who shall serve under the executive director in the administration of the division.

c. Departments. The General Presbytery shall be authorized to establish departments within the division at the initiative of the Executive Presbytery.

ARTICLE XIV

Departments shall operate within the parameters and guidelines of the *General Council Policy Manual*. These departments shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Church Planting
- (2) Intercultural Ministries
- (3) Chaplaincy
- (4) Chi Alpha Campus Ministries
- (5) Teen Challenge International, U.S.A.
- (6) Mission America Placement Service

The Executive Presbytery shall elect a leader for each department to be charged with the operation of the department under the direction of the executive director.

d. Amenability. The division and all of its departments shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the General Presbytery.

e. U.S. Missions Board. The work of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions shall be under the supervision of a U.S. Missions Board.

(1) *Composition.* The U.S. Missions Board shall consist of the executive director of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions; the general superintendent (ex officio); the administrator; one additional member of the Board of Administration; two nonresident members of the Executive Presbytery; and eight ministers, each from a different area of the nation. Four of the national board members shall be selected from among those district officials who have assigned to them the portfolio of district U.S. missions director.

The department leaders, and other key Assemblies of God U.S. Missions personnel as determined by the executive director, shall serve as ex officio members of the U.S. Missions Board.

(2) *Elections.* The members of the U.S. Missions Board shall be nominated by the executive director of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, and elected by the Executive Presbytery subject to ratification by the General Presbytery.

(3) *Term of office.* A term of office shall be for 2 years and so arranged that some of the pastors will be elected each year to maintain continuity. Members may be elected for one succeeding term. The chairperson and ex officio members will have no term limitations.

(4) *Authority and amenability.* It is the responsibility of the U.S. Missions Board to evaluate policies of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions and to offer guidance and counsel in the areas of its supervision, including the approval of policies and procedures governing the operation of the various ministries of the division. The U.S. Missions Board shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the General Presbytery.

(5) *Vacancies.* The Executive Presbytery may fill a vacancy on the U.S. Missions Board by appointment until the term is expired.

f. U.S. Missions Committee. The general administrative work of the division shall be conducted by a U.S. Missions Committee consisting of the executive director as chairperson, the administrator as vice-chairperson, the leaders of the major departments of the division, and other personnel as determined by the Executive Presbytery. The responsibilities of the U.S. Missions Committee shall be the general supervision and direction of the work of the division and its missionaries in conformity with the established policies and principles of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the U.S. Missions Board.

BYLAWS

g. Commission on Chaplains

(1) *Composition.* The Commission on Chaplains shall consist of the executive director of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, representatives of the Military/Veterans Affairs and Industrial/Occupational Chaplaincies, one of whom shall be the leader of the Chaplaincy Department, and eight others. They shall consist of two executive presbyters, two military/VA chaplains, two industrial/occupational chaplains, and two members at large. The commission shall serve as the endorsing agency for The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Members of the commission and its chairman shall be appointed by the Executive Presbytery.

(2) *Term of office.* The term of office shall be for 2 years and so arranged that one-half of the terms expire annually. Members may be appointed for one succeeding term. The commission chairperson and ex officio members will have no term limitations.

(3) *Authority and amenability.* The government and work of the Chaplaincy Department shall be vested in and committed to the Commission on Chaplains. The commission shall operate within guidelines adopted by the Executive Presbytery. It shall have the responsibility to evaluate policies, to offer guidance and counsel in the area of its supervision, to establish criteria for the appointment of workers in the Military/Veterans Affairs, Industrial/Occupational Chaplaincies, and to sit as a Board of Appeal in all matters relating to its area of supervision. It shall be amenable to and under the general supervision of the Executive Presbytery and the General Presbytery.

h. Liaison with districts. The division and its departments shall maintain a constant liaison with the various districts so that proven programs and innovations in each area may be refined and offered to districts. However, the supervision and administration of the work of the various ministries and missionaries shall be committed to the districts where they are located.

i. National U.S. missionaries. National U.S. missionaries shall be appointed by action of the U.S. Missions Committee with the approval of their home districts and the districts in which the missionaries will be working. All missionary appointments and renewals shall be made according to administrative criteria established by the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions upon the approval of the work district.

Section 3. Support

Financial assistance in meeting the operating expense of the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions shall be provided from:

a. Offerings designated for office expense.

b. Five percent of all funds contributed through the national Assemblies of God U.S. Missions for nationally appointed and/or approved Assemblies of God U.S. missions workers.

c. An appropriation of 10 percent of undesignated contributions.

ARTICLE XV

d. Five percent of all funds for approved district, regional, or national Assemblies of God U.S. missions projects.

e. One-half of the tithes of missionaries under appointment.

f. All endorsed and/or approved Assemblies of God chaplains actively serving full- or part-time, reserve chaplains, chaplain trainees, military trainees, and military seminarians shall contribute one-half of their tithe from their income earned from chaplaincy services to the Chaplaincy Department. Industrial/Occupational chaplains' contributions shall be placed in the Industrial/Occupational Chaplaincy Fund, and the Military/Veterans Affairs Chaplain's contributions shall be placed in the Military/Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy Fund.

g. Chi Alpha Campus Ministries Department

(1) All Chi Alpha campus ministers shall contribute one-half of their tithes to the national Chi Alpha Campus Ministries Department.

