



**Bylaws**

**of the**

**Southern California  
District Council**

As Last Revised and Amended  
by the Southern California Executive Presbytery  
under the California Emergency Powers Act  
March 29, 2021

**RESTATED**  
**ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**  
**OF**  
**THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DISTRICT**  
**COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, INC.**

T. Ray Rachels and J. Larry Chapman certify that:

1. They are the president and secretary respectively of THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DISTRICT COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, a California non-profit corporation.
2. The articles of incorporation of this corporation are amended and restated to read as follows:

**I**

The name of this corporation is THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DISTRICT COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD.

**II**

- A. This organization is a religious corporation and is not organized for the private gain of any person. It is organized under the Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law exclusively for religious purposes. This corporation elects to be governed by all of the provisions of the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1980 not otherwise applicable to it under Part 5 thereof.
- B. The purposes for which the said corporation is formed are:

To establish, maintain and conduct an Association of Ministers and Churches in the Southern Section of the State of California; to hold religious services and sessions under the auspices and in accordance with the tenets and teaching of the Christian religion and the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God; to purchase, hold, lease and sell such real and personal property as may be necessary and desirable for the corporation's purposes; to hold, manage and invest

donations, gifts, endowments, and all other money or property for the support, maintenance and benefit of said corporation and to do all other things proper and necessary to maintain the affairs of said organization, and to exercise any and all powers and privileges in anywise permitted and granted by the laws of the State of California to religious corporations, and required by or not contrary to the Bylaws, rules, regulations and/or discipline of the said District Council.

### **III**

That the principal office for the transaction of the business of this corporation shall be located in the County of Orange, State of California.

### **IV**

That the object of this corporation is other than for profit, and therefore there shall be no capital stock.

### **V**

That the number of Directors or Trustees of said Corporation shall be determined by the Bylaws of this corporation and the names and residences of the Trustees who have been elected for the first year and to serve until the election and qualification of their successors are as follows:

G. Osterberg, residing in Los Angeles, California; Louis F. Turnbull, residing in Los Angeles, California; J. Logan Isaacs, residing in Whittier, California; George A. Geffrey, residing in Long Beach, California and Samuel S. Soull, residing in Pasadena, California.

### **VI**

- A. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- B. No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign (including the publishing or distribution of statements) on behalf of any candidate for public office.

## VII

The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes and no part of the net income or assets of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer or member thereof or to the benefit of any private person. Upon the dissolution or winding up of the corporation, its assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of this corporation shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

3. The foregoing amendment and restatement of the articles of incorporation has been duly approved by the board of directors.
4. The foregoing amendment and restatement of the articles of incorporation has been duly approved by the members of the corporation.

We further declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the matters set forth in this certificate are true and correct of our own knowledge.

T. Ray Rachels, President

J. Larry Chapman, Secretary

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DISTRICT COUNCIL  
OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD**

**BYLAWS**

**PREAMBLE**

**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, (3) to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, and (4) to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world.

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 pastors and teachers over the church.

That the priority reasons-for-being of the Assemblies of God are 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 these reasons-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 to fruits and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ.

That we are a cooperative fellowship of Pentecostals, Spirit-baptized saints from local Pentecostal Assemblies of like precious faith throughout the United States and foreign lands to be known as the Southern California District 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 methods and order for worship, unity, fellowship, work, and business for God; but, instead, 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 fulness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13)

That the General Council of the Assemblies of God has made provision for the care and development of local assemblies through the agency of District Councils.

Therefore, we gladly assume this delegated responsibility that has been committed to us, and hereby assemble ourselves in scriptural order for the purpose of promoting and husbanding the interests of the fellowship in the territory assigned to us, and agree to be governed by the following bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God.

#### **ARTICLE II. RELATIONSHIP**

This District Council is an integral part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri. Therefore, the principles of unity and cooperative fellowship as set forth in the Constitution of the General Council are the principles which shall govern the District Council.

#### **ARTICLE III. HEADQUARTERS**

The headquarters of this corporation is 17951 Cowan, Irvine, California. At such time as may be deemed advisable, the District headquarters may be moved to any place deemed feasible by the Executive Presbytery.

#### **ARTICLE IV. TERRITORY**

This District shall include all that part of the State of California lying South of the line beginning at a point where the California-Nevada State line is intersected by

the Mono-Inyo County line, thence along county lines of Mono-Inyo, Mono-Fresno and Madera-Fresno Counties to a point northwest of Fresno where Dickenson Avenue intersects the San Joaquin River, thence south on Dickenson Avenue to the intersection of Dickenson and Central Avenues, thence west on Central Avenue along a projected line which intersects the San Benito-Fresno County line (approximately 4 miles south of Mercey Hot Springs), thence continuing along county lines of San Benito- Fresno, Monterey-Fresno, Monterey-Kings and Monterey-San Luis Obispo counties to the Pacific Ocean.

## **ARTICLE V. INTERCULTURAL FELLOWSHIPS**

Ethnic or language groups may be authorized by the Executive Presbytery to form a fellowship of ministers (General Council Bylaws Article V, Section 7). The fellowship shall exist for the purpose of exchanging information, facilitating evangelism, and establishing churches. The ministers in the intercultural fellowship shall remain affiliated with the geographic section in which they are located. If a nationally recognized fellowship of the intercultural group exists, the District intercultural fellowship will be part of its national fellowship.

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

This Council shall stand for the Holy Scriptures as the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice and adopts the following Statement of Fundamental Truths approved by the General Council, to the end that we may all speak the same thing (reprinted from General Council Constitution):

### **STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS**

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

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

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

## 2. The One True God

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

### The Adorable Godhead

#### (a) Terms Defined

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

#### (b) Distinction and Relationship in the Godhead

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

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

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

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

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are never **identical** as to **Person**; nor **confused** as to **relation**; nor **divided** in respect to the Godhead; nor **opposed** as to **cooperation**. The Son is **in** the Father and the Father is **in** the Son as to relationship. The Son is **with** the Father and



the Father is **with** the Son, as to fellowship. The Father is not **from** the Son, but the Son is **from** the Father, as to authority. The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son proceeding, as to nature, relationship, cooperation and authority. Hence neither Person in the Godhead either exists or works separately or independently of the others (John 5:17-30, 32, 37; John 8:17, 18).

(e) The Title, Lord Jesus Christ

The appellation *Lord Jesus Christ* is a proper name. It is never applied in the New Testament either to the Father or to the Holy Ghost. It therefore belongs exclusively to the **Son of God** (Rom. 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 (Matt. 1:23, 1 John 4:2, 10, 14; Rev. 1:13, 17).

(g) Title, Son of God

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

(h) Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ

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

(i) Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord

The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, having by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels and principalities and powers having been made subject unto Him. And having been made both Lord and Christ, He sent the Holy Ghost that we, in the name of

Jesus, might bow our knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father until the end, when the Son shall become subject to the Father that God may be all in all (Heb. 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Acts 2:32-36; Rom 14:11; 1 Cor. 15:24-28).

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

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

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

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

- (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 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- (e) His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:4).
- (f) His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).

### 4. The Fall of Man

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

### 5. The Salvation of Man

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

(a) Conditions to Salvation

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

(b) The Evidences of Salvation

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

## 6. The Ordinances of the Church

(a) Baptism in Water

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

(b) Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements--bread and the fruit of the vine--is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4), a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Cor. 11:26), a prophecy of His second coming (1 Cor. 11:26), and is enjoined on all believers "until He come!"

## 7. The Baptism in the Holy Ghost

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8); a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb. 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 Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost

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

## 9. Sanctification

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

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:1-11, 13; 8:1, 2, 13; Gal. 2:20; Phil 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 reasons-for-being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church are:

- (a) To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16).
- (b) To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- (c) To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:12).

- (d) To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world (Psalm 112:9; Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to these reasons-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, 13, 14).
- (c) Enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ (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 the following: (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; Matt. 8:16, 17; James 5:14-16).

## 13. The Blessed Hope

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

## 14. The Millennial Reign of Christ

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zech. 14:5; Matt. 24:27, 30; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezekiel 37:21, 22; Zephaniah 3:19, 20; Romans 11:26, 27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11:6-9; 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 (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

## 16. The New Heavens and the New Earth

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

# **ARTICLE VII. PREROGATIVES**

## Section 1. Basic Prerogatives

- 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.

## Section 2. Supervision

In connection with its prerogatives as stated in Section 1, this District Council shall have the right to supervise all activities of the Assemblies of God within its territory (Article IV), in accordance with the rights conferred by Article X of the Constitution of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and/or any subsequent replacement or revision thereof.

## Section 3. Credentials

The District Council shall have the right to examine ministers who have met the requirements for credentialing and to administer discipline to the same in accordance with the provisions as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

#### Section 4. Officers and Committees

The District Council shall have the right to elect its own officers and committees, to arrange for its own meetings, and to govern itself.

#### Section 5. Ministries

The District Council shall have the right to establish and maintain such ministries, institutions and services for the fellowship as may be necessary for the propagation of the Gospel and the work of the Assemblies of God within the District.

#### Section 6. Churches, Organization, and Institutions

The District Council shall have the right to evangelize, to establish churches, and to provide for their development. It shall also have the right to establish and maintain institutions of higher learning, schools, camp meeting grounds, orphanages, homes for the aged, and other charitable and eleemosynary institutions within the District as may be considered desirable for the propagation of the Gospel.

#### Section 7. Finances and Property

Incidental to, or in connection with all the above prerogatives, the District Council shall have the right to receive gifts, own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of such property (real or chattel) as may be needed for the furtherance of its work.

### **ARTICLE VIII. MEMBERSHIP**

#### Section 1. Ordained Ministers

All ordained ministers of the Gospel holding accredited Fellowship Certificates from the General Council shall be recognized as members.

#### Section 2. Licensed and Certified Ministers

All licensed or certified ministers who hold accredited credentials issued by the General Council shall be recognized as members subject to the voting provisions as given in these Bylaws.

### Section 3. Churches

All persons who are members of Assemblies of God churches located within the territory of this District Council are members of this District. Voting rights shall be as set forth in these Bylaws. Each member church shall have the right to representation by one lay delegate, according to provision in these Bylaws, at the District Council sessions.

## ARTICLE IX. OFFICERS, ELECTIONS AND VACANCIES

### Section 1. District Executive Officers

The Executive Officers shall consist of the District Superintendent and members of the District Leadership Team, from which the corporate officers, other than the Superintendent who shall serve as President, will be designated by the Executive Presbytery. The District Superintendent shall be the only Executive Officer elected by the District Council.

- A. Qualifications. The Executive Officers shall be ordained ministers of mature experience, sound Christian character, and ability. They shall have been members in good standing in the District for at least twenty-four months directly prior to the date of their election.
- B. Nominations and Elections
  - (1) **District Superintendent:** The candidate for District Superintendent shall be nominated and elected by secret ballot by the District Council in session. If a candidate receives two-thirds or more of the ballots cast on a nominating ballot, that candidate shall be declared elected; otherwise, the nominating ballot shall not be considered as an electoral ballot.
  - (2) **District Leadership Team:** The District Superintendent shall recommend candidates to serve on the District Leadership Team to the Executive Presbytery. The Executive Presbytery shall elect all District Leadership Team members by secret ballot. A two-thirds



vote of the Executive Presbytery shall be required for election for the first and all succeeding terms of office.

- (3) The names of the nominees for the office of District Superintendent shall be balloted upon until a candidate for the office has received a two-thirds vote of the ballots cast. In order for a candidate to be declared a nominee, that person must have received a minimum of three votes on the nominating ballot. If no such majority is reached in the first three electoral ballots, the two candidates for the office having the highest number of votes in the third ballot shall be the only nominees to be further voted upon, and all other names shall be eliminated. Balloting shall continue until the office is filled by a two-thirds or more vote of the ballots cast.

#### C. Terms of Office.

- (1) **District Superintendent:** The term of office for the District Superintendent shall be for three years. The tenure of office shall begin June 1 following election and shall continue until the three year term is complete, or the office is vacated by death, resignation, or removal.

If the Executive Presbytery determines that a change is needed in the office of the District Superintendent, prior to his or her term's expiration, a two-thirds vote of the Executive Presbytery shall be required to confirm the change. The vote shall be final, unless an appeal is made to a special called District Council, to be held within 40 days of the Executive Presbytery's action.

- (2) **District Leadership Team:** The term of office for members of the District Leadership Team shall be for three years.

If the Executive Presbytery determines that a change is needed on the District Leadership Team, prior to the term's expiration, a two-thirds vote of the Executive Presbytery shall be required to confirm the change, and their action shall be final.

#### D. Vacancies

- (1) **District Superintendent.** In the event the office of District Superintendent becomes permanently vacant, at a time other than a regularly called District Council, the Executive Presbytery shall elect

by secret ballot an interim District Superintendent from all who may qualify to serve. A two-thirds vote shall be required for election. The interim District Superintendent shall serve until the next District Council. A new District Superintendent will then be elected at the next District Council, from all who may qualify to serve, for a three year term.

- (2) **District Leadership Team.** In the event a District Team Leader vacates the office prior to the completion of the term, the District Superintendent shall recommend a new Team Leader to the Executive Presbytery for election by secret ballot for a three year term. A two-thirds vote shall be required for election.

