

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
OF
NEW LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH
818 WASHINGTON ROAD
NEWTON, KANSAS



New Life
Assembly of God

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2024

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father; to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith, where the Holy Spirit may be honored according to our distinctive testimony; to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and throughout the world; we, whose names appear upon the assembly roster under the above date, do hereby recognize ourselves as a local assembly in fellowship with and a part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and of the Kansas District Council of the Assemblies of God; and declare that we hereby adopt the following articles of church order and submit ourselves to be governed by them.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church shall be New Life Assembly of God in the city of Newton, Kansas.

ARTICLE II

PREROGATIVES

SECTION 1. Self Government. This Assemblies of God church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament scriptures, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace... till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the statue of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:3, 13)

SECTION 2. Ownership of Property. In connection therewith, of incidental thereto, it shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest, or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes; all in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws or as the same may hereafter be amended.

ARTICLE III

AFFILIATION AND RELATIONSHIP

This assembly declares itself to be voluntarily in full cooperative fellowship with all other churches affiliated with the Kansas District Council of the Assemblies of God with

headquarters in Wichita, Kansas, and the General Council of the Assemblies of God with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri; and shares in the privileges and assumes the responsibilities enjoined by this affiliation. As a member of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, this assembly agrees to:

- a. Cooperate by every possible means in an extension of God's work and Kingdom throughout the world.
- b. Support the missionary program agreed upon by the District and General Councils.
- c. Participate in District and General Council sessions via duly chosen delegates.
- d. Invite the counsel of the district officary in the event of church difficulty and when changing Pastors.
- e. Share in support of the District and General Council. (See General Council Bylaws, Article XVII. Section 1, Paragraph [c], and Section 2, Paragraph [c])
- f. Recognize that the District Council of the General Council of the Assemblies of God shall have the right and authority to:
 1. Approve scriptural doctrine and conduct;
 2. Disapprove unscriptural doctrine and conduct, as stated in Article III, Paragraph [f], of the General Council Constitution; and
 3. Withdraw its certificate of membership if deemed necessary.
- g. Appeal, if needed, to the District Council or the General Council in accordance with Article VI, Section 4, Paragraph [c], of the General Council Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV

TENETS OF FAITH

This assembly accepts the Holy Scriptures as the revealed will of God, the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, and for the purpose of maintaining general unity, adopts the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, to wit:

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 "god's 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 neither the Father nor the Son. Wherefore the Father is the Begetter; 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; Zachariah 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 no

person in the Godhead either exists or works separately or independently of the others (John 5: 17-30, 32,37; 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 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 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 (Hebrews 1: 3; 1 Peter 3: 22; Acts 2: 32-36; Romans 14:11; 1 Corinthians 15: 24-28).

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

Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgment unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on Earth to bow the knee, but it is an unspeakable joy in the Holy 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; Revelation 5: 6-14, Philipians 2: 8, 9; Revelation 7: 9, 10; 4:8-11).

3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

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

- (a) His virgin birth (Matthew 1: 23; Luke 1: 31, 35).
- (b) His sinless life (Hebrews 7: 26, 1 Peter 2: 22).
- (c) His miracles (Acts 2:22, 10:38).
- (d) His work on the cross (1 Corinthians 15: 3, 2 Corinthians 5: 21).
- (e) His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28: 6, Luke 24: 39, 1 Corinthians 15: 4).
- (f) His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1: 9, 11; 2: 33; Philipians 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 of 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 comes!"

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; 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), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to his work (Acts 2: 42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16: 20).

8. The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy 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). 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 too: 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 first born, 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 worshipped by man, and to build a body of believers in the image of his Son, the priority reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is:

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

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

- a. Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16: 15-20, Acts 4: 29-31; Hebrews 2: 3, 4).
- b. Adds a necessary dimension to a worshipful relationship with God (1 Corinthians 2:10-16, 12-14).
- 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) worship of God (John 4: 23, 24); and (3) building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4: 11, 16).

12. Divine Healing

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

13. The Blessed Hope

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

14. The Millennial Reign of Christ

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

15. The Final Judgment

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

16. The New Heavens and the New Earth

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

ARTICLE V

ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism in Water. The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water shall be administered to all those who have repented of their sins and who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Matthew 28: 19; Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38; Acts 10: 47-48; Romans 6: 3-5; Colossians 2: 12).

Section 2. Holy Communion. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly as enjoined in the Scriptures (Luke 22: 19-20; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26).

ARTICLE VI

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Eligibility. Membership in this assembly shall be open to all those who give evidence of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who subscribed to the tenants of faith of this church, who agree to be subject to its discipline and governed by its Constitution and Bylaws, as herein set forth or as amended by the assembly, and who are approved for membership by the Pastor and the Official Board of Deacons.

Section 2. Requirements for Church Membership. The membership shall be those who have met all requirements for membership stated in the Bylaws and shall have been received into membership and not subsequently been removed from the membership roll. Members shall faithfully support this church with their personal attendance and with their tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10). Members shall be classified as active or inactive as defined in the Bylaws.

Section 3. Voting Membership. The legal voting membership of this assembly shall consist of all persons whose names appear on the current active membership roll, 18 years of age or over, together with the Pastor and his/her spouse. (refer to Bylaws, Article VI, Section 11, Paragraph [f]).
Approximately three (3) weeks prior to all business meetings the Official Board will review the church membership role and shall determine such members as active or inactive. (Refer to Bylaws, Article VI, Section 5, Discipline). This assembly is aware that legitimate circumstances hinder church attendance at times, such as sickness or work, and these circumstances shall be considered.

ARTICLE VII

OFFICERS

Section 1. Official Board. The Pastor, together with the elected Official Board, shall constitute the Official Board, which shall be responsible for the spiritual management, business management, and the holding of all property of the church. The Official Board shall include the Pastor and no more than seven (7) members and no less than three (3) members, both men and women, who shall qualify according to the scriptural standards. The Official Board shall function under the leadership of the Pastor. The Official Board shall be elected from among the membership of the church and shall meet the qualifications and principles as set forth in acts 6: 3; 1 Corinthians 4: 2; Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Timothy 3: 8-13; and Titus 1: 6-9. The Official Board shall be men and women of mature Christian experience, at least 25 years of age, and shall have been members of this church at least one (1) year prior to the time of their election.

