

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORGANIZATION AND RECOGNITION AS A GENERAL COUNCIL AFFILIATED CHURCH

## RELATIONSHIPS

A General Council affiliated church (local congregation, assembly, etc.) is one which has applied for and has received a Certificate of Affiliation from The General Council of the Assemblies of God. (For requirements see current General Council Constitution Article XI and General Council Bylaws Article VI.)

In making this application for affiliation as a General Council affiliated church, it is understood that this local congregation shall have full recognition and be entitled to all the privileges granted by and subject to the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Council. It shall have the right of self-government under Jesus Christ, its living Head, and shall have the power to choose or call its pastor, elect its official board, and transact all other business pertaining to its life as a local unit. It shall have the right to receive members and maintain a membership roster in accordance with its own governance documents and applicable state corporate laws. It shall have the power to acquire and hold title to property in its own right, either through trustees, or in its corporate name as a self-governing body.

It shall be the privilege of this local congregation to send properly accredited delegates to both the General and District Council meetings as per applicable bylaws and guidelines. It shall have access to the general oversight and pastoral care of district officials who shall lend their assistance, provide training, and give counsel when called upon for those purposes. It shall also be entitled to district aid in the preparation and adoption of governance documents, conducting business, and the election of officers, including the choice of a pastor.

The congregation shall be entitled to avail itself of all the avenues of cooperative effort provided through the Fellowship, such as General Council and district council meetings, conferences, literature, media resources, curriculum, periodicals, and training events.

While the right of a local sovereign church to self-government is outlined in General Council Constitution Article XI, it is also recognized that the local church has a responsibility to the district council and General Council, and both have a responsibility to the local church. All three are interdependent, and none is completely independent.

It is understood that this local congregation shall recognize its obligation to the Fellowship as a whole to maintain proper standards of doctrine, church order, and conduct. It agrees to participate in the mission of the church through the General Council and district council in both home and foreign lands.

All the foregoing privileges and responsibilities are involved in the application which is now being made for recognition as an Assemblies of God church, affiliated and identified with The General Council of the Assemblies of God with headquarters at 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, Missouri 65802.

## RECOGNITION OF ASSEMBLIES

There are three categories of local congregations which may receive recognition by the Assemblies of God:

1. *General Council affiliated churches* are local congregations (with an adult membership of not less than 20 persons) which have matured sufficiently to accept their full share of self-governance and financial responsibility for the maintenance of scriptural order. They shall be organized under the guidance of the district council, with proper governance and corporate documents. They shall cooperate with the Assemblies of God Fellowship in doctrine, in conduct, and all other matters which may affect the peace and harmony of the whole.

2. *District Affiliated churches* are local congregations which have been brought into being as the result of evangelistic or church planting efforts and are still in a formative state in need of maturing. These local congregations should be held under the general supervision of the district presbytery, which shall provide for pastoral care, appoint the necessary officers, etc., until such time as the local congregation gives evidence of sufficient maturity to warrant full

recognition as a General Council affiliated church. A letter and/or certificate of affiliation with the district council shall be issued by the district involved.

3. *Cooperative Churches* are local congregations which agree with the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the General Council of the Assemblies of God and wish to enter into a cooperative status with their local district council and the General Council on a temporary basis (4-year term, renewable by the request of the local church congregation at the discretion of the district in cooperation with the General Council Executive Presbytery) before officially affiliating with the district council and the General Council. Cooperative churches do not have the same privileges and responsibilities as General Council or district council affiliated churches (General Council Constitution, Article XI, Section 3).

## HOW TO ORGANIZE THE LOCAL CHURCH

When a pastor considers that the local congregation has developed sufficiently in biblical understanding, and that the members have matured in Christian experience so that they can be entrusted with the full responsibility for maintaining proper scriptural order, he or she may take steps toward the organization of the congregation in accordance with the principles and practices of the Assemblies of God Fellowship. Although the local church shall contact the district office for proper procedures, the following steps generally outline this process:

1. Contact the district office and notify the district of the church's desire to become a General Council affiliated church.
2. Confirm the church's active corporate status by checking with the appropriate Secretary of State's office. If needed, prepare amendments to the Articles of Incorporation to be given to the Secretary of State.
3. Draft a set of governance documents (i.e., constitution, and/or bylaws). The district office can supply sample governance documents. Also, see 4.b. below. The General Council also provides recommended bylaws for the local church that can be obtained through the district council or on the Web site of the office of the general secretary of The General Council of the Assemblies of God ([www.gensec.ag.org](http://www.gensec.ag.org)).
4. Business Meeting. Communicate with the district officers and arrange with them for the appointment of a certain day and time for a business meeting. The business meeting shall then be announced on not less than 2 Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting must be clearly stated, and when held shall be conducted by the district official who has this responsibility. The rest of the meeting should include the following agenda items:
  - a. A resolution to become a General Council affiliated church.
  - b. Adopt Articles of Incorporation, a constitution and/or bylaws compatible with models recommended by the district council, or district approved governance models that provide for adequate accountability, amenability, and safeguards so that a pastor and/or governing body cannot directly or indirectly exert dictatorial control over a church (if not already adopted).
  - c. An election of the pastor by the members of the church (if not already elected).
  - d. An election of the officers/Board of Directors (if not already elected).
  - e. The signing of the roster of members in attendance (no less than 20 members must be present to sign the roster).
  - f. Complete and sign the Application of Recognition as a General Council Affiliated Church and return to the district office with appropriate fee.
  - g. Other steps as may be recommended by the district council.

NOTE: Some of these steps could be different, depending upon the governance model selected. Contact your district office for specific direction.

*These organizational guidelines should be retained for the church's files along with a copy of the application.*