## Section 2. Executive Presbytery

The Executive Presbytery shall consist of the District Superintendent, the executive officers, twelve (12) ordained ministers, one of whom shall be chosen from each of twelve (12) regions. Additional members shall consist of one ordained Female, one ordained Minister under the age of 40, one Intercultural representative identified in the General Council Ethnic group category of Asian/Pacific Islander (Intercultural Executive Presbyter 1), one identified in the General Council Ethnic group category of Black (Intercultural Executive Presbyter 2), one identified in the General Council Ethnic group category of Hispanic (Intercultural Executive Presbyter 3), one at large Intercultural presbyter from any General Council Ethnic code other than Anglo (Intercultural Executive Presbyter 4), and one at large Intercultural Executive Presbyter from any General Council Ethnic group category except ethnic code Anglo nominated by the Intercultural Committee (Intercultural Executive Presbyter 5). No more than two Intercultural Executive Presbyters shall be elected from any one General Council Ethnic group category.

The Executive Presbyters chosen to represent the twelve (12) regions shall be called Regional Executive Presbyters. When a General Council Pastor Presbyter is elected or General Council Executive Presbyter, who is not already serving as a District Executive Presbyter, he or she shall serve as an additional Executive Presbyter. Further, the members of the Executive Presbytery who are not Executive Officers also shall be called non-resident Executive Presbyters.

- A. **Qualifications:** Executive Presbyters shall be ordained ministers of mature experience, sound Christian character, and ability who have been members of the District, in good standing, for at least two consecutive

years directly prior to their nomination, and who have resided within said region from which they are nominated for 12 consecutive months immediately preceding their election. Qualifications for District Executives who serve also as Executive Presbyters shall be the same as given in Article IX, Section 1, A. The General Council Presbyter-Pastor who also serves as an Executive Presbyter shall have the same qualifications as given for Executive Officers in Article IX, Section 1, A.

B. Nominations and Elections for Executive Presbyters

- (1) The Executive Presbyters for Regions 1, 4, 7 and 10 shall be elected in 2015 and serve for one year, and then be elected every three years thereafter. The Executive Presbyters for Regions 2, 5 and 8 and 11 shall be elected in 2015 for two years and then be elected every three years thereafter. The Executive Presbyters for Regions 3, 6, 9, and 12 shall be elected in 2015 for three years and then be elected every three years thereafter. The under 40 Executive Presbyter shall be elected for one year in 2015 and every three years thereafter. The Credentialed Female Executive Presbyter shall be elected in 2015 for three years and then be elected every three years thereafter. Intercultural Executive Presbyters 1 and 3 shall be elected in 2019 for one year and every three years thereafter, Intercultural Executive Presbyters 2 and 5 in 2019 for two years and every three years thereafter, and Intercultural Executive Presbyter 4 in 2019 for 3 years and every three years thereafter. These initial staggered partial terms will count as a full-term in regards to term limits.
- (2) Nominations.
  - (a) Each Region shall, in its proper year, select candidates from the qualified ministers of the region for the position of Executive Presbyter. *If a candidate receives 51% of the votes cast, he or she shall be declared the candidate and the only nominee submitted to the District Council in session.* In the case where no nominee receives 51% of the votes cast, *the three individuals receiving the highest numbers of votes shall be the nominees.* The nominees shall be selected at each Region's Annual Business Meeting.
  - (b) Intercultural Executive Presbyter 1 shall be nominated by all SoCal ministers who have self-identified with the General

Council in the Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic group category. Intercultural Executive Presbyter 2 shall be nominated by all SoCal ministers who have self-identified with the General Council in the Black ethnic group category. Intercultural Executive Presbyter 3 shall be nominated by all SoCal ministers who have self-identified with the General Council in the Hispanic ethnic group category. Intercultural Executive Presbyter 4 shall be nominated by all SoCal ministers who have self-identified with the General Council in any ethnic group category except ethnic code Anglo. Intercultural Executive Presbyter 5 shall be nominated by the Intercultural Committee from any ethnic group category except ethnic code Anglo.

- (c) The nominee(s) for the Minister under the age of 40 Executive Presbyter position shall be selected, in its proper year, at each Regions' Annual Business Meeting. Qualified candidates shall include all ordained ministers under the age of 40 at the time of election. Voting constituency for this nominee shall be limited to credentialed ministers under the age of 40 residing within said region.
- (d) The nominee(s) for the Credentialed Female Executive Presbyter position shall be selected, in its proper year, at each region's annual business meeting. Qualified candidates shall include all female ordained ministers. Voting constituency for this nominee shall be limited to female credentialed ministers residing within said region.
- (e) The nominees for Intercultural Executive Presbyters 1, 2, 3 and 4 shall be balloted on at each region's annual business meeting in the proper year. Qualified candidates shall include all ordained ministers who have self-identified with the General Council in the appropriate ethnic group categories for the Intercultural Executive Presbyter being nominated. If a candidate receives 51% of the aggregate votes cast, he or she shall be declared the candidate and the only nominee submitted to the District Council in session. If no one receives 51%, the individuals receiving the three highest numbers of aggregate votes will be the nominees. The Intercultural Committee will nominate the candidates for Intercultural Executive Presbyter 5 at their annual meeting. If a candidate

receives 51% of the votes cast, he or she shall be declared the candidate and the only nominee submitted to the District Council in session. In the case where no nominee receives 51% of the votes cast, the three individuals receiving the highest numbers of votes shall be the nominees.

(f) Votes from the regions for the Minister under the age of 40 and Credentialed Female Executive Presbyter nominee will be totaled. If a candidate receives 51% of the votes cast, he or she shall be declared the candidate and the only nominee submitted to the District Council in session. If no one receives 51%, the three individuals receiving the highest number of votes will be the nominees.

(g) All nominations for Executive Presbyter shall be submitted to the District Council in session for election. Balloting shall continue until the office is filled by two thirds (2/3) of the votes cast. No nominees shall be accepted from the floor. If the nominee is not elected, the Superintendent shall call for the caucus of the region or fellowship to submit a new nominee(s). All nominees receiving at least twenty five percent (25%) of the votes cast at the caucus shall be reported back to the District Council for election.

(3) All nominations from the regions, all Intercultural Executive Presbyters, Credentialed Female, Minister under the age of 40 shall be submitted to the District Council for election. Balloting shall continue until the office is filled by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the votes cast. No nominees shall be accepted from the floor. If a nominee is not elected, the Superintendent will call for the caucus of the Region or Fellowship to submit a new nominee(s). All nominees reported shall have received at least twenty-five (25%) of votes cast at caucus.

(4) Should a Minister under the age of 40 Executive Presbyter, Credentialed Female Executive Presbyter or Intercultural Executive Presbyter be chosen as a Regional Executive Presbyter, he or she shall have the right to choose which office he or she will accept.

### C. Terms of Office for Executive Presbyters

- (1) The term of office for Executive Presbyter shall be for three years. The Executive Presbyter, after serving three consecutive terms, cannot succeed himself or herself. The same term limits shall apply to the Credentialed Female Executive Presbyter, the Minister under the age of 40 Executive Presbyter, and Intercultural Executive Presbyters.
- (2) The Executive Presbyter shall take office 30 days following the close of the Annual District Council.
- (3) When appropriate, the General Council General Presbyter shall assume office as an Executive Presbyter beginning June 1, following the close of the District Council. His or her term of office shall be for two years.

#### D. Termination of Office for Non-Resident Executive Presbyters

- (1) How vacated: An Executive Presbyter shall be removed by the Executive Presbytery for any of the following reasons: death, resignation, removal, loss of credential or ministerial credentials no longer in good standing. In addition, a Regional Executive Presbyter's office shall be declared vacant by the Executive Presbytery upon his or her transfer out of the region he or she represented. The General Council Presbyter-Pastor Executive Presbyter's office shall be declared vacant by the Executive Presbytery upon his or her transfer out of the District.
- (2) A non-resident Executive Presbyter may be removed from office by a 2/3 (two-thirds) vote of the Executive Presbytery. A removed non-resident Executive Presbyter shall not be eligible to hold the post of non-resident Executive Presbyter until three years after than vote.
- (3) How filled: When the office of a non-resident Executive Presbyter is declared vacant, a successor shall be chosen in the following manner. The District Superintendent shall call a business meeting of the region involved, said business meeting to be conducted in a centrally located city, for the election for the unexpired term for the non-resident Executive Presbyter for the said region or fellowship. The eligibility requirements of those voting for said non-resident Executive Presbyter shall conform to that for the voting constituency at a District Council, providing they are residents within the region or members of the fellowship. When the office of a General Council

Presbyter-Pastor Executive Presbyter is declared vacated, the Executive Presbytery may elect a successor. If the office of a non-resident Executive Presbyter is vacated between regional nomination and the District Council, the position will remain open until the District Council. The Regional Leadership Team, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall oversee the region during the vacancy.

- (4) When the office of Intercultural Executive Presbyter, Female Executive Presbyter or under 40 Executive Presbyter is declared vacant, a successor shall be chosen by calling a business meeting in a centrally located city for all members of the group being represented for the election for the unexpired term for the Executive Presbyter whose position has been declared vacant. If the office is vacated between nomination and the District Council, the position will remain open until the District Council.

E. Each Region of the District shall form its own Regional Leadership Team consisting of a minimum of six (6) members, one of whom shall be the Regional Executive Presbyter who shall serve as chair.

- (1) Qualifications: Each member of the Regional Leadership Team, other than the Executive Presbyter, must have resided in the Region for a minimum of six (6) months prior to being selected to serve. Four (4) members of the Regional Leadership Team shall be Ordained ministers in good standing. At least one (1) member of the team shall be a credentialed Female, one (1) credentialed minister under 40 years of age at the time of selection and one (1) credentialed Intercultural minister. Additional members of the Regional Leadership Team may be non-credentialed men and women from the Region's churches.
  - (a) In the case of the "Intercultural" member of the Regional Leadership Team, the minister may be a member of a recognized Fellowship, or in collaboration with the Superintendent, may be self-identified as from a specific Intercultural group.
  - (b) Ten percent (10%) of the ministers in a given region and who are from an Intercultural group as described in the Governance Policy Manual, which has been approved by the Executive Presbytery, may petition to have a designated

member of their group on the Regional Leadership Team. In these cases, the Executive Presbyter will consult with the Superintendent on the creation of this position.

- (2) Selection of Members of the Regional Leadership Team
  - (a) Each member of the Regional Leadership Team shall be selected by the Executive Presbyter in collaboration with the District Superintendent.
  - (b) Consideration shall be given to broad based representation on the Regional Leadership Team from the entire region's ministers and churches. The majority of the Regional Leadership Team cannot be from one church.
- (3) Terms of Office: The term of office for members of the Regional Leadership Team shall be for one (1) year. There shall be no limit in the number of terms a member of the Regional Leadership Team may serve.
- (4) Vacancy: Members of the Regional Leadership Team may vacate their office by resignation, death or removal. A member of the Regional Leadership Team may be removed from office by decision of the Executive Presbyter in collaboration with the District Superintendent for due cause. In the event of the resignation, death or removal of a Regional Leadership Team member, the Executive Presbyter shall appoint a replacement in collaboration with the Superintendent to fulfill the unexpired term.
- (5) Portfolio assignments for each member of the Regional Leadership Team are made by the Executive Presbyter having given due consideration to the needs, ministries and vision for the Region.
- (6) If the office of Executive Presbyter is vacated, the Regional Leadership Team, in consultation with the Superintendent, will oversee the region during the vacancy.

### Section 3. General Council Non-Resident Regional Executive Presbyter



At each District Council preceding the biennial General Council, the Southern California District Council shall elect four nominees for the office of General Council Non-Resident Executive Presbyter.

A. Qualifications

- (1) Each nominee shall be an Ordained Minister in good standing with the Southern California District.
- (2) One qualified nominee may be a full-time District Executive Officer.
- (3) One qualified nominee who is not a full-time District Executive Officer.
- (4) One qualified nominee who is under 40 years of age at time of election.
- (5) One qualified nominee who is female (no age requirement).

B. Nominations

- (1) The Executive Presbytery shall by secret ballot select at least three qualified candidates for each office to be presented to the District Council for election. The Executive Presbytery shall submit all qualified candidates who have received at least three votes on the nominating ballot to the District Council in session. There shall be no further nominations from the District Council floor.

C. Elections

- (1) A two-thirds majority of all votes cast shall be required in order to constitute an election.

#### Section 4. General Council Presbytery

There shall be three General Council Presbyters from the Southern California District.

- A. The District Superintendent, by virtue of office, shall serve as a General Presbyter.
- B. The Corporate Secretary/Treasurer, by virtue of office, shall serve as a General Presbyter.
- C. One pastor meeting the qualifications of an Executive Presbyter as stated in the above Section 2 of Article IX, shall be elected by the Executive Presbytery. He or she shall be elected by a two-thirds vote of all votes

cast by secret ballot. The term of office shall be for a period of two years beginning immediately upon election.

### Section 5. Nominations and Elections

- A. The names of the nominees for the Executive Presbytery shall be balloted upon until a candidate for office has received a two-thirds vote of the votes cast (unless specifically stated otherwise in the bylaws). In order for a candidate to be declared a nominee, he or she must have received a minimum of three votes on the nominating ballot. If no such majority is reached in the first three ballots, the two candidates for each office having the highest number of votes in the third ballot shall be the only nominees to be further voted upon, and all other names shall be eliminated. Balloting shall continue until the office is filled by a two-thirds vote of the votes cast (unless specifically stated otherwise in the bylaws).
- B. No minister is qualified to be nominated, elected or appointed to serve any office or committee, regional or district, unless he or she is in good standing. "Good standing" shall be defined as follows: has demonstrated high moral character and ethics, has cooperated with the District and Regional activities, and is current with his or her financial responsibilities to the District, the General Council and to the public.