Section 2. Officers. The Official Board shall be recognized as the officers of the church. Where required by law or otherwise, the executive committee of the church shall be recognized as the Pastor, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 3. Trustees. In order to properly transact the business of the church the Official Board shall be recognized as the Trustees for the holding of all church property and other matters as necessary. Each Trustee's term of office shall run concurrently with his/her office on the Official Board.

ARTICLE VIII

MEETINGS

Section 1. Public Meetings. Meetings for public worship shall be held on each Lord's Day and during the week as may be provided for under the direction of the Pastor and the Official Board. The time and place shall be determined by the Official Board.

Section 2. Business Meetings.

- a. There shall be an annual business meeting of the assembly, at which time the election of officers shall take place, reports of officers shall be presented, and other essential business of the church transacted. This meeting shall be held the first Wednesday in February or at a more convenient date to be decided upon by the Official Board. The time and place of the meeting shall be determined by the Official Board and announced by the Pastor. Due notice shall be given on two (2) Sundays immediately prior to the date of said meeting.
- b. Special business meetings may be called, when necessary, after proper notice has been given by the Pastor or by the Secretary of the Official Board, provided the meeting has been agreed upon by a majority of the Official Board and due notice has been given on two (2) Sundays immediately prior to the date of said meeting.

Section 3. Right of Initiative. Special business meetings may also be called by petition having been signed by no less than one-third (1/3) of the active membership of the assembly. The petition must be placed in the hands of the Pastor or Secretary of the church three (3) weeks prior to the date of the meeting. However, before the right of initiative is exercised, the church should request the help and counsel of the district officary.

Section 4. Notices:

- a. Notice of all business meetings of this church shall be announced not less than ten (10) days before the date of the proposed meeting.

- b. Notice shall be given by announcement from the pulpit on the two (2) preceding Sundays and/or by letter from the Official Board.
- c. If events necessitate a postponement of the meeting, or there is a lack of sufficient members present for a quorum, the Official Board will be authorized to designate a new date in accordance with A and B of this same section.
- d. In the event that two (2) business meetings are properly called and in each case there is not a quorum present, the Official Board may, at their discretion, set aside the quorum requirement and a third business meeting may be called in order that business may be transacted.

Section 5. Official Board. The Official Board shall meet at the call of the Pastor, regularly, or as often as necessary for the proper transaction of the business of the church.

Section 6. Quorums.

- a. Church Business Meetings. A majority of active members registered and voting in any duly called and announced business meeting of this church shall constitute a quorum.
- b. Official Board Meetings. A majority of Official Board members present at any meeting of the Official Board shall constitute a quorum provided all the members of the Board have been notified to be present.

Section 7. Authorized Meetings. No members or adherents shall conduct any private or secret business or devotional meetings without the consent and knowledge of the Pastor or the Official Board.

ARTICLE IX

DEPARTMENTS and COMMITTEES

Section 1. Authorization. The Pastor and the Official Board shall hereby provide for the establishment of departments, committees, auxiliaries, or other organizations which may be necessary or desirable for the total work of the church to evangelize, teach, train, encourage, or otherwise serve the needs of the church.

Section 2. Relationships. All departments, committees, auxiliaries, or other organizations authorized shall be subordinate to the church and shall contribute to the harmony and development of the whole. They shall be under the general supervision of

the Pastor and the Official Board. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees, departments, auxiliaries, and other organizations.

ARTICLE X

FINANCES

All funds for the maintenance and outreach of this assembly shall be by the voluntary contributions of tithes and offerings by members and friends of the organization. Offerings shall be accepted by the assembly at such times and in such ways as agreed upon by the Pastor and the Official Board and shall be disbursed by the Treasurer under their direction (Malachi 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 16: 1-2; 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8)

ARTICLE XI

PROPERTY

Section 1. Ownership. All real or chattel property of the assembly shall be held in the corporate name. The corporate name is New Life Assembly of God of Newton, Kansas.

- a. All property, real or chattel, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred, or conveyed in the church or corporate name.
- b. No property, real or chattel, of the assembly shall be bought, sold, transferred, mortgaged, or otherwise disposed of unless the same shall have been recommended by a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the voting membership who are in attendance at a regular meeting or special meeting of the assembly which has been called for consideration of the proposal with the following exception: Any property, real or chattel, that is determined to no longer be useful or is no longer usable for the operation of use of the assembly and has a value fo less than five hundred dollars may be, without notice, disposed of or transferred or sold at the discretion of the Pastor and Official Board with a majority vote of each Board.
- c. The Pastor and the Secretary of the Official Board shall certify in such conveyance or mortgage that the same has been duly authorized and recommended by a vote of the assembly. Such certificate shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.

Section 2. Defection. In the event defection shall occur from the tenets of faith of this church as the same stated in the Statement of Fundamental Truths in the Constitution of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, any portion of the membership subscribing to and practicing the aforesaid tenets of faith and retaining membership with

the local church shall retain possession of, and title to, all properties of said church with full rights thereto as provided in its Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 3. Dissolution.

