

# CONSTITUTION

## SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND MINISTRY NETWORK OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, INC.

(UPDATED JUNE 2019)

### PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, it is the express purpose of God, our Heavenly Father, to call out of the world a saved people, who shall constitute the body or church of Jesus Christ, Himself being the Chief Cornerstone; and

WHEREAS, the members of the body, the church ekklesia. of Jesus Christ, are enjoined to assemble themselves together 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; and

WHEREAS, the General Council of the Assemblies of God has made provision for the care and development of local assemblies through the agency of network councils,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that as a duly recognized network of the General Council of the Assemblies of God we agree to be governed by the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Southern New England Ministry Network.

### CONSTITUTION

#### Article I. Name

The name of this body shall be the SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND MINISTRY NETWORK OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, INC.

#### Article II. Territory

The network shall include Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, and may be divided into sections at the discretion of the network council.

#### Article III. Relationships

This network is an integral part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, hereinafter referred to as Assemblies of God. Therefore, the principles of voluntary unity and cooperative fellowship as set forth in the Constitution of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, adopted at Springfield, Missouri, September 16-22, 1927, are the principles which shall govern this network.

#### Article IV. Tenets of Faith

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us i.e., that we all speak the same thing, (1 Corinthians 1:10; Acts 2:42). The phraseology employed in this

statement is not inspired or contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to a full-gospel ministry. No claim is made that it contains all Biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines.

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

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

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

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

#### *The Adorable Godhead*

##### **A. Terms Defined**

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

##### **B. Distinction and relationship in the Godhead**

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

##### **C. Unity of the One Being of Father, Son, and Holy 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, (Romans 1:1-3,7; 2 John 3).

F. The Lord Jesus Christ, God with us

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

G. The Title, Son of God

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

H. Transgression and 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 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, (Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Acts 2:32-36; Romans 14:11; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

J. Equal Honor to the Father and to the Son

Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgment unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on earth to bow the knee, but 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 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; Philipians 2:8,9; Revelation 4:8-11; 7:9,10).

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

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

- A. His virgin birth, (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31,35).
- B. His sinless life, (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
- C. His miracles, (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- D. His substitutionary work on the cross, (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- E. His bodily resurrection from the dead, (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:4).
- F. His exaltation to the right hand of God, (Acts 1:9,11; 2:23; 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, (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).

#### **6. The Ordinances of the Church**

##### **A. Baptism in Water**

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

##### **B. Holy Communion**

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

#### **7. The Baptism in the Holy 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 Corinthians 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; Hebrews 12:28), and 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 Corinthians 12:4-10,28), but different in purpose and use.

### **9. Sanctification**

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God, (Romans 12:1,2; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord", (Hebrews 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, (Romans 6:1-11,13; 8:1,2,13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12,13; 1 Peter 1:5).

### **10. The Church and Its Mission**

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

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

- A. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world, (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16).
- B. To be a corporate body in which man may worship God, (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- C. To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son, (Eph. 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, (1 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. Evangelization of the world, (Mark 16:15-20; 2), 2. Worship of God, (John 4:23,24) and 3. Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son, (Ephesians 4:11-16).

### **12. Divine Healing**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 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, (1 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).

## **Article V. Prerogatives**

In connection with its purpose to promulgate the Gospel of Jesus Christ at home and abroad by all available means, to encourage and promote the worship of God, and to promote the edification of believers, this district shall have the following rights:

**Section 1.** To supervise all activities of the Assemblies of God in its prescribed field, in accordance with the rights conferred by Article X of the Constitution of the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

**Section 2.** To examine candidates for the ministry, and to license and ordain those who have met the requirements of the network as set forth in its constitution and bylaws.

**Section 3.** To elect its own officers and committees, to arrange for its own meetings and govern itself. It shall be subordinate to the General Council and amenable thereto in all matters of doctrine and the conduct of its ministers who shall have the network endorsement.

**Section 4.** To establish and maintain such departments and institutions for the network as may be required for the propagation of the Gospel within its borders such as camp meeting grounds, youth camps, Bible schools, orphanages, homes for the aged and other institutions, missionary rest homes, and printing and publishing plants.

**Section 5.** Incidental to and in connection therewith, it shall have the right to the same extent as natural persons might or could do, to purchase or otherwise acquire and to hold, own, maintain, develop, sell, lease, exchange, hire, convey, mortgage or otherwise dispose of and deal in any interest in real estate or real property and in any personal or mixed property necessary, convenient or appropriate for any of the purposes expressed.