## **ARTICLE X. DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### Section 1. District Superintendent

- A. Shall act as President of the corporation in all legal matters. He or she shall be authorized to sign all official and legal documents, and to perform any other functions usual and customary as presiding officer, or such as may be directed by the District Council or the Executive Presbytery.
- B. Shall preside at all meetings and sessions of the District Council.
- C. Shall be the head of the District Office and supervise the work of that office.
- D. Shall be the general superintendent of all the activities and work which may be related to or be a part of the District Council's functions and assign duties to the other members of the District Leadership Team.

- E. Shall administer discipline in all cases when authorized to do so by the Executive Presbytery.
- F. Shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Presbytery and to receive all communications directed to these bodies.
- G. Shall preside in all meetings of the Credentials Committee.
- H. Shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
- I. Shall represent the District at all sessions of the General Council and of the General Presbytery.
- J. Shall appoint the various committees for the Annual District Council session not later than three months previous to that session subject to the approval of the Executive Presbytery.
- K. Shall make provision for the Executive Presbyters and heads of all District ministries to meet at District Headquarters at least eight (8) times per year to be presided over by the District Superintendent – or in the absence of the Superintendent, a member of the District Leadership Team designated by the Executive Presbytery – for the purpose of coordinating the activities of all ministries of the District Office.

## Section 2. Corporate Secretary/Treasurer

- A. Shall be a member of the District Leadership Team and designated by the Executive Presbytery as Corporate Secretary/Treasurer. A two-thirds vote by secret ballot shall confirm the designation.
- B. Shall devote full time to the functions of this office and assist in the office and in the supervision of the work on the field as directed by and in cooperation with the District Superintendent and shall be amenable to the Superintendent in all matters of the District work and policy.
- C. Shall keep a record of all the proceedings of the District Council and shall publish the same as approved and directed by the District Council or Executive Presbytery.
- D. Shall act as the Secretary of the corporation in all legal matters.

- E. Shall act as Secretary of the Credentials Committee and of the Executive Presbytery.
- F. Shall be the custodian of the official seal of the District. He or she shall keep a record of the names of ministers and assemblies in the District fellowship.
- G. Shall be authorized to sign all official and legal documents and perform such other functions as are customary or as may be directed by the District Council or the Executive Presbytery. He or she shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
- H. Shall be the custodian of the District Council funds and shall deposit same in the name of the District Council.
- I. Shall be authorized to disburse the same upon the approval of the Executive Presbytery. He or she shall keep an accurate record of all disbursements and receipts of all ministries, and conduct the work of this office according to accepted methods of business.
- J. Shall make a quarterly report to the Executive Presbytery. All books shall be audited yearly prior to the annual convention of the District Council, and the report of such shall be made to same.
- K. Shall perform such other functions as are customary to this office or as may be directed by the Executive Presbytery.

### Section 3. Executive Presbytery

- A. The Executive Presbyters shall serve as trustees of the District Council. They shall supervise and have general oversight of all District ministries and shall be expected to execute the will of the Council in all administrative matters. They shall make reports to the District Council of their activities on behalf of the fellowship as may be directed by the District Council.
- B. Subject to the limitations of the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, and of California law, and while the District Council is not in session, the Executive Presbytery shall exercise all corporate powers and control the business and affairs of the corporation. The Executive Presbytery shall have the power to do the following:
  - (1) Make contracts.

- (2) Receive property by devise or bequest, subject to the laws regulating the transfer of property by will, and otherwise acquire and hold all property, real or personal, including shares of stock, bonds, and securities of other corporations.
- (3) Act as trustee under any trust incidental to the principal objects of the corporation, and receive, hold, administer, and expend funds and property subject to such trust.
- (4) Convey, exchange, lease, mortgage, encumber, transfer upon trust, or otherwise dispose of all property, real or personal.
- (5) Borrow money, contract debts and issue bonds, including annuity bonds, notes, and debentures, and secure the payment or performance of its obligations.
- (6) Give authority to the President, and/or Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer, to sign all necessary legal documents.
- (7) Determine the time, place and duration of the annual District Council sessions and provide for proper publication of announcements thereof.
- (8) Call business meetings of the District Council or the Executive Presbytery when deemed advisable.
- (9) Fix all salaries, allowances, and honorariums.
- (10) Respond to lawsuits and litigation.
- (11) The Executive Presbytery shall constitute the District Credentials Committee.
- (12) They shall serve as the Disciplinary Committee.
- (13) The Executive Presbytery shall also act as a Court of Appeals in matters referred to it.
- (14) Do all other acts necessary or expedient for the administration of the affairs and attainment of the purposes of the corporation.

- (15) The Executive Presbytery, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, shall elect all members of the District Leadership Team, with the exception of the District Superintendent, by secret ballot for a three year term. A two-thirds vote shall be required for election.

A three-year review of each person on the District Leadership Team, with the exception of the District Superintendent, shall be conducted by the Executive Presbytery to determine if that person shall continue in office. A two-thirds vote of the Executive Presbytery shall then be required to continue in office. This procedure shall occur each three-year cycle of the leader's tenure.

#### Section 4. Executive Presbyter

- A. Shall be amenable to the District Superintendent and shall work closely in harmony with the Superintendent to promote the best interest of the District to the ministers and churches of the region represented.
- B. Shall be the chairman of the Regional Leadership Team of the region. With them, the Executive Presbyter shall plan the program of the region so there will be a minimum of overlap of regional activities.
- C. Shall represent the interests of the ministers and churches of the respective region or General Council ethnic group at meetings of the Executive Presbytery.
- D. Shall be in charge of and arrange for the fellowship meetings and other activities in that region.
- E. Shall meet regularly and/or upon call with other members of the Executive Presbytery to transact such business as lies in the province of the Executive Presbytery.
- F. Shall endeavor to foster a sense of community and meaningful relationships within the Region and shall promote the same among the ministers. The Executive Presbyter shall personally welcome new ministers into the region.
- G. Shall perform such additional duties as may be assigned by the District Superintendent or Executive Presbytery.

## **ARTICLE XI. STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1. District Leadership Team**

There shall be a District Leadership Team composed of the District Superintendent as the Chairman, and the Leadership Team members elected by the Executive Presbytery. The District Leadership Team shall meet upon the call of the District Superintendent. The District Leadership Team shall administer and carry out the policies and directives of the District Council and the Executive Presbytery.

### **Section 2. Regional Leadership Team**

The Regional Leadership Team shall perform duties assigned it by the District Council, the District Superintendent, the Executive Presbytery, and/or the District Leadership Team.

### **Section 3. The Credentials Committee**

- A. Composition of the Credentials Committee: The Credentials Committee shall consist of the Executive Presbytery, as defined in Article IX, Section 3.
- B. Meetings of the Credentials Committee
  - (1) The Corporate Secretary/Treasurer shall present completed applications to the Credentials Committee complete with references, test results, and other materials that may be important for evaluation of the candidates.
  - (2) All credential applicants shall be required to attend the meeting designated for them and to meet with the members of the Credentials Committee for a personal interview. Unless prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond their control, each candidate will attend the sessions, and if married, will attend with their spouse.
  - (3) Following examination of credential applicants, the Credentials Committee shall recommend to the General Council what credential, if any, should be granted to each applicant.

#### Section 4. World Missions Committee

There shall be a District World Missions Committee for the purpose of advancement of home and foreign missions. The District Superintendent shall submit nominations for this committee to the Executive Presbytery for ratification. The World Missions Committee shall function according to the purposes and guidelines established by the Executive Presbytery from time to time.

#### Section 5. Intercultural Committee

There shall be an Intercultural Committee for the purpose of continuing advancement of intercultural diversity. The District Superintendent shall submit nominations for this committee to the Executive Presbytery for ratification. The Intercultural Committee shall function according to the purposes and guidelines established by the Executive Presbytery from time to time.

#### Section 6. Panel of Arbitrators

In order to fulfill the biblical injunction that believers hear and resolve disputes within the church (I Cor. 6:1-8), a Panel of Arbitrators is hereby established.

##### A. Qualifications:

- (1) Each arbitrator shall be an ordained minister of mature experience, sound Christian character and ability, who is a member in good standing in the District and has been so for at least two consecutive years prior to the date of election. A nominee for the panel of arbitrators must have been serving within the region from which he or she is nominated for 12 consecutive months preceding his or her election.
- (2) Each arbitrator shall be a person who has been active and cooperative with the District and Regional activities and is current with his or her financial responsibilities to the District, the General Council and the public.
- (3) When the selection of arbitrators shall be unacceptable to either or both of the parties in a dispute, three arbitrators shall be selected by the Christian Legal Society to hear and decide disputes between the



Southern California District Council and a General Council or District Affiliated church, or a credentialed Assemblies of God minister.

- B. Term of Office: The term of office for the members of the Panel of Arbitrators shall be six years.
- C. Termination of Office: The term of office for the members of the Panel of Arbitrators ends and their successors shall take office June 1 following the close of the Annual District Council.
- D. Nominations and Elections:
  - (1) Each of the regions of the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God shall nominate by secret ballot two (2) ministers meeting the qualifications in Paragraph A, subparagraphs (1) and (2) to represent their region on the Panel of Arbitrators.
  - (2) The District Council shall elect two people from each section meeting the above qualifications to serve on the Panel of Arbitrators.
- E. Vacancies: In the event a position on the Panel of Arbitrators becomes permanently vacant for any reason, a successor shall be chosen by the Executive Presbytery at a regular quarterly meeting of said Presbytery, or at a special meeting of the Presbytery called by the District Superintendent. Such successor shall fill the unexpired term.
- F. Cost of Arbitration: The cost of arbitration shall be limited to actual expenses and shall be borne equally by the parties involved. Arbitrators shall receive no compensation other than actual and reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, except when the Christian Legal Society has been requested, then the costs and charges of the Christian Legal Society shall be borne equally by the parties involved.

## **ARTICLE XII. ANNUAL DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1. Appointment of Committees**

Committees and the chair of each committee shall be appointed not later than three months prior to the date announced for the Annual District Council. They shall be appointed by the District Superintendent subject to the approval of the Executive Presbytery and shall serve until the close of the Annual District Council session.

## Section 2. Resolutions Committee

- A. Purpose. It shall be the responsibility of the Resolutions Committee to review and prepare all resolutions presented for action at the upcoming Annual District Council as follows:
- (1) Determine if a proposed resolution is a new policy or action or represents a modification of existing policy. Where it is a modification to existing policy, the committee shall where possible provide reference to the existing policy as backup information to accompany the resolution.
  - (2) Determine if the proposed resolution is compatible with the Articles of Incorporation and/or Bylaws of the District and the General Council and, in areas concerning the legal status of the District such as non-profit corporate status, whether the proposed resolution is consistent with the legal duties of the District.
  - (3) Determine if the resolution seeks or requires an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation and/or the Bylaws, and, if so, specify the correct portion of the Articles of Incorporation and/or Bylaws to be modified and/or appropriate placement and indexing of the change if it represents a new provision or provisions. Further, the committee may recommend specific wording where the committee deems it appropriate to maintain consistency of form and language in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws in the event the resolution is adopted. (Revisions where made or recommended shall not alter the obvious intent and/or meaning of the proposed resolution.)
- B. Procedure for submitting resolutions:
- (1) Anyone who wishes to have a resolution considered at the Annual District Council must submit the resolution, in writing, to the District Superintendent at the District Office on or before 120 days preceding the Annual District Council.
  - (2) The District Superintendent shall cause notice of the deadline for submitting resolutions to be advertised to the membership.
  - (3) Persons or committees submitting resolutions should include the following information:

- a. Whether the resolution is a new action or policy or if it modifies some existing policy or standing rule.
  - b. Whether the resolution seeks to amend the Articles of Incorporation and/or the Bylaws and if so, specify the Article(s) and Section(s) to be amended specifically.
  - c. The duration of the action called for where applicable.
  - d. If the resolution calls for a report to the Executive Presbytery, another committee, or the District Council, specify the questions to be addressed in the report and the due date.
  - e. An estimate of the costs involved if the resolution is adopted, if any.
  - f. A designation of the source of the funds necessary to implement the action requested, if any.
  - g. Identification of each resolution separately by the caption Resolution 1, Resolution 2, etc.
  - h. Designation of the person(s) or committee(s) forwarding the resolution and the signature of at least one person proposing the resolution and the mailing address of each person signing the resolution.
- (4) The committee shall meet to receive and process all resolutions to be presented to the Annual District Council.
  - (5) The chair of the Parliamentary Committee shall be invited to meet with the Resolutions Committee. He or she shall not be a voting member or person with voice, unless he or she was named as a member of the Resolutions Committee also. He or she shall be a resource person regarding the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the District and General Council and proper parliamentary procedure.
  - (6) The committee chair shall cause notice of the time and place of the meeting of the committee to be given to each person whose signature and mailing address appears on the proposed resolution. Any proposer of a resolution who attends the committee session regarding their proposed resolution shall be given the opportunity to answer questions and provide information regarding their resolution.
  - (7) The committee shall put all resolutions in final form for presentation to the Annual District Council. All actions shall be by majority vote except a determination not to forward a resolution to the Annual District Council as provided below.