- a. In the event this church shall cease to function for the purpose as declared heretofore in its Constitution, then after providing for payment of its debts, the remaining assets will not inure to the benefit of any private person or persons but all such remaining assets shall revert to, and be transferred to, the Kansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, a Kansas Corporation with headquarters in Wichita, Kansas.
- b. The Kansas District Council of the Assemblies of God shall have full authority to sell such property and use the proceeds derived therefrom for the extension of the work of the Assemblies of God within the Kansas District and under the direction of the Presbytery of said district.
- c. In the event of cessation of this church, its Board of Trustees shall within one (1) year thereafter transfer all properties and any remaining assets to the Kansas District Council of the Assemblies of God in accordance with the foregoing provisions.
- d. If such transfer is not made within the time prescribed herein or if the aforesaid, the Kansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, shall be unable or unwilling to accept the aforesaid transfer as an organization operated exclusively for religious purposes with tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, then disposition thereof shall be made by the court of the county in which this church is located, provided that in such case proceeds of the dissolution shall be distributed to an organization or organizations having purposes nearest the purposes of the Kansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, which have established tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE XII

AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of this membership of the assembly in attendance at any regular or special meeting called for the purpose, provided due notice of such proposed change shall have been made at all the services at least two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the time of such meeting. Copies of all proposed amendments shall be given to or mailed to each active member

at least ten (10) days prior to the business meeting. The mailing of the proposed amendments shall be considered proper notification. It shall be understood that this does not apply to the tenets of faith, which stand regardless of the majority.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

PARLIAMENTARY ORDER

To facilitate the conducting of business in an orderly and satisfactory manner, the business meetings of this assembly shall be governed by the edition of Robert's Rules of Order Revised, in keeping with the spirit of Christian love and fellowship.

ARTICLE II

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

Section 1. Pastor. The Pastor is designated in the Scriptures as the leader of the church under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and is referred to under the title "Pastor" (Ephesians 4: 11), "Overseer" (Acts 20: 28), and "Shepherd" (1 Peter 5: 1-3).

- a. The Pastor shall be a member in good standing with the General Council of the Assemblies of God.
- b. The Pastor shall be considered as the spiritual overseer of the assembly and shall direct all of its activities.
- c. The Pastor shall be the president of the corporation and shall act as chairman of all the business meetings of the assembly and the Official Board.
- d. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees or departments.
- e. The Pastor shall provide for all the services of the assembly and shall arrange for all special meetings, conventions, or revival campaigns. No person shall be invited to speak or preach in the assembly without the Pastor's approval.

Section 2. Official Board. The Official Board shall serve in an advisory capacity with the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the church in its spiritual life, ministry, and business.

- a. The Official Board shall assist the Pastor in the ministry of ordinances, the examination of applicants for membership, and the administration of discipline.
- b. The Official Board shall assist the Pastor in maintaining the membership roster by revising all membership roles of the assembly as authorized by these Bylaws.

- c. In the event the assembly is temporarily without a Pastor, or the Pastor is unable to be present, the Official Board shall be empowered to provide for its own chairman from its membership in order to transact business for the assembly.

Section 3. Trustees. The Official Board, acting in the capacity of Trustees as provided in the Constitution, Article VII, Officers, Section 3, Trustees, shall be the custodians of all the property of the church. The Official Board shall meet for the discharge of their duties as necessity may demand upon the request of the Pastor.

Section 4. The Secretary.

- a. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the official meetings of the Official Board and of the annual and special business meetings of the assembly.
- b. The Secretary shall keep a record of the membership of the assembly and perform any other clerical work necessary for the proper discharge of his/her duties.
- c. The Secretary shall be the custodian of all legal documents including documents of title, the articles of incorporation and amendments thereto, and the corporate seal.
- d. The Secretary shall maintain a correct and current Constitution and Bylaws and the historic record of the assembly.

Section 5. The Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be entrusted with all the finances of the assembly which may be committed to the Treasurer.

- a. The Treasurer shall deposit all funds in a responsible bank in the name of the assembly, and shall disperse the same by check, as authorized by the pastor and the official board.
- b. The Treasurer shall keep an itemized account of the receipts and disbursements.
- c. The Treasurer shall present an itemized report at the regular meetings of the Official Board and a summarized report to the assembly at its regular business meetings.
- d. The accounts of the assembly shall be subject to review at all times under the direction of the Pastor and Official Board.

Section 6. Bookkeeper.

- a. A Bookkeeper shall be maintained for the purpose of keeping the financial records, who shall be familiar with and experienced in the area of bookkeeping skills using a computer.

- b. The Bookkeeper shall provide a monthly financial statement to the Treasurer for presentation at monthly board meetings.
- c. The Bookkeeper shall provide contribution statements to the membership of the church.
- d. The Bookkeeper shall work closely with the Treasurer in the financial matters of the church (i.e., receipts and disbursements).

Section 7. Christian Education Director.

- a. The Christian Education Director is elected at the annual business meeting from among the members of the church. The Pastor and the Christian Education Director shall have the right to appoint all officers, teachers, and other workers of the Christian Education Department.
- b. The Christian Education Director will serve for a one (1) year term. The Christian Education Director shall be voted on annually and may serve unlimited consecutive terms.
- c. The Christian Education Director shall be of mature experience, an active member in good standing in this church for a period of one (1) year, faithful in attendance and tithing, filled with the Holy Spirit, and one who has clearly demonstrated a Christian attitude of cooperation and concern for the welfare of the church.

Section 8. Youth Leader. The position of Youth Leader shall be one of mature experience, an active member of this church for a period of one (1) year, filled with the Holy Spirit and faithful in attendance and tithing. The person shall have clearly demonstrated a Christian attitude of cooperation and concern for the welfare of this church. This person shall be selected by the Official Board.

ARTICLE III

ELECTIONS

Section 1. The Pastor. The Pastor may be elected to serve for a specific term at the first election, or the Pastor may be elected for an indefinite period of time. The Pastor shall be nominated by the Official Board after consultation with the district officary regarding available candidates. Only one (1) name shall be voted upon at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot at the annual business meeting or at a special business meeting called for that purpose. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of all votes cast by the active

membership present shall be required to constitute a first election. Any election after the first election shall require a majority vote of all votes cast by the active membership present.

Section 2. Assistant Pastor. There may be an Assistant Pastor who shall be selected by the Pastor and a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at an annual business meeting or a special business meeting called for that purpose. In the absence of the Pastor, the Assistant Pastor shall act in cooperation with the Pastor. The Pastor and Official Board shall agree upon remuneration at the time of selection.