## **Article VI. Principles for Fellowship**

The Southern New England Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God shall as nearly as possible in detail represent the body of Christ as described in the New Testament Scriptures, recognizing the principles inherent in that body as also inherent in this fellowship, particularly the principles of unity, fellowship, cooperation, and equality. It recognizes that adherence to those principles will enable it to achieve its priority reason-for-being and to maintain conditions under which it can, as a fellowship, demonstrate those principles and their consequent development.

## **Article VII. Membership**

**Section 1.** Ministers: All certified, and licensed, and ordained ministers holding accredited fellowship certificates from the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and having their permanent residence within the boundaries of the Network, along with those holding accredited fellowship certificates who are serving as evangelists, or at general headquarters, and those teaching at or attending colleges or Bible schools, serving as missionaries, retired ministers, or those serving in the armed services or chaplaincy, are considered members of the Southern New England Ministry Network.

**Section 2.** Assemblies: All General Council and district council affiliated churches, the individual members of which are considered members of the Assemblies of God, are considered to be member churches. Each assembly has the right of representation at the Annual Network Council according to the provisions in Article III, Southern New England Ministry Network Bylaws.

#### **Article VIII. Officers**

**Section 1.** EXECUTIVE PRESBYTERY — The Executive Presbytery shall consist of the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the director of minister development and the director of church development.

**Section 2.** NETWORK PRESBYTERY — The Network Presbytery shall consist of the Executive Presbytery, the Sectional Presbyters, the Intercultural Ministries Presbyter, the Under 40 Representative Presbyter, and a Female Representative Presbyter.

**Section 3.** GENERAL PRESBYTERS — The General Presbytery shall be composed of representative men of mature experience and ability whose lives and ministry are above reproach, who shall represent the Fellowship in all phases of its work and interest in their respective fields. The General Presbytery shall be the official policy-making body of the General Council when the General Council is not in session. Each district shall have the privilege of representation on the General Presbytery by three members, the district superintendent together with two others who shall be elected by the District Council, one of whom shall be an ordained pastor of a church located in the district. They shall take office immediately. General Council Constitution, Article IX, Section 3.

**Section 4.** SECTIONAL PRESBYTERS — There shall be a sectional presbyter from each of the sections of the network, the Intercultural Ministries Presbyter, an Under 40 Representative Presbyter, and a Female Representative Presbyter.

**Section 5.** NOMINEES FOR NON-RESIDENT EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER — The Network Council shall nominate two ministers from its district, one of whom is not an elected full-time official, to be presented to the General Council as nominees from its area to serve on the Executive Presbytery of the General Council. See Article II, Section 2.e., General Council Bylaws.

#### **Article IX. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of this corporation shall be from January 1 to December 31.

#### **Article X. Meetings**

**Section 1.** The annual meeting of the corporation, known as the Annual Network Council, shall be held after the close of the fiscal year, and the time and place of said meeting shall be fixed by the Network Presbytery, and thirty days notice shall be given to the members defined under Article VII of the Constitution.

**Section 2.** Special sessions may be called to meet any emergency that may arise within the network. Such call shall be issued by the secretary after the emergency has been fully considered and passed upon by a majority of the Network Presbytery. At least seven days written notice of such meeting shall be given to all the members defined under Article VII of the Constitution. Such notice shall contain a brief statement of the business to be transacted at such meeting.



## **Article XI. Dissolution Clause**

In the event this Southern New England Ministry Network shall cease to function for the purposes herein set forth, then all property, real or chattel, and all assets remaining after satisfying debts and obligations, shall revert to the parent body, THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, a Missouri not-for-profit corporation, with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri. The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall have full authority to sell such property and to use the proceeds derived therefrom for the extension of the work of the Assemblies of God.

In the event of cessation of this Southern New England Ministry Network, it's Board of Trustees or directors. shall transfer all properties and any remaining assets, in accordance with the foregoing provisions, within one year after the date of such cessation. If such transfer is not made within the time prescribed above or if the aforesaid General Council shall be unable or unwilling to accept the aforesaid transfer as an organization operated exclusively for religious purposes and is exempt from taxes under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, then disposition thereof shall be made by the court of the county in which the Southern New England Ministry Network headquarters office is located to a non-profit 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, and which has purposes nearest to those of The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

## **Article XII. Amendments**

Amendments to the constitution may be made at any regular or special session of the Annual Network Council, provided the proposed amendments have been submitted first to the Network Presbytery for consideration, and then mailed to each member of the district at least two months prior to the time of meeting. A two-third vote of all members present shall be necessary for adoption.