- (8) The committee may decline to forward a resolution to the Annual District Council if upon a two-thirds vote of the committee members present and voting it is found that the proposed resolution is essentially a duplication of existing policy or is not appropriate when compared to the purposes and procedures contained in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the District and/or the General Council. If the committee determines that a resolution is inappropriate, it shall so advise the author and shall inform him or her of his or her right to present the proposed resolution to the Council for determination as to appropriateness.
- (9) The Executive Presbytery may forward resolution(s) to the Annual District Council directly without submitting them first to the Resolutions Committee, but only if the respective body specifically considers the necessity or desirability to bypass the committee process and votes affirmatively to forward the resolution directly to the Annual District Council. Possible reasons for bypassing the committee might be that in the preparation of the resolution, the respective body has already subjected the resolution to all of the processes the committee undertakes or that the resolution was prepared and approved by the respective body after the deadline for submission to the committee or after the deadline for mailing by the Secretary as provided below.
- (10) In addition to its duties in regard to resolutions which are referred to it and which usually relate to policy matters, the Resolutions Committee shall draft and present to the Annual District Council any courtesy resolutions which they deem appropriate. (Ordinarily courtesy resolutions express the appreciation of the District Council to a person or persons who have made unique contributions to the work of the District Council or served the needs of the delegates or the Council in arranging or providing the program or accommodations or otherwise). Courtesy resolutions need not be forwarded in the usual manner but may be given directly to the chairman of the Annual District Council at any time.
- (11) Resolutions processed by the committee shall be forwarded to the Corporate Secretary for mailing, by the Corporate Secretary, to the membership not later than 15 days prior to the District Council.

- (12) When a resolution is presented for consideration at the Annual District Council, an author, sponsor or spokesperson selected by the authors or sponsors shall be permitted the opportunity to be the first speaker on behalf of the resolution.
- (13) The Resolutions Committee has the right to offer an amendment to a resolution, but it must be acted upon by the District Council in the same manner as any amendment from the floor.

### Section 3. Parliamentary Procedure Committee

- A. Qualifications. The members of the committee and the chairman shall be persons knowledgeable in the provisions of the District Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the General Council Constitution and Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order.
- B. Duties. The committee shall provide opinions regarding questions of parliamentary procedure addressed to it by the chair of the Annual District Council.
- C. Procedure. If the chair seeks assistance in making a decision or ruling regarding the conduct of business at the Annual District Council, he or she may ask the advice of the committee by making a request through the chair. The chair shall consult with the committee and report the consensus of the committee regarding the issue to the chair privately.
- D. Rulings. The chair of the Annual District Council presiding at the time shall be responsible for making proper rulings on parliamentary procedure. The advice of the Parliamentary Procedure Committee and its chair shall be to assist the presiding chair of the Annual District Council in correctly ruling on such procedure, but such advice is not binding on him or her.

### Section 4. Steering and Rules Committee

The Steering and Rules Committee shall meet no later than 30 days prior to the convening of any District Council. The committee shall have the responsibility of recommending to the Annual District Council the order of business and the proper order of all resolutions, including those resolutions given by the Executive Presbytery, providing guidelines, time-tables, and priority for the scheduling and expediting of business to come before the Annual District Council in session. (This committee shall be subject to the District Superintendent.)

## Section 5. Registration and Roster Committee

- A. The District Office shall distribute pre-registration materials to all ministers and church secretaries at least fifteen (15) days prior to the District Council.
- B. The Committee shall be entrusted with the responsibility of examining and certifying all credentials and the recognition of all delegates. Suitable badges shall be issued by the Committee to all qualified members. It shall hold the Roster open for enrollment during the Council session and shall render such reports as may be called for by the action of the Council.
- C. The Committee shall be expected to open the Roster on the day preceding the convening of the District Council. The pre-registrations that have come back to the District Office shall be submitted to the Committee for processing, along with the registrations at the District Council.

## Section 6. Revisions Committee

- A. The Revisions Committee reviews and edits these Bylaws for clarity, simplicity, continuity, and for conformity with the General Council Bylaws throughout the year.
- B. This committee is amenable to the Executive Presbytery.
- C. The chair of this committee shall be appointed by the Executive Presbytery.
- D. This committee shall consist of five or more members.
- E. The Revisions Committee shall review and edit the Bylaws of the District Council for clarity, simplicity and continuity. It shall also edit and review the District Council Bylaws for conformity with the General Council Bylaws. Such conformity changes shall not require a vote of the District Council for implementation. Such changes shall be reported to the Executive Presbytery at their next regularly scheduled meeting and to the District Council annually.

## Section 7. Special Committees

Special committees may be appointed by the District Superintendent subject to the approval of the Executive Presbytery between sessions or by the District Council itself when the need requires.

### Section 8. Time of Meetings

The District Council Committees shall meet at the discretion of the District Superintendent or upon the call of the committee chair.

## **ARTICLE XIII. MEETINGS**

### Section 1. Annual District Councils

#### A. Time and Location

The District Council shall meet annually, the time and place to be announced by the Executive Presbytery. Announcement shall be published to the membership not later than two months prior to the time of the meeting.

#### B. Appropriate Facilities

The District Officers shall use careful discretion in selecting a large church, civic auditorium or (hotel) convention center for such meetings where the surroundings will be compatible with our Pentecostal testimony.

#### C. Voting Constituency and Quorum

(1) The voting constituency shall consist of the following:

- (a) All ordained, licensed, and certified ministers who hold a current Fellowship Certificate.
- (b) One duly accredited lay delegate from each member church within this District.

Further, each member of the voting constituency, as listed above, shall be a registered attendant at the District Council.

(2) Any number present shall constitute a quorum provided due notice shall have been given.

#### D. District Council Reports

All District Council reports, including the reports of the District Leadership Team, District financial report, and the District Ministries reports shall be distributed to all members of the voting constituency of the District by 15

days prior to the District Council. (The above referenced materials for the lay delegates shall be made available on the District's website.) These reports shall be subject to ratification by the District Council in session. This will dispense with the reading of the reports at the District Council.

## Section 2. Special Councils

### A. Procedure for Calling

Special councils may be called to meet any emergencies that may arise in the District. Such call shall be issued by the District Superintendent upon a majority vote of the Executive Presbytery. A written notice shall be sent to all of the District Council voting constituency in the same manner as provided in Section 1, D, above.

### B. Voting Constituency and Quorum

The voting constituency and quorum of special councils shall be the same as that of District Councils.

### C. Right of Initiative.

The right of initiative in calling a special council shall be granted to any ordained minister who holds a current Fellowship Certificate with this District. A statement setting forth the reasons for the special council and signed by not less than 33 1/3 percent of the ordained ministers who hold a current Fellowship Certificate with the District may be considered sufficient reason for such a call, said statement to be filed with the District Executive Presbytery, through the District Superintendent, who shall issue the call, setting the time and place for the meeting.

## Section 3. Annual Regional Business Meeting

### A. Time and Location

There shall be an annual Regional Business Meeting for each section in the month of January or February. The time and place for the meeting shall be determined by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Executive Presbytery.

### B. Notice of Meeting

The District Superintendent shall notify the voting constituency within the Region of the time and place of the Annual Regional Business Meeting not less than 30 days prior to said meeting. He or she shall apprise them of their church's privilege to send a lay delegate.



### C. Voting Constituency

- (1) The voting constituency of the Regional Business Meetings shall include the following:
  - (a) All ordained, licensed and certified ministers who hold a current Fellowship Certificate and who reside in or serve a church in the region.
  - (b) One lay delegate from each member church.
- (2) Any number present shall constitute a quorum provided due notice shall have been given.

### D. Minutes

The Corporate Secretary/Treasurer or a designee of the District Superintendent shall record in the District records the names of those nominated at the meeting.

## Section 4. Fellowship Meetings

For the purpose of promoting general unity and fellowship in the District, Fellowship Meetings shall be encouraged in each region. The Executive Presbyter shall be entrusted with the responsibility of arranging for and presiding over the Fellowship Meetings in his or her region.

## Section 5. Annual Intercultural Fellowship Meeting

### A. Time and Location

There shall be an annual Intercultural Fellowship Business Meeting for each intercultural fellowship in the month of January or February, or at the discretion of the District Superintendent. The time and place for the meeting shall be determined by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Intercultural Fellowship.

### B. Notice of Meeting

The District Superintendent shall notify the voting constituency within the Intercultural Fellowship of the time and place of the Annual Intercultural Fellowship Annual Business Meeting not less than 30 days prior to said meeting. He or she shall apprise them of their church's privilege to send a lay delegate.

### C. Voting Constituency

- (1) The voting constituency of the Intercultural Fellowship Business Meetings shall include the following:
  - (a) All ordained, licensed, and certified ministers who hold a current Fellowship Certificate and who are members of the said Intercultural Fellowship.
- (2) Any number present shall constitute a quorum provided due notice shall have been given.

D. Minutes

The Corporate Secretary/Treasurer or a designee of the District Superintendent shall record in the District records the names of those nominated or elected at the meeting.

## **ARTICLE XIV. THE 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 with His sovereign discretion without regard to gender, race, disability, or national origin.

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

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

A fourth classification of ministry, a local church credential, may be provided by a local General Council affiliated church under basic guidelines adopted by the General Presbytery and such additional guidelines adopted by the district council. The local church credential shall be non-transferable (limited to the issuing local church) and shall be limited to 2 years, unless the credential is solely required for active and ongoing local ministry in a prison, hospital or institution. 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 him or her to fulfill the fourfold mission of the church (Preamble to these bylaws).
- 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. Basic educational 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 the District Council Credentials Committee as qualifying for credentials through self-study and ministerial experience. Such candidates must have a proven and fruitful ministry of substantial duration. Requests from the district for such a candidate shall be presented to the General Council Credentials Committee and may be granted on a case-by-case basis.
- I. Mandatory screening. All applicants for ministerial credentials shall be screened through a designated screening agency established by the General Council 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.

- J. Marital status. We disapprove of any married persons holding ministerial credentials with the Southern California District [Assemblies of God] if either marriage partner has a former spouse living, unless the divorce occurred prior to his or her conversion or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15), except as hereinafter provided.
- K. Ecclesiastical annulments and marriage dissolutions. The Executive Presbytery of the General Council shall have the authority to determine whether an application 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 of the General Council 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 General Council Executive Presbytery may be made to the General Council General Presbytery.
- L. Eligibility of women. The Scriptures plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word (Joel 2:28; 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.
- M. Ministers from other organizations. If a minister from another reputable body desires to affiliate with the Assemblies of God, the credentials committees of both the General Council and the District Council are under no obligation to accept the applicant's previous ministerial status, but will judge each candidate on his or her own merits as to the level of credentials to be granted. Such applicants shall be required to:
- (1) Conform to Assemblies of God criteria for recognition.
  - (2) Complete an application for ministerial recognition.

- (3) Submit a letter of recommendation from a neighboring Assemblies of God minister and/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 Council Credentials Committee for action by the General Council Credentials Committee.
- (9) All previously ordained ministers so approved shall receive recognition as an ordained Assemblies of God minister with the laying on of hands by the Executive 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 the District Council Credentials Committee for a minister serving as a missionary in this country and who holds a credential with a member body of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, or in special and/or unique cases as determined by the General Council Credentials Committee.

N. Citizenship. Must either be a citizen of the United States or have a permanent residence status. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the General Council Credentials Committee.

### Section 3. Specific Qualifications

- A. Residency requirements of applicants. Applicants for all credentials must be residents of or hold credentials in the Southern California District and appear before the District Council Credentials Committee.
- B. Local church credential. A local church credential shall be administered by the local church pursuant to basic guidelines adopted by the General Council General Presbytery. 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 full or part time to Christian ministry and, at the discretion of the District Council Credentials Committee, may remain under the supervision of a pastor or a ministry coach or mentor. They shall show evidence of a divine call and be actively engaged in some aspect of ministry and proclamation of the gospel, except in case of ill health or advanced age.
  - (2) Pastoral requirements. In the event a certified minister is serving in a position as the pastor, he or she shall be expected to advance to licensure 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 exception shall be at the discretion of the District Credentials Committee.
  - (3) Exception for provisional issuance. A Certificate of Ministry may be issued on a provisional basis to a person who has not met all the credentialing requirements but who is deemed by the District Credentials Committee to be essential to the continuity of a church or a ministry outreach for which a duly credentialed and qualified minister is unavailable. The reason for such a provisional issuance must be ministry driven, and the justification for its use is terminated when the minister ceases to be involved in the ministry for which it was initially granted unless he or she accepts another qualifying assignment. Other limitations are:
    - (a) The ministry certificate on a provisional basis will be issued for 1 year and shall not be renewed more than two times.

- (b) A person who has been granted the Certificate of Ministry on a provisional basis must meet the qualifications for a ministry certificate within a 3 year period.
- D. Licensed Minister. Qualifications for license shall include clear evidence of a divine call, character and preparation suitable for that calling, practical ministry experience, and an evident purpose to devote one's life in service to the proclamation of the gospel.
- E. Ordained minister. Qualifications for ordination are outlined in the New Testament Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 7-9). In addition:
  - (1) Applicants must be 23 years of age or older.
  - (2) They must have met all the requirements in making application and in completing the prescribed application form.
  - (3) No person may be ordained to the ministry until he or she has shown evidence of a divine call and has held a ministry license and has been actively engaged in ministry and proclamation of the gospel for a least 2 full consecutive years immediately prior thereto.
  - (4) Residency requirements of applicants. Applicants must be residents of or hold credentials in the Southern California District Council when they make application and appear before the District Council Credentials Committee. The District Council does not approve any applicant for ordination who may have been licensed in another district until such licensed minister shall have been a member of the Southern California District Council for at least 1 year. Applicants who have not been a member of the Southern California District Council 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 ministry license for 2 (two) full consecutive years or being a member of the district in which he or she is seeking ordination for at least one year.