Section 3. Official Board. The Official Board shall be chosen and elected according to the qualifications of the Constitution, Article VII, Section 1.

- a. The Official Board of the church shall be men and women of mature experience, active members in good standing in the church for a period of one (1) year; faithful in attendance in worship services and in Sunday school, and in tithing; And who have a good report among the members of the church and who have clearly demonstrated a Christian attitude of cooperation and concern for the welfare of the church. Official Board members must be filled with the Holy Spirit and be living consistent Christian lives.
- b. The Official Board shall be elected by secret ballot at the annual business meeting, or a special business meeting called for that purpose, from a slate of nominees submitted by the Official Board in office, who is responsible for the investigation and determination of the eligibility of qualified persons from the membership of this church. Those nominated will be notified prior to the business meeting so they can agree to have their names stand on the ballot or to have their name removed from ballot. The names of the approved nominees shall be submitted to the membership on the Sunday prior to the annual business meeting. The names of the approved nominees shall be submitted to the membership to be voted on at the annual business meeting.
- c. All Official Board members shall be elected to serve for a term of not more than three (3) years. No Official Board member shall serve more than one (1) term of three (3) years without a lapse of at least one (1) year.
- d. If there should be no election on the first two (2) ballots cast the two (2) nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be further balloted upon until an election is declared.
- e. A majority vote of all votes cast shall be required to constitute an election.

- f. The Official Board members shall consist of not less than three (3) or more than seven (7) members. The elected term shall be three (3) years unless otherwise specified at the time of election. After serving an elected term, that person shall not hold the office for at least a period of one (1) year.
- g. Those who serve on the Official Board must not be related in any way biologically or by marriage. This includes “in-laws”, cousins, etc.

Section 4. Christian Education Director. Election of the Christian education director shall be by secret ballot.

Section 5. Appointments. The Secretary and the Treasurer shall be appointed from among the number of the Official Board for a term of one (1) year. The Secretary and Treasurer can be reelected for one (1) year terms consecutively for a total of three (3) terms, while they are in office on the Official Board. All other offices of departments, auxiliaries, or committee personnel shall serve for periods of one year, unless provision is otherwise made within the policies and procedures of those areas.

Section 6. Absentee Ballots.

- a. Absentee ballots may be cast by members in good standing who are unable to attend the annual business meeting due to illness or circumstances deemed permissible by the official board.
- b. Ballots may be obtained by request from the Pastor or church Secretary.
- c. Ballots must be submitted to the Pastor and/or an Official Board member by the voting member no later than two (2) days prior to the date of the annual business meeting.
- d. Ballots will be counted as one (1) vote per candidate selected during each electoral ballot for the position being voted on.
- e. Ballots must be signed by voting member.
- f. Ballots may be used only for election of candidates.

ARTICLE IV

DEPARTMENTS and COMMITTEES

The Official Board shall assist the Pastor in supervising and overseeing the proper function of all departments and committees, which may be established to implement the total work and ministry of the church. Each officially approved department shall have the right to adopt a Constitution and Bylaws to govern the operation of the department with the provisions that such documents shall be consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the church and meets the approval of the Official Board. In the absence of a Constitution and Bylaws, any department or committee shall operate as a branch of the activities of this church according to the policies approved by the Official Board.

ARTICLE V

VACANCIES

Section 1. The Pastorate. When a vacancy in the Pastorate shall occur, the Official Board shall be recognized as the pulpit committee whose duty it shall be to consult with the district officary for guidance in locating, investigating, interviewing, screening, and recommending the best possible nominee to the church. The Official Board shall gather all available information on the likely candidates, observing them in their ministry, if possible, and schedule the one who seems the most suitable to minister to the church at the earliest possible date. Only one nominee at a time shall be considered and voted upon by the church.

- a. When a vacancy of the Pastorate shall occur, the Official Board shall select one (1) of its number to act as a Chairperson of the board until another Pastor is elected. The Chairperson will be responsible for bringing all applications before the Official Board for consideration and shall serve as a spokesperson for the Official Board and the church body in all matters concerning candidates for Pastor or any business of the church. The Chairperson shall have the authority to place the church in a continuous state of business so that a business meeting may be announced at any time.
- b. In the event the Pastor shall resign, or the church shall desire the Pastor's resignation as in Section 3 herein, thirty (30) days notice shall be given by the party desiring termination, unless mutual agreement can be reached otherwise by all parties involved.
- c. The Official Board shall arrange for temporary replacements to fill any vacancy in the office of the Pastor until a new Pastor is elected and installed.

- d. In the event that the Pastorate is vacated, a special business meeting shall be called by the official board within thirty (30) days.

Section 2. Official Board Member. In case a duly elected Official Board member cannot, or will not, complete the term for which they were elected, the position shall be declared vacant by action of the Official Board.

- a. If at any time the Official Board is reduced to less than three (3) members, the Pastor shall, after conferring with the official board, announce within ten (10) days after such vacancy occurs, a date on which a special election will be called for the purpose of electing the person or number of persons required to fill the position(s) left vacant.
- b. The individual(s) elected to the position(s) serve(s) the remainder of the term of the vacant position(s).

Section 3. Declared Vacancies. Any office may be declared vacant by an act of a majority of the Official Board at any regular or special business meeting called for that purpose by written notice to all members of the Official Board.

- a. Ground for such action shall be:
 - 1. Unscriptural conduct
 - 2. Doctrinal departure from the tenants of faith
 - 3. Incompetency in office
 - 4. Any good and sufficient reason or cause
- b. Any incumbent under charges shall be notified of the charges in writing by the Secretary of the Official Board.
- c. Any incumbent under charges shall have the opportunity for a fair and impartial hearing of their case before the church if they so request.
- d. In the event a Pastor has serious charges preferred against him/her and the Official Board asks for his/her resignation, if such resignation is refused the Pastorate shall not be considered vacant until the action of the Official Board has been sustained by a majority vote of the active membership present and voting at a special business meeting called for that purpose, such meeting to be presided over by a district official.