(2) All International Student Ministry missionaries and recognized international student ministry campus and church staff shall contribute one-half of their tithes to the national Chi Alpha Campus Ministries Department.

(3) All Chi Alpha chapters and International Student Ministry works shall contribute 5 percent of their budget to the national Chi Alpha Campus Ministries Department.

h. Teen Challenge International, U.S.A.

All Teen Challenge centers shall contribute monthly in support of Teen Challenge International, U.S.A.

ARTICLE XV. CORPORATIONS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

Section 1. Authorization

The Executive Presbytery may from time-to-time establish certain Assemblies of God corporations, which entities are separately legally incorporated for governance purposes from The General Council of the Assemblies of God, but whose boards of directors are appointed by the Executive Presbytery and ratified by the General Presbytery. All such corporations shall be submitted to the General Council for approval.

Section 2. Board of Directors

The oversight of policy and administration of each of the corporations shall be delegated to a Board of Directors in accordance with the provisions of the corporation's articles and bylaws. The articles and bylaws of each corporation and amendments thereto shall be approved by the Executive Presbytery and General Presbytery.

BYLAWS

Section 3. Amenability

Each corporation and its Board of Directors shall be amenable to the Executive Presbytery and the General Presbytery.

Section 4. Fiscal Affairs

The books of each corporation shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant selected by the Executive Presbytery, and such audit shall be included with The General Council of the Assemblies of God annual audit report to the General Presbytery and the General Council in session.

Section 5. Recognized Corporations

The following entities shall constitute the recognized corporations of The General Council of the Assemblies of God: Central Bible College, Evangel University, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Global University of the Assemblies of God, Assemblies of God Financial Services Group, Assemblies of God Foundation, Assemblies of God Loan Fund, and Assemblies of God Ministers Benefit Association. No General Council corporation shall be dissolved, merged, or liquidated without the approval of the General Council in session.

ARTICLE XVI. AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

Section 1. Authorization

Ministries that represent a national or global ministry focus working with The General Council of the Assemblies of God or its corporations but whose boards of directors are not controlled or appointed by the Executive Presbytery may be recognized by the Executive Presbytery as affiliated ministries.

Section 2. Board of Directors

Each affiliated ministry shall have a Board of Directors that will be responsible for governance and administration of the ministry. The Board of Directors shall be selected by the ministry itself in the manner prescribed by its bylaws, except that the Executive Presbytery shall be authorized to appoint one member of the Board of Directors.

Section 3. Governance

Each affiliated ministry shall select and manage its own employees, maintain accounting records, hold title to property, obtain insurance, file tax returns, prepare financial statements, pay salaries and other expenses, raise funds, create and distribute promotional literature, provide charitable contribution receipts to donors, and in all other respects operate as an autonomous legal ministry except as noted in Section 4 through 6, below.

Section 4. Relationship

Affiliated ministries shall enter into a covenant relationship with The General Council of the Assemblies of God under such terms and conditions as are established by the Executive Presbytery and approved by the General Presbytery.

The charter or bylaws of each affiliated ministry shall affirm acceptance of the Constitution and Bylaws of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, including the Statement of Fundamental Truths. Each affiliated ministry shall be amenable to the Executive Presbytery and General Presbytery with regard to doctrine and compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. In all other respects an affiliated ministry shall be autonomous and self-governed.

Section 5. Name and logo

Affiliated ministries may refer to their status as an affiliated ministry with The General Council of the Assemblies of God but may not use the Assemblies of God name or logo or other indications or marks to convey in any way a formal legal relationship with The General Council of the Assemblies of God or its recognized corporations, unless an exception has been granted by the Executive Presbytery.

Section 6. Dissolution

The charter or bylaws of an affiliated ministry shall specify that in the event of dissolution its assets shall be distributed to The General Council of the Assemblies of God or any Assemblies of God church, district council, or corporation.

XVII. MILITARY SERVICE

As a Movement we affirm our loyalty to the government of the United States in war or peace.

We shall continue to insist, as we have historically, on the right of each member to choose whether to declare their position as a combatant, a noncombatant, or a conscientious objector.

ARTICLE XVIII. GENERAL COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

The General Presbytery shall be empowered to develop and maintain a set of documents referred to as the *General Council Policy Manual*. These documents shall set forth the policies, procedures, guidelines, and parameters relating to the operation and structure of divisions, departments, commissions, and ministries of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. The *General Council Policy Manual* shall be administered by the Board of Administration. The Executive Presbytery shall submit annually to the General Presbytery all proposed additions, deletions, and modifications to the *General Council Policy Manual* for approval or amendment by the General Presbytery. The *General Council Policy Manual* shall be available upon request to churches and credentialed ministers.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE XIX. ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

1. Report of the general superintendent
2. Report of the general secretary
3. Report of the general treasurer
4. Departmental reports
5. Unfinished business
6. Election of officers
7. New business
8. Adjournment

All business sessions of the General Council shall commence with prayer.

ARTICLE XX. QUORUM

All members registered and voting in any meeting of The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall constitute a quorum, and all general presbyters registered and voting in any meeting of the General Presbytery shall constitute a quorum. The presence of nine executive presbyters at any meeting of the Executive Presbytery shall constitute a quorum. The presence of four members at any meeting of the Board of Administration shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE XXI. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Bylaws may be made at any regular meeting of The General Council of the Assemblies of God. Amendments to be adopted shall require a majority of all votes cast.

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