- (6) In order to maintain active status, ordained ministers shall be engaged in viable ministry and proclamation of the gospel except for cases of disability, retirement, or other valid circumstances as determined by the General Council General Secretary.

#### Section 4. Procedural Qualifications

- A. The General Council Credentials Committee delegates to the District Council the authority to examine, approve, and recommend candidates who qualify as certified ministers, licensed ministers, and ordained ministers. Final approval and issuance of the ministerial credential shall be made by the General Council Credentials Committee. All ordination services, with the laying on of hands, shall take place under the auspice of the District Council.
- B. Study course. The Executive Presbytery shall approve the number and names of the Berean College courses needed for each credential level. The Executive Presbytery may prepare and approve an alternative study course for all candidates for ministerial credentials, it being understood that such a study course would necessitate the applicant's passing a standard examination authorized by the General Council General Presbytery.
- C. Examination. The General Council Executive Presbytery shall provide an examination, with due regard to doctrine, Bible interpretation, Christian ethics, etc., and said examination shall be given to all candidates for ministerial credentials.

The process and administering of said examination shall be in writing as approved by the District Council Credentials Committee. Candidates shall be permitted to use the Bible, concordance, and dictionary as reference books during the examination.

- D. Examination reading. The District Executive Presbytery shall appoint a committee of qualified persons to read, correct and evaluate the answers written in the respective examinations given to the candidates for credentials. Such evaluations shall be provided to the respective Credentials Committee members along with the examination papers for the perusal of the said Committee members.

#### Section 5. Application for Ministerial Recognition

A. Fees and residence requirements

- (1) All applications for certified minister, licensed minister, ordained minister and reinstatement, shall be accompanied by an application fee, which is not refundable.
- (2) Applicants shall maintain residence in the District for one year before they can receive credentials of any kind. However, if in the viewpoint of the Credential Committee unusual circumstances are involved, and if in the viewpoint of the Credentials Committee this requirement creates an undue hardship upon a candidate that may be ministering in one of our local churches, the Credentials Committee may waive this requirement for those applying for a credential.
- (3) All applicants for ministerial recognition shall obtain application forms from the Corporate Secretary.

B. Appearances before the District Leadership Team

In cases of emergency, the District Leadership Team, at their discretion, may invite a candidate to appear before the entire Credentials Committee.

C. Ministerial requirements

All persons seeking ministerial recognition with the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God shall be required to complete an application for ministerial recognition.

### Section 6. Action of Credentials Committees

- A. Certified, licensed and ordained minister. The Southern California District Council Credentials Committee shall recommend candidates who qualify as certified, licensed and ordained ministers to the General Council Credentials Committee for approval and issuance of the appropriate credential.
- B. Ordinations. All ordination services, with the laying on of hands, shall take place under the auspices of the Southern California District Council.

### Section 7. 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. In the event a minister does not receive his or her General Council renewal forms by December 1, he or she should notify the District Office.
- C. Grace period until January 15. All who shall have failed to renew their General Council fellowship certificates by mail postmarked on or before December 31 shall be considered delinquent. They shall be required to pay a late fee of \$50 up until January 15, to be divided equally between the Southern California District Council and the General Council offices.
- D. Reinstatement of lapsed minister. Ministers whose renewal applications are not postmarked by January 15 shall be recorded as lapsed as of the expiration date of December 31. They must make application for reinstatement and pay a non-refundable fee of \$100, which shall be divided equally between the Southern California District Council and General Council offices. 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 in no case be eligible for reinstatement until at least 6 months have elapsed after his or her name has been stricken from our list of ministers. The application must be made in the district where the minister resides and be accompanied with a non-refundable fee of \$100 which will be divided between the Southern California District Council and General Council. (See General Council Bylaws Article X, A, Section 12, paragraph b, for reinstatement of dismissed minister.)

The Southern California District Council shall seek a letter of clearance from the district which processed the termination (if different from the

Southern California District itself) 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.

## Section 8. Nondisciplinary Credential Terminations

### A. On the initiative of the minister.

(1) Lapsed. A minister who does not elect to renew his or her credentials, providing there is no cause for disciplinary action, shall be listed as having lapsed. His or her name shall be published as lapsed in the Assemblies of God Ministers' Letter, hereinafter referred to as the ministers' letter.

(2) Resigned. A minister who has elected to remove himself or herself from the Fellowship shall submit a letter of resignation to the Southern California District Council. If there is no cause for disciplinary action, his or her resignation shall be accepted by the General Council Credentials Committee. His or her termination shall be listed in the ministers' letter as resigned.

### B. On the initiative of the District. (See General Council Bylaws Article X, Section 4)

Not renewed. If in the opinion of the credentials committees a minister's credentials should not be renewed short of disciplinary action, his or her 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 himself or herself with another organization granting ministerial credentials, and shall have received such credentials, his or her credentials with the General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be terminated. An investigation shall be made to determine the proper category of termination.

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

## Section 9. Transfers

- A. All ministers who move into the District with the purpose of making this their headquarters or place of residence shall request a letter of transfer from the former district of which they were members to the Southern California District.
- B. Ministers coming into this District and accepting pastorates shall immediately transfer their membership into this District. Evangelists and other ministers shall transfer their membership into the District within 90 days after establishing their residence here.

## Section 10. Change of Address

All ministers shall keep the Corporate Secretary/Treasurer informed as to their whereabouts. When change of address is made, the Secretary/Treasurer should be notified of the change by mail. When a minister leaves the District, he or she shall inform the Secretary/Treasurer of such removal, giving a forwarding address where he or she may be reached when necessary. If the minister leaves the District for permanent ministry in some other district, a letter of transfer should be obtained for presentation to the Secretary of the new district.

## Section 11. Resigning and Incoming Ministers

- A. Resignation Defined.
  - (1) Pastor. A pastor shall be deemed to have resigned from a church when the following occurs:
    - (a) He or she gives their resignation verbally or in writing to the church board, and/or to the church at any worship service or business meeting, and/or to the District Superintendent; or
    - (b) He or she is not reelected to their office in accordance with the requirements given for reelection in the local church bylaws; or
    - (c) He or she is removed from their office through a process provided for in the local church bylaws and/or through a disciplinary action of the District and/or General Council Credentials Committee.

- (2) Ministerial Staff. A ministerial staff member shall be deemed to have resigned from a church when the following occurs:
  - (a) He or she gives his resignation verbally or in writing to the pastor and/or church board; or
  - (b) His or her resignation is requested by the pastor and/or church board; or
  - (c) The senior pastor resigns (thus giving the incoming pastor freedom to select a staff that will cooperate with his or her program.

B. Resigning Pastor's Responsibilities.

- (1) He or she shall notify the District Superintendent, verbally or in writing, prior to his or her resignation or at least within 48 hours following his resignation. The District Superintendent shall inform the Executive Presbyter of a pastor's resignation.
- (2) He or she shall provide the District Superintendent, within five days, with the following:
  - (a) A current list of the church board and its officers and how to contact each board member.
  - (b) A current list of the church membership.
  - (c) A current copy of the church constitution and/or bylaws.
- (3) He or she shall not participate in the nomination or selection of an interim pastor or permanent successor unless consent is obtained from the District Superintendent.
- (4) He or she shall not delegate the pastoral care or preaching responsibilities to any person who is not a credentialed Assemblies of God minister.
- (5) He or she shall inform the church board and the assembly that the appropriate procedure for securing qualified candidates for the office of pastor is for the board to consult with the District Superintendent for his or her assistance.
- (6) He or she shall inform the church board and the assembly that these bylaws require that no amendments may be made to the assembly's articles of incorporation, constitution and/or bylaws, nor any

resolutions adopted, that will in any way give the resigning pastor a continuing influence or authority, stated or implied, over the assembly.

- (7) The resigning pastor and spouse shall sever all normal pastoral relations with the assembly following his or her resignation. He or she shall not write to, or otherwise communicate with, any member of the congregation without the express knowledge and consent of the succeeding pastor. He or she shall make it clear to the congregation that he or she will not be available for pastoral counsel and/or advice in the future. It is recommended, where feasible, that the retiring pastor move from the general area of the assembly. In abiding by such principles of courtesy and respect, the teaching of the Lord ("The Golden Rule") is kept: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." In this manner, the resigning pastor will avoid unnecessary strife, unrest, and confusion in the church that grieves the Holy Spirit.
- (8) In the event a pastor serving a member church in the Southern California District feels the congregation cannot continue to operate for any reason, before disbanding the church he or she shall confer with his or her Executive Presbyter who shall make an investigation and report his or her findings to the District Superintendent. Should the Superintendent deem it advisable to disband the church, he or she shall counsel with and provide direction to the Executive Presbyter, pastor, and church board in the disposition of any funds, furnishings and/or property. Any funds remaining after all accounts are settled shall be transferred to the District Home Missions Department.

#### C. Resigning Ministerial Staff Member's Responsibilities

- (1) The staff member shall notify the District Superintendent and Executive Presbyter of his or her resignation.
- (2) The staff member and his or her spouse shall sever all relations with the church as provided in (7) above.

D. Incoming Pastor and Ministerial Staff Member. A minister assuming the responsibilities of pastor or ministerial staff member shall treat the predecessor with the same respect which he or she would expect the predecessor to show, remembering that the "Golden Rule" applies to all.

The above provisions are formulated with the objective of preserving the harmony and growth of the assembly and of allowing the incoming minister the unhindered opportunity for full ministry, as well as protecting the resigning minister from embarrassment.

## Section 12. Transfer of Information

The general secretary of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, and any district officer, may share information in a minister's file that pertains to the minister's fitness for ministry with any other district officer. The term "minister's file" includes files maintained for both credentialed ministers and applicants for ministerial credentials. This provision shall also apply to designees of the general secretary or district officer.

## Section 13. Ministerial Ethics, Integrity, Loyalty

### A. Ministerial Ethics, Courtesy and Integrity

- (1) All ministers of the Assemblies of God shall be courteous in their conduct, endeavoring by every means possible to strengthen the hand of their fellow pastors in their Assemblies. Any kind of communication with an Assembly shall be through the pastor, or if there is no pastor, through the responsible lay officers in order to maintain harmony in the church's life. Cooperation for the sake of Christian unity in the Assembly shall be the practice watchword.
- (2) Since all Assemblies are entitled to counsel from the District Superintendent when in need of advice, ministers should encourage the laity to contact him or her for such and to disengage themselves from anything that could conceivably destroy the peace and harmony of the church should unauthorized counsel be indulged.
- (3) Whenever there seems to be a matter of justifiable complaint against the pastor of an Assembly, ministers contacted with regard to the same should instruct complainants to contact the District Superintendent who shall inquire further into the matter and then, if necessary, institute a more thorough investigation. The pastor involved shall be apprised of the complaint and asked to give his or her cooperation to a solution of the problem.
- (4) Care shall be taken so as not to destroy or to debase through groundless complaints a pastor's proper authority as the Biblical and



constitutional leader of the church, nor to cause a division in the Assembly.

- (5) Ministers, former pastors, as well as others, must remember that first, foremost, and at all times they are fellow servants of the living God. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Colossians 3:17)

B. Ministerial Integrity. All charges made against a fellow minister must be in writing and signed by the person making them. The person making the charges shall be required to face the individual charged, if requested to do so.

C. Ministerial Loyalty

- (1) All ministers of the Assemblies of God, active, inactive and/or retired are expected to support the local Assemblies of God in the communities in which they reside.
- (2) All Assemblies of God ministers shall refrain from derogatory remarks regarding the Assemblies of God Fellowship. Constructive criticism should be directed to those in a position to make changes or on the District Council floor.

#### Section 14. Ministry in a Non-Assemblies Church or Organization

Ministers shall not be limited or restrained from entering open doors to preach the 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 15. Transfer of Membership

It is strongly recommended that pastors urge members of Assemblies of God churches transferring from one church to another to go through the normal transfer procedure requesting a letter of transfer thus eliminating dual membership.

Whenever a pastor has good faith belief that a member leaving his or her church, going to another member church (whether requesting a formal transfer or not), has been participating in illegal activities, sexual immorality, or business practices or lifestyle behavior not in keeping with Assemblies of God understanding of Scriptural teaching, the pastor of the church which the member is leaving shall so inform the pastor of the member church to which the church member is going.

Pastors shall exercise great care not to encourage members of other churches to leave their present place of service.

Care should be used to avoid accepting members into another church who have a reputation as troublemakers in other Assemblies.

### Section 16. Ministers in Local Assemblies

It is advisable that no credentialed minister may accept the office on any official church board without the express written permission of the senior pastor, except in his or her executive capacity as the pastor of the church.

### Section 17. Ministers with Disabilities

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

### Section 18. Senior Ministers

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

A. Application for Retired Category

*Senior-retired* status shall be granted only to those ministers who have filed a request for such status with the District Office. The Corporate Secretary shall forward annual to the General Secretary a list of those ministers who have made these requests.