ARTICLE VI

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Standard of Membership. The standard of membership in this church shall be:

- a. Evidence of a genuine experience in regeneration, the new birth (John 1: 12-13; 3: 3-8; 1 Peter 1: 18-25).
- b. Baptized in water by immersion following salvation.
- c. Abstain from the misuse of drugs and sins mentioned in Galatians 5: 19-21.
- d. Evidence of a consistent Christian life (Romans 3: 1-4; 6: 4; 13: 3-14; Ephesians 4: 17-32; 5: 1-15; 1 John 1: 6-7).
- e. To fully subscribe to the tenets of faith, as set forth in Article IV of the church Constitution.
- f. To faithfully contribute regularly to the financial support of this church through tithes and offerings (Malachi 3: 10; 1 Corinthians 16: 1-2; 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8).
- g. Attained eighteen (18) years of age.

Section 2. Reception of Members.

- a. Those individuals who shall desire to become members of this assembly shall make the fact known by written application to the Pastor, who shall examine the applicant according to the standard of membership, Article VI, Section 1 of the Bylaws.
- b. The Pastor shall present the names of those who apply for membership with recommendation to the Official Board, who has the right to determine the acceptability of all applicants and shall act upon said recommendation and render a final decision. All persons who shall have met the membership requirements and have been favorably agreed upon shall be received into the assembly at any of its regular services and shall have their names inscribed on the membership roster. (Refer to Article VI, Section 11, Membership Process.)

Section 3. Categories of Membership.

- a. Active Membership. All those who meet the scriptural standards for membership, whose names appeared on the original role of the assembly at the time it was organized, together with those names that shall be added from time to time, shall constitute the active voting membership of the assembly, provided they are eighteen (18) years of age or over, that they regularly attend and take part in the services, that they are living consistent Christian lives, and are in agreement with our distinctive testimony.
- b. Inactive Membership. Enrolled members who shall without good cause absent themselves from services of the assembly for a period of three (3) consecutive months or more or who cease to contribute of their means to its support, or who may be out of harmony with its teachings, or who shall be under charges of misconduct, or who have fallen under condemnation through sinful or worldly practices, shall be considered as inactive members and shall lose their voting privileges until they are restored to the fellowship, their standing to be settled by the definite action of the assembly through the official board.
- c. Junior Membership. Membership shall be available for youth thirteen (13) years of age and older who give evidence of the new birth, having received Christ as personal Savior, and who meet the usual qualifications for membership established by this assembly. They shall have the privilege of being reclassified to active or legal voting membership at eighteen (18) years of age, pending approval of the Official Board. This is considered an honorary relationship to the church and does not carry the rights of voting membership (voting, holding office, access to the floor of a business meeting).

Section 4. Revision of the Membership Roster. The Pastor and Official Board shall be authorized to revise the membership role quarterly and to remove from the list of members all names of those who have become deceased, those who have withdrawn, those who are on probation, those who have transferred their membership, those who have been terminated, or those who have willfully absented themselves from regular services of the church for a period of three (3) consecutive months except for physical disability.

Section 5. Discipline. Any members of the church who shall willfully absent themselves from regular services for a period of three (3) consecutive months, or who shall be under charges, shall be temporarily suspended from active voting membership pending an investigation and final decision in their case.

Unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure from the Tenets of Faith held by this church shall be considered sufficient grounds upon which any person may be disqualified as a member (Matthew 18: 15-18; Romans 16: 17-18; 1 Corinthians 5: 11; Galatians 1: 8-9; Titus 3: 1-15).

Any person under charges or who may be otherwise subject to the official discipline of the assembly shall receive written notice of such charges, or pending disciplinary proceedings, and shall have an opportunity to answer the same before the Official Board at a meeting called for that purpose. Notice of such meeting shall be given to such person at least ten (10) days prior to the date of said meeting. Written notice of said meeting and the purpose thereof shall also be provided to all members of the Official Board. At such meeting such persons shall have the right to respond to the charges and, if desired, to call and examine witnesses and to present evidence on his or her behalf. Such person shall have the right to request that the Official Board reconsider its decision. Such persons shall furthermore have the right to appeal the Official Board's decision to the assembly at a special business meeting called for that purpose. In that event, the action of the Official Board must be sustained by a majority vote of the active membership present.

Section 6. Probation.

- a. Should a member of this assembly fall below the standard of membership in faith or in practice, or should his/her spirit be contentious and discordant to the well-being of church life, then at the discretion of the Pastor and the Official Board his/her membership may be placed on probation without voting privileges for a specified or an indefinite period of time.
- b. The disciplined member shall be notified, in writing, of the terms of his/her probation period within thirty (30) days of receipt of such notification, the disciplined member may file a written protest with the Official Board.
- c. The filing of a written protest shall entitle the disciplined member to a hearing before the Official Board, after which the Official Board shall render a final decision in the case.

Section 7. Restoration. When a member has been listed as inactive, the Official Board shall allow a reasonable time for reinstatement in the good graces of the congregation. If evidence is sufficient to satisfy the Official Board that restoration is desirable, the Official Board shall instruct the Secretary to restore said member to the active membership role and to notify said member of such action.

Section 8. Continuing Absence.

- a. The Official Board shall have the right to remove from active membership any members who shall willfully absent themselves from the regular services of the church for a period of three (3) consecutive months except for physical disability.
- b. If the inactive member shall again resume attendance, the member shall petition the Board to have his/her name returned to the active list and may participate in a vote only after having been active for a period of three (3) months.

Section 9. Termination.

- a. If a member shall fall below the standard of membership in faith and practice or should his/her spirit be contentious and discordant to the well-being of the church life, then at the discretion of the Pastor and the Official Board, his/her membership may be terminated and his/her name removed from the membership role. An individual membership shall not be terminated unless and until patient and persistent effort has been made to win such individual back to the standard of membership. Within thirty (30) days after receipt of such notifications, the terminated member may file a written protest with the Official Board. The filing of a written protest shall entitle the terminated member to a hearing before the Official Board, after which the Official Board shall render a final decision in the case (1 Corinthians 5: 1-11; Matthew 18: 15-18; Romans 16: 17-18).
- b. A member may terminate his/her membership by informing the Official Board, in writing, of his/her desire to do so. Such termination requires no action by the Official Board.

