

Potomac District Council

CONSTITUTION

ORIGIN OF THE POTOMAC DISTRICT COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

Feeling the need of cooperation in the work of God in Maryland and West Virginia, a meeting of workers was held on August 24th, 1917, at Shaft, Maryland, to organize a District Council. The following resolution was adopted:

RESOLVED, That we recognize ourselves as the District Council of Maryland and West Virginia, in cooperative fellowship with the General Council of the Assemblies of God (incorporated) with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri.

MOTION: Carried that we adopt the "Statement of Fundamental Truths" as the basis of cooperation and fellowship for this District Council.

RESOLVED, That we adopt the preamble and resolution of the Constitution of the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

During the annual District meeting which was held at Hagerstown, Maryland, August 20, 1925, the matter of changing the name of the District was discussed.

The wisdom of a change seemed apparent owing to the fact that the former name did not adequately describe the boundaries of the territory included.

On motion it was carried that we change the name of our District from "The Maryland and West Virginia District Council" to "The Potomac District Council of the Assemblies of God."

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE POTOMAC DISTRICT COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

CONSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION

WE BELIEVE:

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

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

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

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

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

That the Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason-for-being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, which enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs, adding a necessary dimension to worshipful relationship with God, and enabling them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ.

That we are a part of the cooperative fellowship of Pentecostal, Spirit-baptized saints from local Pentecostal assemblies of like precious faith throughout the United States and foreign lands known as the General Council of the Assemblies of God, whose purpose is neither to usurp authority over the various local assemblies, nor to deprive them of their scriptural and local rights and privileges, but to recognize and promote scriptural methods and order for worship, unity, fellowship, work, and business for God; and to disapprove unscriptural methods, doctrines and conduct, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in

the bond of peace, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of promulgating the Gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means in the Potomac District, so that the results of our efforts may be conserved and assemblies established and developed in general unity and cooperative fellowship along the lines of our distinctive testimony, and for the further purpose of cooperating with all other districts in the work of the General Council at home and abroad; we, who are members of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, hereby associate ourselves together for Scriptural fellowship and recognize ourselves as the Potomac District Council, and agree to be governed by the following Constitution and Bylaws.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this body shall be the Potomac District Council of the Assemblies of God.

ARTICLE II. TERRITORY

The Potomac District shall include the District of Columbia; all the State of Maryland; that part of West Virginia that includes and lies east of Marshall, Wetzel, Harrison, Upshur, Randolph, and Pocahontas counties; and that part of Virginia that includes and lies east of Bath, Rockbridge, Bedford, and Pittsylvania counties.

ARTICLE III. RELATIONSHIP

The Potomac District Council shall be an integral part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Incorporated, with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri; therefore the principles of voluntary unity and cooperative fellowship as set forth in the Constitution of the General Council are the principles which shall govern this District Council.

ARTICLE IV. TENETS OF FAITH

This Council shall stand for the Holy Scriptures as the all-sufficient rule for faith and practice, and adopts the Statement of Fundamental Truths approved by the General Council, that we may all speak the same thing.

STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing, 1 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 (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. The One True God

The one true God has revealed himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM," the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son, and Holy 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 the 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; 28:19; 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; and 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; Zechariah 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 "Emmanuel," God with us. (Matt. 1:23; 1 John 4:2, 10, 14; Rev. 1:13, 17).

(g) The Title, Son of God

Since the name "Emmanuel" 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 1:3; 1 John 3:8; Heb. 1:1-13; 7:3).

(h) Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ

Wherefore, it is a transgression of the Doctrine of Christ to say that Jesus Christ derived the title, Son of God, solely from the fact of the incarnation, or because of His relationship 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 1:2, 14, 18, 29, 49; 1 John 2:22, 23; 4:1-5; Heb. 12:2).