B. Guidelines

- (1) Reports. *Senior-retired* ministers shall file an abbreviated annual report to maintain a correct mailing address.
- (2) Designations in publications. *Senior-retired* ministers shall have this status indicated in the Official List of Assemblies of God Ministers.
- (3) Support of General Council National Leadership and Resource Center.

*Senior-retired* ministers shall be free to distribute as they desire the portion of their tithes previously paid to the General Council.

- (4) District Support. *Senior-retired* shall contribute according to Article XIX, Section 5, A, (10) of these Bylaws.

Section 19. Vanguard University of Southern California Credential Applicants

- A. The accountant's office of Vanguard University of Southern California shall furnish the Corporate Secretary/Treasurer's office with a list of all students or former students who have delinquent accounts with the college after the approval of the list by the college Administrative Council, and at least 15 days prior to the convening of the Credentials Committee. The Corporate Secretary/Treasurer shall share this information with the Credentials Committee.
- B. Any student or former student of Vanguard University of Southern California who has an unsatisfactory financial standing at said college shall not be granted credentials until his or her standing is certified as satisfactory.

- C. All ministers holding credentials who owe money to the college shall be required to make arrangements with the administration of the college to liquidate their indebtedness or be subject to the withholding of District credentials.
- D. The Corporate Secretary/Treasurer shall inform other Districts as to their ministers' delinquent accounts with Vanguard University of Southern California.

### Section 20. Privileged Communications

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

### Section 21. General Council Bylaws Article VII

Additional provisions related to this Article (The Ministry) are provided for in General Council Bylaws Article VII and/or subsequent replacement or revision thereof. Ministers within this District are bound to the provisions of this General Council Bylaws on any matter on which the provisions of this District Bylaws Article are either silent or in conflict with the General Council Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE XV. DISCIPLINE OF MINISTERS**

### Section 1. General Council Provisions

The discipline of ministers who are members of this District Council shall be conducted according to the provisions given in the General Council Bylaws Article X (Discipline) and/or subsequent replacement or revision thereof.

### Section 2. Waiver of Claim

Notwithstanding the provisions herein before contained, credentials issued by the General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be issued on the condition and the understanding of the minister that suspension of the minister, withdrawal of the credential, and/or any other disciplinary action taken against the minister by the District or General Council shall be final and shall not give the disciplined minister cause for legal action (redress from any civil court)

against the District or General Council. Each minister by acceptance of the credential certificate and these bylaws absolutely and unconditionally waives any right to bring a cause of action in any civil court against the District or General Council, or any member or officer thereof, in connection with the suspension, withdrawal of the credential and/or any other disciplinary action taken.

### Section 3. Arbitration of Legal Claims

Any controversy or claim between any minister and the District Council, or any member or officer thereof, for which a minister may have a cause for legal action (redress from any civil court) shall be settled through binding arbitration by a panel of three arbitrators: one to be selected by the minister, one to be selected by the District Council (or any member or officer thereof against whom such claim is brought), and one to be selected by the two previously selected arbitrators. Each arbitrator shall be selected from the panel of arbitrators elected in accordance with Article XII, Section 5 of these Bylaws. Such arbitration shall proceed in accordance with Title 9 of the California Code of Civil Procedure or any successor statute.

## **ARTICLE XVI. MEMBER CHURCHES**

### Section 1. Categories

A member church of the Southern California District Council shall be any church which is either: (1) a General Council affiliated church, (2) a District Council affiliated church, or (3) a Parent affiliated church. A church bearing the designation of cooperative church shall not be considered a member church.

### Section 2. Name

All member churches of the Southern California District Council shall add the title Assembly of God to their present church name if possible.

### Section 3. Benefits of Affiliation

Each member church of the Southern California District Council may receive the following benefits.

- A. Purpose. Each member church is entitled to participate in the reasons-for-being of the Assemblies of God as declared in the Constitutional Declaration of the General Council Constitution.

- B. Doctrine. Each member church is undergirded by sound Biblical doctrine (see Article VI).
- C. Pastors and Staff Ministers. Each member church is entitled to call credentialed ministers of the General and/or District Council to serve it as pastor or as a staff minister.
- D. Itinerant ministers. Each member church is entitled, through its pastor, to the strengthening ministry of evangelists, teachers, and various types of itinerant ministers credentialed with the General and/or District Council.
- E. Listing. Each member church is entitled to be listed in the current annual District and General Council Yearbooks. Such listing qualifies the church to receipt donations given it and accords the member church the benefit of being under the umbrella of the Assemblies of God qualification as a non-profit corporation bearing Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) status.
- F. Oversight and Accountability. Each member church is entitled to receive counsel and direction from those whose election and qualification has set them aside as overseers in God's work. Such counsel and direction may come from District Executive Officers and/or Executive Presbytery.
- G. US and World Missions. Each member church is entitled to participate in the vibrant US and World missionary work of the Assemblies of God through giving its people and financial resources for the spread of the Gospel under a program with strict doctrinal and financial accountability.
- H. Ministries. Each member church is entitled to utilize the services of General Council and District Council ministries for the strengthening of its local church ministry.
- I. Vanguard University of Southern California and Chi Alpha USA. Each member church shall be entitled to utilize the resources of Vanguard University of Southern California and the district Chi Alpha USA Ministry for its college students to be nurtured in the Faith within a Christian or secular college context.
- J. Pinecrest Christian Conference Center. Subject to availability and expense, each member church shall be entitled to the use of this excellent resource for Christian conference grounds in an idyllic mountain setting. Whether through use for the member church itself, or the member church's

participation in District-wide conferences and camps, Pinecrest may be utilized for the evangelization and edification of all persons in our member churches.

- K. Teen Challenge. Each member church may avail itself of the resources of Teen Challenge in seeking to minister to those within our churches and community who are dependent upon chemicals or alcohol.
- L. Official Representation. Each member church, by action of its membership or board in accordance with its bylaws, shall appoint one of its members to serve as a lay representative at General Council, District Council and Sectional Council business sessions.
- M. Church Loans. Each qualifying member church may utilize the resources of the District financial standing to help it obtain church construction financing through District funds and/or the General Council Ministers Benefit Association.

#### Section 4. Responsibilities of Affiliation

Each member church shall have the following responsibilities to the General and/or District Council.

- A. Prayer. Each member church shall pray for the global, national, and district ministry of the Assemblies of God.
- B. Support
  - (1) 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.

- (2) District Council. Each member church shall be encouraged to give a minimum of 1 percent of its general fund, on a monthly basis, to the District United Ministries Fund (UMF) for the undergirding of the District work and expansion. Additional offerings may be given to District departments and ministries.
  - (3) Missions. Each church shall be encouraged to support to the best of its ability, on a monthly basis, world missionaries from the Southern California District under General Council appointment and US missionaries from the Southern California District under District or General Council appointment. To the best of their ability, member churches shall be encouraged to have such appointed missionaries hold services and minister at missions meetings and conventions, and the member churches shall be encouraged to receive faith promises and/or offerings for their support and that of the approved projects they represent.
  - (4) Vanguard University of Southern California. Each member church shall be encouraged to give an amount equivalent to ten percent (10%) of its world missions giving to Vanguard University of Southern California.
  - (5) Church Planting and Strengthening. Each member church shall be encouraged to give an amount equivalent to ten percent (10%) of its world missions giving to District US Missions for the planting, strengthening and promotion of member churches within the District.
- C. Ministry and Mission. Each church shall maintain pure doctrine, operate within its own and District bylaws, conduct itself in a manner consistent with Assemblies of God principles and integrity, and ensure that its assets are not dissipated but at all times conserved and dedicated to the historic mission of the Assemblies of God.
- D. Integrity and Fidelity. Each member church shall seek to exalt Christ in all its conduct and ministries. It shall remain faithful to live and proclaim the Full Gospel. It shall identify with and affirm its affiliation with the General Council and District Council of the Assemblies of God.

## Section 5. Records



Each member church shall cause a copy of its important corporate records to be kept on file at the District Office. Such records shall include, but not be limited to the current:

- A. Articles of Incorporation
- B. Constitution and/or Bylaws
- C. Current Annual Financial Report
- D. Copies of Property Deeds
- E. Completed Annual Church Ministries Report furnished by the General Council
- F. All amendments made to the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and/or Bylaws
- G. Proof of current casualty and comprehensive liability insurance. Each member church shall list the District Council as an additional insured on its liability insurance policy.
- H. Federal identification number.

#### Section 6. The General Council Affiliated Church

- A. Distinctives. The General Council affiliated church shall be a member church regarded, within the limits of these bylaws, as self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing. It may hold property in its name, govern itself by articles of governance consistent with the requirements of these bylaws and the General Council Constitution and Bylaws, elect its own pastor and officers, and engage in any ministry or activity consistent with its own bylaws, its association with the Assemblies of God, and the law. The following is essential for maintaining the good order and nature of congregational church government characteristic to the Assemblies of God.
  - (1) The Office of Pastor.
    - (a) The pastor, under Jesus Christ, is recognized as the head of the church. He or she is responsible both to the District Fellowship and to the church being served, and as long as he or she conforms to Scriptural order and complies with the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and/or Bylaws of the

local church, he or she shall be respected in this office. In case of any difference between the pastor and his or her assistants, the Bylaws shall govern, and the Executive Presbytery shall be the highest court of appeal.

- (b) The pastor may, at his or her discretion, ask for a confidential vote of the members of the church being served. The vote is "confidential" and is designed to allow the pastor to know the feeling of the people; therefore, the result is not to be shared with the congregation unless the pastor chooses to do so. In the event the pastor does request a confidential vote, he or she may notify the District Superintendent, informing him of the results of said vote.

(2) Church Boards.

In a General Council affiliated church, there shall be a board consisting of qualified lay leadership elected by the voting membership. The board shall fulfill its spiritual and temporal duties in a spirit of servanthood to the Lord, the church, and pastoral leadership. Neither the pastor nor the board are to exercise dictatorial leadership over one another or the church; but shall cooperatively work together as a model of Christian unity and leadership, each submitting to one another as the Spirit, need, or circumstance may require. When disunity becomes present between a pastor and board, it shall be the responsibility of each to attempt to solve the difficulty between them; if failing to do so, it shall be the responsibility of each to seek the mediating efforts of the District Superintendent or their designee in order that the conflict may not be carried into the church, but resolved within the circle of leadership.

(3) Articles of Governance.

It shall be the privilege of each General Council affiliated church to adopt its own Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and/or Bylaws provided that the same are in accordance with these Bylaws and national, state, and local law. Members of a local Assembly shall be informed of the provisions of the church's Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and/or Bylaws. The pastor shall distribute or cause to be distributed copies of the aforementioned articles of governance and teach the church members concerning their use and the rights and privileges of membership.

- B. Procedures for affiliation. General Council affiliated churches shall consist of the following:

- (1) All those member churches shown as General Council affiliated in the records of the Corporate Secretary on December 31, 1988, and
- (2) All those churches who thereafter fulfill the procedure for affiliation given in the General Council Bylaws, Article VI, Section 1 or its successor provision and these bylaws and whose Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and/or Bylaws are approved by the Executive Presbytery.

C. Change in Status. The Executive Presbytery shall have the power to change the status of a member church from General Council affiliated to District Council affiliated in any of the following circumstances.

- (1) Active Membership Less Than 20.  
Whenever a General Council affiliated church has fallen below 20 active adult voting members exclusive of the pastor and spouse, the Executive Presbytery shall declare it to be a District affiliated church, unless an exception has been granted by the district in accordance with the provisions of General Council Constitution Article XI, Section 1, paragraph a, subparagraph (3); the pastor and church shall be so notified in writing by the District Superintendent; or at its discretion, the Executive Presbytery may authorize that an examination be made of the membership roster of a General Council affiliated church to determine the names and true number of its members. The Executive Presbytery is authorized to request that the pastor and/or secretary provide the name and address of each voting member of the church. The Executive Presbytery may request by mail that each member attest to or certify their membership. Failure of the pastor and/or secretary to provide such a list within two weeks upon the request of the Executive Presbytery may be interpreted by the Executive Presbytery as evidence the church has less than 20 members. No new members may be added to the membership roster once the Executive Presbytery has notified the pastor and/or the church that an examination of the membership roster is to be made. If the Executive Presbytery determines that the number of voting members is less than 20, it shall declare the church to be a District affiliated church. The church may appeal such a decision to the General Council Executive Presbytery whose decision shall be final. Such a church may again become a General Council affiliated assembly at whatever time it meets the criteria for General Council affiliation given in these Bylaws, Article XVII, Section 7, B.

- (2) Request by the Church for District Affiliation.  
The active voting members of a General Council affiliated church, for any reason, may elect by a majority vote of a quorum at a duly called meeting to place the church into District affiliated status. The meeting in which a vote shall be held may be called by either of the following: (1) provision of the church's own bylaws, or (2) the District Superintendent may call such a meeting upon written request of at least 20% of the voting membership. The District Superintendent or their designee shall preside at said membership meeting. When a General Council church appeals for District assistance either by its pastor, official board, or at least 20% of the voting membership, no names shall be added or removed from the membership roll of said church from the date of the letter or petition of appeal to the District Superintendent until the matter is adequately resolved and the decision approved by the Executive Presbytery.
- (3) District Superintendent Intervention.  
If a situation is such that it requires more immediate action, the District Superintendent, after conference with the District Leadership Team and with the approval of the Executive Presbytery, may declare the church in the hands of the District as a District affiliated church.

## Section 7. The District Affiliated Church

The District affiliated church shall be under the direct oversight and governance of the District Council in a manner provided for in these bylaws. The title of property of District Council affiliated churches may be held in the corporate name of the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God.