Section 10. Transfers.

- a. Any person having been a member of another Assemblies of God church who shall desire to be affiliated with this assembly shall file with the Official Board a letter of transfer from the former assembly. Such persons shall still be required to participate in the orientation and membership process offered by this assembly.
- b. A voting member in good standing who desires to transfer his/her membership to another congregation may apply to the Official Board for a Letter of Transfer. The Letter of Transfer shall be signed by the Pastor.

Section 11. Membership Process.

- a. Attend an orientation and membership class.
- b. Fill out a request for membership.
- c. Upon completion of the class and faithful attendance for at least two (2) months, the Pastor will present the names of applicants to the Official Board for approval at the next scheduled Board meeting.
- d. Membership to this assembly will be granted following the approval of the Pastor and the Official Board. (Voting privileges are awarded after being a member in

good standing for three (3) consecutive months after being received into membership.)

e. Church recognition.

Section 12. Pastoral Membership. The Pastor and his/her spouse shall be considered members of this church upon installation. This provision shall also apply to associate pastors and other ministers of the church staff. Qualified members of the pastoral families shall be encouraged to become members.

ARTICLE VII

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE, ABORTION, AND REPRODUCTIVE ISSUES

The Assemblies of God bases its understanding of the nature of human beings on the Bible, which reveals that God created the universe, the world, and all living things (Genesis 1:1,11,21,25). Humans are the highest form of God's creative activity, and He is intentional in both their creation and destiny. " 'Let us make man in our image'... So God created man in his own image,... male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26,27). "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7).¹

By making human beings in His own image, God set them above all other forms of life on earth. The term "image of God" signifies that, like their Creator, men and women are personal and spiritual beings, rational and relational. It implies that humans are intended for eternal fellowship with their Creator and requires both sexes for full expression. Though marred when the first human pair fell into sin (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12), the image of God is still intrinsic to human nature (Genesis 9:6), ensuring that men and women are capable of response to their Maker. Creation in the divine image is not only an expression of the incalculable value God places upon human life, it also signifies that God has sovereign power over life. He is both giver and sustainer of life; He alone has the power to determine its beginning and ending.²

The nobility of human beings is seen in the divine mandate: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:28). Superior to all other life forms, humans are to assume the role of responsible custodians of the earth.

Every human life, from conception through death, is therefore to be valued, respected, nurtured, and protected. Every human life is to be lived in obedience to God and His Word. The Bible describes a moral order to which all persons are

responsible. At the end of life, all persons will stand before God to give account for their actions. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Therefore, human beings are responsible to bring the light of God’s Word to decisions that bear on the sanctity of life. To this end, the Assemblies of God offers the following biblical perspectives:

THE BEGINNING OF LIFE

Contraception. The Assemblies of God, finding no clear scriptural mandate, does not take an official stand on the appropriateness of contraception within a heterosexual marriage for purposes of regulating the number of children, determining the time of their birth, or safeguarding the health of the mother. These are matters of personal conscience as godly spouses prayerfully covenant with God about the growth of their families. While there are important ethical issues in determining to have a family, the prevention of pregnancy is understood to be qualitatively different from the termination of pregnancy since the sperm has not fertilized the ovum and human life has not yet begun. The biological processes themselves teach us that in God’s creative design not every sperm or ovum is intended to survive and unite. It should be remembered, however, that some methods commonly regarded as contraception, such as the IUD and the morning-after pill, are actually agents that abort, rather than prevent, pregnancy.

The Bible teaches that in the institution of marriage, children are divinely ordered both to fulfill God’s divine purposes for the race and for the repopulation of the earth. The mandate to the first pair was, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). Throughout Scripture, children are regarded as God’s gift: “Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him” (Psalm 127:3). There are certain circumstances where couples may choose not to have children for very good reasons. However, the use of contraception merely to avoid the demands of child rearing ought to be prayerfully examined in terms of the purity of one’s motives and the personal implications of the divine mandate.

In Vitro Fertilization. From a study of the Scriptures, God’s plan for human conception is sexual union between a man and woman in a legal marriage covenant. Children of such a covenant ought to be the result of a joyous and loving sexual relationship in which the husband and wife are responsible for birthing and rearing godly offspring. However, infertile heterosexual couples who have pursued without success all viable treatments may be confronted with a decision to utilize in vitro fertilization.

There are numerous ethical issues to be evaluated in such a process, including the financial costs, the harvesting of sperm and ova, and the nurturing of multiple living human embryos, not all of which likely will be implanted in the uterus. The disposal

of unused embryos is an acute ethical issue since they represent the beginning of human life.

Further, there may also be serious danger to the life of the mother in the event that multiple babies survive to full term, which might call for the selective abortion of one or more of the babies.

Given these grave concerns, it is imperative that those who elect this procedure prayerfully seek godly and knowledgeable counsel and engage medical professionals with compatible ethical standards. We disapprove any procedure that results in the destruction of unimplanted embryos.

Reproductive Cloning. The Assemblies of God believes that reproductive cloning is immoral and a matter of grave concern. In the cloning process, the person is not conceived from the union of the father's sperm and the mother's ovum. The genetic material is drawn from only one person and manipulated in the laboratory, with some risk of contamination, before implantation in the surrogate. There are also grave physical risks for persons who may be cloned. Animal cloning has demonstrated the potential for birth defects and premature aging. Scientists have no way of knowing what type of horrors may be visited upon cloned individuals or upon humankind at large through such a process.

Abortion. The Assemblies of God views the practice of abortion as an evil that has been inflicted upon millions of innocent babies and that will threaten millions more in the years to come. Abortion is a morally unacceptable alternative for birth control, population control, sex selection, and elimination of the physically and mentally handicapped. Certain parts of the world are already experiencing serious population imbalances as a result of the systematic abortion of female babies. The advocacy and practice of so-called partial birth abortion of babies is particularly heinous.