(i) Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord

The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, having 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. Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

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

- (a) His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31, 35).
- (b) His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
- (c) His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- (d) His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- (e) His bodily resurrection from the dead (Mt. 28:6; Lk. 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:4)
- (f) His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 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 the 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); and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Cor. 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till 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 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, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:1-11, 13; 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 reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is:

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

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

- (a) Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Hebrews 2:3, 4).
- (b) Adds a necessary dimension to worshipful relationship with God (2 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 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 (1) Evangelism of the world (Mark 16:15-20), (2) Worship of God (John 4:23, 24), (3) Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11-16).

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 blessed hope of the Church (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rom. 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 72:38; 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 V. PREROGATIVES

In connection with its purpose to promulgate the Gospel of Jesus Christ at home and abroad by all available means this Council shall have the right to:

1. Supervise all activities of the Assemblies of God in its prescribed field, in accordance with the right conferred by Article X of the General Council Constitution.
2. The District Council shall have the right to grant ministerial credentials to those who have met the requirements of the District as set forth in its Constitution and Bylaws.
3. It shall have the right to elect its own officers and committees, to arrange its own meetings, and to govern itself. It shall be subordinate to the General Council and amenable thereto in all matters of doctrine and the personal conduct of ministers who shall have district endorsement.
4. It shall have the right to establish churches and to provide for their development. It shall also have the right to establish and maintain such departments and institutions for the fellowship as may be necessary for the propagation of the Gospel in our borders.
5. Incidental to, or in connection therewith, it shall have the right to own, hold in trust, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of such property, real or chattel, as may be needed for the prosecution of its work.

ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP

1. Ordained ministers holding valid credentials with the General Council and in good standing with the Potomac District shall be considered members.
2. All licensed ministers or certified ministers who hold valid credentials with the Potomac District shall be considered members.
3. All affiliated local assemblies shall have the right to representation in business sessions of the Potomac District Council. Each assembly having a membership of 100 or more is entitled to two delegates and those whose membership is less than 100, one delegate. Each delegate must present a letter of certification signed by the church secretary or the pastor of the assembly being represented.

4. All spouses, as well as widows and widowers, of ministers (ordained, licensed, specialized license, and certified ministers) shall be recognized as non-voting honorary members of the District Council.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

1. The officers shall consist of the District Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, four Executive Presbyters, and a Presbyter from each section of the District.
2. The General Council Presbyters shall consist of the District Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Secretary-Treasurer, who shall serve on the General Presbytery of the General Council by virtue of their offices.
3. The Executive Committee shall consist of the District Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, and the four Executive Presbyters.
4. The Board of Presbyters shall consist of the Executive Committee and Sectional Presbyters.
5. The Honorary Presbyters shall consist of qualified former members of the Potomac District Board of Presbyters subject to election by the District Council.

ARTICLE VIII. DEPARTMENTS & BOARDS

1. The Potomac District Council shall establish and maintain departments and boards as required to carry out its work.
2. The Board of Presbyters shall name the Board of the Potomac Park Camp Grounds, Inc.

ARTICLE IX. COMMITTEES

1. The District Presbytery shall serve as the Credentials Committee.
2. Standing committees shall be appointed as necessary. The District Superintendent shall make such appointments and secure their confirmation from the District Presbytery. Appointees shall serve from the date of appointment until adjournment of the next District Council.
3. Special committees may be appointed at the District Council in session or may be appointed by the District Presbytery between District Council sessions.

ARTICLE X. MEETINGS

1. The regular meeting of the District Council shall be held annually.
2. A special session of the District Council may be called by the Board of Presbyters when they deem it necessary.

3. An ordained minister may initiate an appeal to the District Presbytery for a special District Council session provided that a written request for such a session has been signed by no fewer than 20 percent of the ordained ministers of the District.

ARTICLE XI. LOCAL ASSEMBLIES

1. Local Assemblies shall be set in order by the District and shall be amenable to the Potomac District in doctrine, in conduct, and in all other matters which affect the peace and harmony of the fellowship. They shall have a standard for membership determined by the local assembly in agreement with the District Council. They shall be expected to support the district programs financially.
2. Local assemblies shall be classified as General Council affiliated or District Council affiliated as outlined in the General Council Constitution and Bylaws.