### A. Classification.

A District affiliated church shall be a church which falls within one of the following classifications:

- (1) Pioneer. A pioneer church shall be a church less than three years in existence which has not received General Council affiliation.
  - (a) Process for Opening. A pioneer church may be opened through a church planting effort initiated by the District, in cooperation with the Section; or, through the initiative of a pioneering pastor and/or group, and/or a member church.

Those desiring to initiate a pioneer church shall follow this procedure:

- (i) The initiator shall contact the Executive Presbyter.
  - (ii) The Regional Executive Presbyter shall contact his or her Regional Leadership Team, who shall investigate the project, as to nature and personnel, attitude of neighboring pastors, financial obligations involved and the possibility of the new work succeeding. (If any member of the Regional Leadership Team has a conflict of interest, he or she shall disqualify himself or herself.
  - (iii) The Regional Leadership Team shall render a full report, in writing, to the District Leadership Team.
  - (iv) The District Leadership Team shall consider all the facts and notify the proponent of the project of its approval, qualified approval, or disapproval.
  - (v) In case the proponent of the project is not satisfied with the decision, the entire matter shall be considered by the Executive Presbytery, whose decision shall be final.
- (b) Setting in Order. Upon approval of the District Leadership Team or the Executive Presbytery, the Pioneer church shall be set in order in the following manner.
- (i) The Corporate Secretary shall file Articles of Incorporation for the pioneer church.
  - (ii) At the opening service of any church, a representative of the District shall be present and set said church in order as a District affiliated church of the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God. A letter of affiliation shall be presented the church at that time.
  - (iii) The pioneer church shall be governed by Articles of Incorporation and bylaws approved by the Executive Presbytery for all District affiliated churches.
  - (iv) A list of charter members of the new church, who have met the standards of membership as given in the local church bylaws, shall be furnished the District Office within twelve months following the beginning of the pioneer church.
  - (v) The pastor and church shall meet such additional requirements as may be determined by policy enacted by the Executive Presbytery.

- (2) Established. An established church shall be a church, existing more than three years, which has not received General Council affiliation.
- (3) Temporarily Dependent. A temporarily dependent church shall be a General Council affiliated church which has become a District affiliated church in accordance with the provision of this Article, Section 6, C. While the church is a District affiliated church, it shall be governed under Articles of Incorporation and bylaws approved by the Executive Presbytery for District affiliated churches, and such other guidelines and procedures as the Executive Presbytery may adopt.

B. Governance

The District Affiliated church shall be governed in accordance with these Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws approved by the Executive Presbytery for District Affiliated churches, and such other guidelines and requirements approved by the Executive Presbytery.

C. Process for becoming General Council Affiliated.

The District affiliated church, by a majority vote of its members, may request that the Executive Presbytery change its status to that of General Council affiliated. The Executive Presbytery may grant such a request provided that the church meets the following conditions:

- (1) A minimum of 20 voting members are required, unless an exception has been granted by the district in accordance with the provisions of General Council Constitution Article XI, Section 1, paragraph a, subparagraph (3). It is recommended that a church have a minimum of 25 voting members before requesting approval as a General Council affiliated church.
- (2) A sufficient number of qualified individuals to serve on an official board.
- (3) Approval of the District Leadership Team upon the recommendation of the Regional Leadership Team and/or official church board.
- (4) The church shall adopt Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and/or Bylaws approved by the Executive Presbytery.

- (5) Approval of the membership by a vote at a business meeting presided over by the District Superintendent or his designee.

### Section 8. Cooperative Churches

Cooperative churches shall consist of all those churches shown as cooperative churches in the records of the Corporate Secretary on December 31, 1988. A cooperative church may become a General Council affiliated member church by following the procedures given in Section 7, C, above.

### Section 9. Church Mergers

Pastors of churches considering a merger shall consult first with the District Superintendent and Regional Executive Presbyter prior to presenting the matter to their church boards or congregations. Any church considering a merger with another church shall be required to call a meeting of its voting members to consider such a proposal. A two-thirds vote shall be required of each church to approve such a merger. Said business meeting shall be presided over by the District Superintendent or one whom he shall designate. Before a church merger can be completed, it must have the approval of the Executive Presbytery.

### Section 10. Established Churches Relocating

Any church contemplating relocating shall seek a site that will not conflict with another member church in the same area, letting the spirit of love rule over a sense of expediency. Said church shall apply to the Executive Presbyter. The committee shall call a hearing as per the rules governing the hearing for opening a new church (Article XVII, Section 7, A (1) (a)). The Executive Presbyter shall render its decision and report to the District Superintendent. In the event that either the applicant or a neighboring church is displeased with the decision, they may appeal to the Executive Presbytery whose decision shall be final.

### Section 11. New Assemblies Resulting From a Division

#### A. Meritorious groups.

When efforts to maintain unity and harmony in a member church have failed, and a division results in a new congregation being formed, the District should exercise strong and wise leadership in ascertaining the facts and seek to preserve Assemblies of God adherents for the Fellowship. Within the bounds of ethical principles, sound doctrine, and District policy,

the Southern California District Council will seek to retain any meritorious group within the Assemblies of God.

B. Ministers Disciplined for Schism.

Circumstances of the occasion will determine whether a minister should be disciplined or denied ministry in either the original church or the dissident group or even residence in the area where the division occurred. If a minister is guilty of wrong conduct and wrong attitudes resulting in a split, the Executive Presbytery shall deal appropriately with him or her as provided in Article XV of these Bylaws.

C. Forfeiture of Credentials.

When a pastor has lost his or her credentials because of the circumstances involved in a group separating from a member church, any credentialed minister in the church electing to go with the dissident group, or subsequently joining the ministerial staff of that group, shall forfeit his or her credentials, unless an appeal is made to the Executive Presbytery and they decide on another course of action because of extenuating circumstances.

## Section 12. Affiliation of Independent Churches

When an established non-member church in a section, being either an independent work or a member of another church organization, seeks affiliation with the Southern California District Council, the procedure followed shall be the same as that outlined in Article XVII, Section 7.

## Section 13. Safeguarding the Assemblies

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

No dismissed minister may be allowed to pastor or have ministry in an Assemblies of God church. Pastors and the District Leadership Team shall maintain an exchange of information regarding dismissed ministers known to be seeking ministry in our assemblies.

## Section 14. Potential Conflicts in Governance



The District Council Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws shall take precedence over the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and/or Bylaws of any member church. The District shall not usurp the authority properly vested in the local member church; however, whenever member church governance provisions are either silent on or in conflict with provisions made in the District Articles of Incorporation and/or Bylaws, the District provisions shall rule.

### Section 15. Arbitration of Legal Claims

Any controversy or claim between any District Council member church, or cooperative church, or any member or officer, or any person claiming to be a member or officer of any such church and the District Council, for which either party may have a cause for legal action (redress from any civil court) shall be submitted to binding arbitration by a panel of three arbitrators: one to be selected by the member church, cooperative church, any member or officer, or any person claiming to be a member or officer of any such church; one to be selected by the District Council, or any member or officer thereof against whom such a claim is brought; and one to be selected by the two previously selected arbitrators. Each arbitrator shall be selected from the panel of arbitrators elected in accordance with the Article XII, Section 12 of these Bylaws. Such arbitration shall proceed in accordance with Title 9 of the California Code of Civil Procedure, or any successor statute.

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

### Section 1. Ecumenical Movement

While we recognize the benefits of mutual cooperation among different denominations, we are not in favor of the Ecumenical Movement whose purpose is not to unite all churches under the "Lordship of Christ," but to unite all churches at the expense of fundamental evangelical doctrine. We, therefore, disapprove of our ministers participating in any dialogue destined to promote such a union.

### Section 2. Membership in Secret Orders

Because membership in lodges and other organizations which require secret oaths could cause division and mistrust as well as misunderstanding among brethren, it is recommended that we discourage membership of our ministers and members in such organizations.

Section 3. Abuses of Stewardship  
(See Article VII, Section 7, General Council Bylaws.)

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 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 the authorization of the district officary. Projects or institutions of national scope must have the authorization of the Executive Presbytery of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. Promotion of all projects of a missionary 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 the 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 Southern California District 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 title to such properties by the ministers of the Assemblies of God, through private ownership, corporation of sole, closed corporation or any other type of ownership where initiative of action or final authority is not vested in a corporation of the whole. In the event a local congregation is not incorporated or set in order by the District Council, title should be vested in proper qualified trustees. Where private ownership exists, a properly incorporated body shall be formed and title to the property shall be transferred to the corporation taking into consideration equity that the title holder may legitimately have. A disregard of this principle and recommendation shall seriously affect the relation to the Assemblies of God members involved in such ownership.

### Section 4. Divorce and Remarriage

#### A. Membership

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

#### B. Remarriage

Low standards on marriage and divorce are very hurtful to individuals, to the family, and to the cause of Christ. Therefore, we discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. We positively disapprove of Christians getting divorces for any cause except fornication and adultery (Matthew 19:9). Where these exceptional circumstances exist or when a Christian has been divorced by an unbeliever, we recommend that the question of

remarriage be resolved by the believer as he or her walks in the light of God's Word (1 Corinthians 7:15, 27, 28).

#### C. Local Church Leadership

- (1) It is recommended that divorced and remarried believers not serve in the church offices of bishop or elder and deacon unless the divorce occurred prior to conversion (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15). We recommend that all other opportunities for Christian service for which divorced and remarried believers may be qualified be made available to them.
- (2) 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 of the General Council).

#### 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 Paragraph B of this section.
- (2) Violation of conscience not required. We realize that the remarrying of such persons included in the exceptive circumstances in Article IX, B, Section 5, paragraph b, could violate the conscience of a minister; and if this should be the case, the minister should not be expected to perform such ceremonies.
- (3) Same-sex ceremonies. No minister shall perform any type of marriage, cohabitation, or covenant ceremony for persons who are of the same sex. Such a ceremony would endorse homosexuality which is a sin and strictly forbidden in God's Word (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26,27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:9-11). Any minister of our Fellowship who performs a ceremony for these types of disapproved relations, unless innocently deceived into doing so, shall be dismissed from the Fellowship.

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

E. Ministerial Credentials

We disapprove of any married minister of the Assemblies of God holding credentials if either minister or spouse has a former spouse living unless the divorce occurred prior to conversion or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15). (See Article XV, Section 2, J, and also Article VII, Section 2, paragraphs k. and l. of the General Council Bylaws.)

## **ARTICLE XVIII. MINISTRIES**

- A. In order to obtain effective promotion and development of the work of the District Council in specific areas of concern, ministries shall be established by the Executive Presbytery to resource the local church and shall be amenable to the District Superintendent.
- B. The Executive Presbytery shall be responsible to see that District Ministries and their personnel function in accordance with the desires and guidelines given by the Executive Presbytery. Each Ministry Leader shall function within the purposes and guidelines established in the Ministry Handbook adopted by the Executive Presbytery.
- C. The Executive Presbytery shall be responsible for the approval and review of all financial matters pertaining to all District Ministries.

## **ARTICLE XIX. DISTRICT FINANCES**

### Section 1. General Fund

- A. The District shall maintain a General Fund into which all monies shall be received and out of which all District operations and ministries shall be funded by budgetary allocations. This budget shall encompass all ministries and services of the District Council. Disbursements shall be under the supervision of the Executive Presbytery.

This fund shall be available for the support of the Executive Officers of the District, District Departments, the District Council office, traveling expenses, and other necessary District activities. A minimum of ten percent (10%) of this fund shall be devoted to missions work. It shall be disbursed under the supervision of the Executive Presbytery.

- B. There shall be an audit of all District Council accounts annually, prepared by an independent Public Accountant, in accordance with the requirements of the laws of the State of California. A copy of the audit shall be made available to the District Council in session.
- C. All personnel involved in the handling of District finance shall be covered by an adequate position bond. Theft insurance shall be provided for the personal effects of all personnel in the District Office.

## Section 2. United Ministries Fund

Each church shall contribute a minimum of one percent (1%) of its General Funds income (this is to be interpreted as all funds excepting those for Assemblies of God World Missions and other specifically designated funds) to the United Ministries Fund. These amounts shall be forwarded to the District Treasurer monthly and shall be disbursed under the supervision of the Executive Presbytery.

## Section 3. Special and Designated Funds

All funds designated for special projects shall be used only for those purposes.

## Section 4. Ministers' Renewal Fees

There shall be an annual renewal fee for all ministers. This fee shall be set by and be disbursed under the supervision of the Executive Presbytery.

## Section 5. Ministers' Contributions

- A. It shall be the responsibility of all credentialed ministers affiliated with the Southern California District Council to contribute from his/her/or their tithe, on any and all income received regardless of its source, the following minimum amounts each month, effective January 1, 2022:
  - (1) Ordained ministers: 50% of his/her tithes from all sources of income or \$270 per month, whichever is greater.

- (2) Licensed ministers: 50% of his/her tithes from all sources of income or \$245 per month, whichever is greater.
- (3) Certified ministers: 50% of his/her tithes from all sources of income or \$214 per month, whichever is greater.
- (4) 6.5% of the monthly contributions received from all ministers shall be designated for the planting of new churches.
- (5) 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.
- (6) Chaplains: All chaplains, military and institutional, will be obligated to their home district in the amount of ten percent (10%) 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.
- (7) 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 the district.
- (8) Where both husband and wife are credentialed ministers, the second member in the family shall contribute a minimum of \$25 per month except where both receive a salary in which case each would contribute 50% of their tithe or the minimum monthly contribution appropriate to their credential, whichever is greater.
- (9) Senior Ministers: All Active Senior Ministers are expected to contribute regularly to the support of the District as required of all other ministers.
- (10) Senior Retired Ministers, upon reaching the age of 65, shall be expected to contribute either 50% of their tithe or \$25 per month, whichever is greater.