Sexual responsibility. Contemporary demands for abortion often flow from the practice of sexual freedom without corresponding responsibility. The Scriptures speak definitively against premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse and declare such activity to be sinful (Exodus 22:16; Acts 15:20; 1 Corinthians 6:9,13,18; Galatians 5:19). To add abortion as an after-the-fact birth control device is to deepen and compound the sin with resultant guilt and emotional distress. The Assemblies of God affirms the biblical mandate for sexual purity and responsibility that, when obeyed, will obviate and eliminate situations in which abortion might otherwise be contemplated.

The personhood of the unborn. The Scriptures regularly treat the unborn child as a person under the care of God.

1. The Bible recognizes that a woman is with child even in the first stages of pregnancy. When the virgin Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus, an angel made this announcement to her: "You will conceive in your womb and

bear a son [huios]" (Luke 1:31, NASB). The angel then informed Mary that her cousin Elizabeth was pregnant: "Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child [huios, "son"] in her old age" (Luke 1:36). Scripture makes it clear that in the prenatal phase both Jesus and John the Baptist were recognized as males well before the time of delivery. Moreover, John before birth is recognized as a "baby" (brephos) (Luke 1:41,44). This translates a Greek word used for children both before and after birth (cf. Acts 7:19). The Bible always recognizes the prenatal phase of life as that of a child and not a mere appendage to the mother's body to be aborted at will.

Even when pregnancy in Bible times was due to an illicit relationship, the sanctity and value of that life was not questioned. The daughters of Lot willfully became pregnant by incestuous relationships (Genesis 19:36), and Bathsheba gave birth to Solomon though her marriage to King David came about through an adulterous relationship (2 Samuel 11:5). In none of these cases is the life of the unborn considered to be unworthy and requiring an abortion.

2. The Bible recognizes that God is active in the creative process of forming new life. Concerning Leah, the wife of Jacob, Scripture says, "When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb... Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son" (Genesis 29:31,32). When Job compared himself to his servants, he asked, "Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?" (Job 31:15).

That each person yet unborn has equal value and status before God is indicated in Job's declaration that God "shows no partiality to princes and does not favor the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands" (Job 34:19).

God spoke through Isaiah: " 'This is what the Lord says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant' " (Isaiah 44:2). And again, " 'This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who has made all things' " (v. 24).

David summed it up, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13–16).

3. The Bible recognizes that God has plans for the unborn child. Only He knows the potential of this new life. When God called Jeremiah to his prophetic

ministry, He indicated the ordination was prenatal when He said: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). When Zechariah the priest was ministering at the altar of incense, an angel announced that his wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to a son who should be called John. Then it was revealed that God had definite plans for this child. He was to be a forerunner of Jesus (Luke 1:11–17).

4. The Bible recognizes that God is sovereign in all things, including the quality of life of the unborn child. When people reject God, they may more easily cheapen human life and make it relative. Some are considered worthy to live; others are considered expendable. Who but God knows whether someone destroyed in the Holocaust might not have discovered a cure for cancer. Who but God knows what blessing millions of children killed before birth might have brought to improve the quality of life. When people set themselves up as God to determine if a life is worth living—whether before or after birth—they are usurping the sovereignty of the Creator. There are also things finite humans cannot understand. God’s ways are above human ways. While medical technology may now allow prenatal diagnoses of some medical conditions, it is critical to remember that God’s love is unconditional and above any consideration of physical or mental limitations. Thus, while it may be permissible to pursue prenatal testing so as to better provide for the needs of an unborn child, it is impermissible to use prenatal testing to determine whether or not an unborn child should be allowed to live.

The killing of innocent persons. God’s Word is very explicit concerning the taking of innocent human life. “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13) is not only one of the Ten Commandments, but also a moral imperative that recurs throughout Scripture (cf. Matthew 19:18; Romans 13:9).

God inspired Moses to include in the Scriptures a law that brings the sanctity of the lives of unborn children into focus. “If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (Exodus 21:22–24).

It should be noted that the value of the life of both the mother and the child is such that even if there is no critical and lasting harm to either, the responsible party must be fined. However, if either the mother or the premature child is seriously injured or dies, then the severe penalties of the law are to be applied, possibly in this case, those having to do with manslaughter (Exodus 21:13; Numbers 35:22–25). It is clear that the life of the unborn child is precious, and even a non-premeditated injury inflicted on the unborn is a serious crime.

God’s attitude toward the killing of innocents is clear. No one is guiltless who takes the life of another, with the possible scriptural exceptions of capital punishment

administered by a system of justice (Genesis 9:6; Numbers 35:12), unintended killing in self-defense (Exodus 22:2), or deaths occasioned by duly constituted police and war powers (Romans 13:4,5).

John Calvin expressed the horror of abortion in commenting on Exodus 21:22,23: "The fetus, though enclosed in the womb of his mother, is already a human being, and it is a monstrous crime to rob it of life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light."

Danger to the life of the mother. In the modern era, situations in which pregnancy seriously and imminently threatens the life of the mother are exceedingly rare. If, however, responsible diagnoses confirm that childbirth is likely to result in the death of the mother, historic Christian faith usually has favored the life of the mother above that of the unborn child. Unlike the unborn child, the mother is a mature person with established family and societal relationships and responsibilities.

However, vague threats to the mother's physical or emotional health must not become an excuse to place the child at risk. Any intervention required must have the intent of saving the mother's life, not the prior intent of causing death to the child. As in any emergency, in such times God's children ought to fervently and earnestly pray for divine intervention. In doing so, the persons involved must prayerfully evaluate the medical diagnoses with the assistance of humane physicians and godly leaders and make, responsibly and with a clear conscience, what will be a very painful decision.