- (11) All ministers under suspension and/or rehabilitation shall contribute to the support of the District and the General Council as required of all other ministers.
- (12) The minister's minimum contribution shall be adjusted annually as per the average Consumer Price Index for any five counties within the boundaries of the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc. with available data as chosen by the Executive Presbytery. The annual adjustment, rounded to the nearest dollar, shall be presented to the District Council for ratification. The change, when ratified, would become effective January 1 of each year. This annual adjustment would apply to Section 5, Subsection A, lines 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, & 11 (or as such numbers may be edited from time to time).
- (13) A minister's tithe should be calculated on "income from all sources", i.e., salary, housing allowance or rental value of a parsonage including utilities, Social Security allowance, investment income and honoraria. The local church board shall establish the rental value of a parsonage, for tax and tithe purposes.
- (14) No minister, regardless of the credential level or classification, shall ever be expected to contribute more than his/her tithe to the District.
- (15) The income earned by a non-credentialed spouse shall not be included when determining the tithe due to the District.

- B. For those making the full contribution (tithes/dues) as noted in Section 5, A, (1), (2), or (3), or Section 5, D, ten percent (10%) of the amount received by the District shall be contributed to the Ministers Benefit Association, a retirement program of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. (This does not include those who participate in the return of the tithe to the District Affiliated Church Plan as noted in Paragraph C). These contributions shall inure to the benefit of the individual minister.

Deposits to the individual ministers' accounts will be made by the Executive Presbyters monthly. In order for one to participate, he or she must be current with their minimum tithe support on the last day of each month.

If a minister specifically requests, this 10 percent may be placed in a district reserve fund for the benefit of Southern California District Council



ministers. These funds shall be distributed at the discretion of the Executive Presbytery.

- C. If the provision of Section 5, A, (1), (2), (3), presents a hardship for the church and the Pastor of the congregation, an application may be made to the Executive Presbytery, through the Regional Leadership Team. The Executive Presbytery, at its discretion, may return a portion of this support to the church. Such exceptions shall be reviewed annually by the Executive Presbytery in consultation with the Regional Leadership Team and/or the official church board.
- D. If the provision of Section 5, A, (1), (2,) or (3) presents a hardship for a credentialed minister or ministers (when both husband and wife are credentialed) by exceeding the amount of his/her/or their tithe, as defined in Paragraph A, an appeal may be made to the Executive Presbytery, through the Corporate Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer may require documentation of income when considering such an application. Upon the recommendation of the Secretary/Treasurer, the Executive Presbytery may agree to accept the entire tithe of the minister(s) as meeting the requirements of Section 5, Paragraph A. Such provisions shall be reviewed annually by the Corporate Secretary/Treasurer, who shall report to the Executive Presbytery.
- E. Obligation to General Council. All credentialed ministers of the Southern California District are obligated to support the General Council Headquarters in the following amounts:
  - Ordained, \$25.00 per month
  - Licensed, \$20.00 per month
  - Certified, \$10.00 per month
- F. Monthly District Letter and Report
  - (1) The District Office shall send each minister and church a report showing their accumulated giving to the District on a monthly basis.
  - (2) The minister shall be encouraged to return, along with his or her tithe and/or contribution, a news report of church and personal events of interest to the fellowship not later than the 15th of each month.
  - (3) Ministers who respond faithfully with their monthly financial support of the District Council shall receive, free of charge, the following benefits:

- (a) The District Yearbook
- (b) The newsletter
- (c) Registration fees at District Ministers' Retreat.

G. The Executive Presbytery shall conduct a quarterly review and evaluation of the minister's tithe support. Those who have not paid their tithe support each month during the previous quarter shall be considered delinquent. The Executive Presbytery shall be responsible to encourage delinquent ministers to become and remain current in their monthly support. They shall make it clear that such lack of support may lead to loss of the ministerial credential. If the actions of the Executive Presbytery are ignored, or if said delinquency is not remedied by December 31 of the year, their annual fellowship certificates shall not be renewed until their cases are reviewed and decision has been rendered by the Executive Presbytery. Implementation of the foregoing shall be considered a mandate from the District Council in session to the District Leadership Team and the Executive Presbytery. In case of extreme circumstances, or emergency conditions, exceptions may be granted only by the Executive Presbytery.

#### Section 6. Sureties and Endorsements

The District Superintendent and Corporate Secretary/Treasurer, jointly, upon authorization of the District Council or the Executive Presbytery, shall execute on behalf of the District, sureties or endorsements of loans made by banks, individuals, or other lending institutions to General or District Council affiliated churches, Vanguard University of Southern California, and any other projects as specified under Article VII of these Bylaws.

### **ARTICLE XX. INSURANCE AND BENEVOLENCES**

#### Section 1. Ministers' Benefit Retirement Plan

We recommend that the ministers and churches of this District adopt a Ministers' Retirement Plan. A Ministers' Retirement Plan shall be provided for all District personnel as determined by the Executive Presbytery. The District shall contribute a minimum of 6% of the salary to a Retirement Plan for the District Leadership Team and others as may be determined by the Executive Presbytery.

#### Section 2. Social Security

- A. We recommend that our ministers accept the Social Security benefits unless it is against their religious principles to do so. We recommend that all churches provide additional compensation to their ministers sufficient to cover the cost of these benefits.
- B. The Executive Presbytery shall be instructed to provide additional compensation to cover the cost of Social Security for the District Leadership Team and others as may be determined by the Executive Presbytery.
- C. It is recommended that all evangelists who have accepted Social Security, when ministering in local churches, be given the same consideration by the church as is accorded the pastor, to wit, by providing an additional offering out of the church treasury to cover the cost of Social Security for the evangelist.

### Section 3. Insurance

- A. District Group Life Insurance  
The District Council shall inform its members of the plan provided through the General Council's master policy for group life insurance.
- B. Medical Insurance  
Information concerning optional major medical insurance is available to all credentialed ministers who are in fellowship with the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God. Information regarding said insurance can be obtained through the office designated to handle such matters.

### Section 4. Benevolences - Ministers' Benevolence Fund

- A. The District Council shall provide a Ministers' Benevolence Fund. All ministers and their spouses who are not over 55 years of age are eligible. No person over 55 years of age shall be permitted to join the Benevolence Fund. Dependents of the immediate family under 21 years of age who so desire are also eligible. Any eligible person wishing to join may do so by making application to the District Council and paying a membership fee of \$4.00 each. Dependents remain eligible until their status changes or they reach the age of 21. Membership in the Fund also shall be extended as an additional benefit to all employees on the payroll of the District Office and to the faculty of our Assemblies of God related Christian Schools and our Vanguard University of Southern California. Membership shall be

maintained by payment of \$1.50 when assessment is made at the death of a member.

- B. Upon the death of minister-member, his or her non-minister spouse member and eligible dependent members may continue their membership in the Fund as provided for in paragraph A.
- C. The Corporate Secretary/Treasurer is authorized to pay the beneficiary of the deceased, upon receipt of notice of death of a member, as follows:

If death shall occur during the first 6 months of membership, the sum of \$150. During the second 6 months, \$350. After the second year, \$900.

The amount paid on any call shall not exceed 1 ½ times the membership.

- D. In the event there is a lapse of membership because of failure to meet an assessment or assessments, unless such memberships shall have been renewed within 6 months after such lapse by payment in full of all unpaid assessments, renewal shall be upon the basis of a new membership with benefits occurring as stated in the above schedule.

#### Section 5. Institutions

The District Council may establish and maintain homes for children and the aged and for retired ministers and missionaries.

### **ARTICLE XXI. DISTRICT PUBLICATIONS**

#### Section 1. District Bylaws

- A. The District shall prepare the District Council Bylaws and Minutes of the Annual District Council as soon after each Annual District Council meeting as feasible and disseminate them electronically.
- B. The Executive Presbytery is authorized and instructed to approve the classification as to Article, Section, etc., of the Bylaws, and to edit where necessary, all Essential Resolutions adopted by the District Council. Said Resolutions so classified and edited shall be included in the Bylaws.

#### Section 2. District Periodicals

The District Executives are authorized to institute a printed publication, geared in its content to reach our total constituency. All District ministries, including Vanguard University of Southern California, may use this medium to publicize events, activities and news. The publication shall be mailed to the constituency on the basis of paid subscriptions. Paid advertisements may be accepted for this publication. The Executive Presbytery shall set standards for acceptable advertising. Pertinent information that relates only to ministers shall continue to be published in the newsletter under the direction of the District Superintendent.

## **ARTICLE XXII. COLLEGES**

### **Section 1. Vanguard University of Southern California**

Vanguard University of Southern California is owned and operated by the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God, and has, by its own decree, delegated to the Board of Trustees of Vanguard University of Southern California the responsibility for the over-all management, operation, development, and direction of the University.

The Executive Presbytery of the Southern California District Council may communicate in writing to the Board of Trustees their comments, questions, sentiments, and evaluations relative to the governance of and the financial affairs of the University. Such communications shall be predicated on the regular flow of the minutes and financial reports from the Board of Trustees to the Executive Presbytery. The Board of Trustees shall make its response to the Executive Presbytery immediately following its next regular scheduled meeting.

If at any time the Executive Presbytery deem it necessary to intervene in matters pertaining to the governance of or the financial affairs of the University, they shall do so by recommendation first to the Board of Trustees of Vanguard University of Southern California, and then, if necessary, to the Corporate University Membership at its regular annual meeting or at a specially called meeting. The decision of the Corporate University Membership shall be final.

### **Section 2. American Indian College**

A. The Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God, at the invitation of the Division of Home Missions of the General Council, is a participating District of the Southwest Region in promoting the AIC.

- B. The Executive Presbytery of the Southern California District Council shall name representatives to sit on the Board of Directors of the American Indian College according to the Bylaws of the AIC.

### **ARTICLE XXIII. 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 for himself or herself whether to declare a position as a combatant, a non-combatant, or a conscientious objector.

### **ARTICLE XXIV. PROPERTY DEDICATION AND/OR CORPORATION DISSOLUTION**

The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious, charitable or educational purposes, and upon liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment of this corporation, after providing for the debts and obligations thereof, the remaining assets will not inure to the benefit of any private person but shall be transferred to the General Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, which is organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes, and which has established its tax exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. In the event that the said General Council of the Assemblies of God is not then in operation, or declines to accept said property, the remaining assets after providing for all debts and obligations, shall be transferred to a non-profit organization organized exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes, and which has established its tax exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### **ARTICLE XXV. MINUTES**

The minutes of all Executive Presbytery meetings shall be open for inspection at all reasonable hours to any ordained or licensed minister of the Southern California District Council. In the event the Executive Presbytery meet in a duly called Executive Session, the minutes shall record the general topic of the Executive Session. The minutes of the Committees and Boards provided in these Bylaws shall be open for inspection at all reasonable hours to any ordained or licensed minister of the Southern California District Council. In the event the Committees or Boards referenced above meet in a duly called

Executive Session, the minutes shall record the general topic of the Executive Session.

**ARTICLE XXVI. ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER**

Where not in conflict with other provisions of these bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall control the procedure for all meetings of the District Council and all committees and subcommittees established by or pursuant to the Articles of Incorporation, and/or the Bylaws of the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God.

**ARTICLE XXVII. NUMBER AND GENDER**

Except where the context indicates otherwise, words in the singular number shall include the plural. All words related to gender shall be inclusive throughout these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE XXIII. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and to Articles I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, XXVI and XXIV of the Bylaws may be made by a two-thirds majority vote of those members voting, and all other provisions of the Bylaws may be amended by a simple majority vote of those members voting at any duly called and duly noticed meeting of the District Council, provided that the notice of the meeting states the intention to call for a vote to amend the Articles of Incorporation and/or the Bylaws and referencing the particular Article and/or Section to be amended and the amendment proposed.

\* \* \* \* \*

**DEFINITION OF VOLUNTARY COOPERATIVE FELLOWSHIP**

The principle of voluntary cooperation upon which the General Council of the Assemblies of God is based, involves the following:

By "voluntary", it is meant that, upon learning the principles, doctrines and practices of the Assemblies of God, and by seeing the benefits one could derive from being associated with such an organization, a person of his or her own free choice decides to become a member, thus subscribing to all that for which the organization stands.

By "cooperation", it is meant that, to the best of his or her ability, one will comply with all decisions setting forth and defining duties and responsibilities incumbent upon members of the organization, and will respect the will of the majority expressed through democratic processes, as long as he or her remains a member.

Hence, "voluntary cooperation" means that one of his or her own free will decides to become a cooperating member of the Assemblies of God, this cooperation being obligatory and not optional.

## **ESSENTIAL RESOLUTIONS**

### **1. PRAYER FOR COUNTRY AND UNITY OF BELIEVERS**

RESOLVED, that the Southern California District Council in session request all of our pastors and assemblies to arrange in each public service to have prayer offered for our leaders and all those in authority that we "may live quiet and peaceable lives," and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Council through various publications, remind our constituency of this scriptural injunction.