The emotional and spiritual toll. The abortion industry rarely advises pregnant women of the potential impact of abortion on their spiritual and mental health. Desperate women who find themselves in an acutely embarrassing or inconvenient position because of an illicit affair or an unplanned pregnancy, and who are often coerced by selfish lovers and/or embarrassed families, are led to see abortion as a "quick fix." Nothing could be further from the truth. Women are usually unaware of the depression, guilt, and shame that may plague them for a lifetime. While God can and does forgive and heal the broken hearts of repentant sinners who come to Him for forgiveness, the actual deed can never be undone and probably will be remembered with pain and regret.

The woman's right to choose. In recent years, the argument is made that since the woman alone bears the physical consequences of pregnancy, she should always have the right to choose freely an abortion. The laws of many nations now guarantee that "right" within varying durations and circumstances of pregnancy. As this study has shown, however, there is no biblical basis for a pregnant woman to terminate her unborn child. The long historical tradition of orthodox Christianity prohibits abortion. The legality of abortion in modern cultures is rooted in concepts of individual rights, autonomy, and privacy pushed far beyond scriptural teaching.

We therefore expressly deny that this supposed legal “right” automatically confers upon the pregnant woman the moral right to abort her unborn child.

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

The Assemblies of God affirms and encourages reverent and responsible scientific research intended to enhance the health and well-being of persons created in the image of God. Christian faith is not to be interpreted in ways that needlessly hinder greater understanding of the human body and the discovery of cures for and prevention of dreaded diseases and defects. However, there are many temptations to pursue the life sciences for ignoble reasons. Therefore, all biomedical research should be monitored and regulated so as to ensure respect for the sanctity of human life and the essential dignity of human beings who are created in the image of God. All researchers are finally answerable to God.

Stem Cell Research. Stem cell research shows great promise for the cure of numerous diseases and should proceed under appropriate ethical guidelines regularly reviewed and revised. There are stem cells, such as adult stem cells, that are readily available for research and whose procurement does not compromise the sanctity of human life. However, the practice of cultivating stem cells from the tissue of aborted fetuses (embryonic stem cells) perpetuates the evil of abortion and should be prohibited. Likewise, the cultivation of stem cells from the unused embryos left with fertility clinics raises serious ethical concerns for human life. Great care must always be exercised in the cultivation of stem cells to ensure that the sanctity and dignity of human life are not compromised.

Genetic Intervention. The Assemblies of God is supportive of morally responsible genetic research and therapies. Genetic research conducted with reverence for life appears to have great potential for the health of human beings through the identification of and intervention in the genetic roots of hundreds of diseases. By the same token, used for proud and selfish ends, genetic screening and intervention also have the potential to bring great harm to the entire human race. In addition, the Assemblies of God believes legislation is necessary to prevent intrusive genetic screening and resultant discrimination as well as misguided experimentation and termination of life.

CHRISTIAN ACTION:

Whenever abortion and other immoral life-threatening practices present themselves, Christians have an obligation to address these evils in public forums and to seek legislative and judicial redress. Among the steps Christians should take are the following:

1. Christians should pray earnestly for God’s intervention and the wisdom and resolve to resist abortion and questionable biomedical research and experimentation.

2. Christians should provide biblical moral instruction in their homes and all possible public forums. The church, rooted in the eternal truths of God's Word, should seek to lift the standards of society by overcoming evil with good.
 3. Christians should actively support candidates who embrace the sanctity of life and should lobby on behalf of legislation to protect the unborn.
 4. Christians should work through legislative and governmental agencies to insure appropriate ethical review of all biomedical research and to impose constraints on that which is evil or misguided. While strongly and fervently opposing immoral laws, Christians should exert their influence in peaceable ways consistent with scriptural principles (1 Peter 2:11,12).
 5. Christians should counsel those with unwanted pregnancies about alternatives to abortion, such as adoption. They should generously support responsible Christian adoption agencies with their prayers, finances, and time as well as facilitate placement of unwanted babies in loving Christian homes.
 6. Christians should compassionately minister to those who suffer remorse and guilt from having had abortions, or participated in abortions and other life-destroying activity or research, reminding them of these words of Jesus: "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). Nonviolent Opposition Current laws virtually permit abortion-on-demand, at least in the early trimesters of pregnancy. The Assemblies of God strongly believes such laws are immoral and contravene the law of God. Every legal means should be employed to reverse the effects of these laws and dismantle the immoral industries they spawn. While opposing immoral laws that permit and protect the destruction of life, the Assemblies of God also denounces violent and lawless acts against both the purveyors and the participants in the abortion industry, occasionally carried out by people claiming to be Christians.
- Conclusion This paper cannot possibly address every single issue or dilemma that may arise. In rare and unusual circumstances where the Bible does not speak directly, affected individuals ought to prayerfully seek godly counsel and the guidance of the Spirit of God. All persons must finally give account to God for any actions that rob others of life, health, or dignity. With these eternal issues in view, the Assemblies of God intends to be both a witness to the truth of Christ and a healing and redemptive agency to assist, through its numerous ministries, those who may be caught in these dilemmas.

ARTICLE VIII

HOMOSEXUALITY, MARRIAGE, AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

Increasing political and religious advocacy for homosexual¹ practices, same-sex marriage, and alternate sexual identities has prompted us to clarify our position on

these critical issues. We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Since the Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that the Church correctly understands and articulates what it actually teaches on these matters which have now become so controversial and divisive.

A reaffirmation of biblical teachings has become all the more urgent because writers sympathetic to the LGBT (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender)² communities have advanced revisionist interpretations of relevant biblical texts that are based upon biased exegesis and mistranslation. In effect, they seek to set aside almost two thousand years of Christian biblical interpretation and ethical teachings. We believe these efforts are reflective of the conditions described in 2 Timothy 4:3, “For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.”³ (See also v. 4.)

It should be noted at the outset that there is absolutely no affirmation of homosexual activity, same-sex marriage, or changes in sexual identity found anywhere in Scripture. Male and female genders are carefully defined and unconfused. The consistent ideal for sexual experience in the Bible is chastity⁴ for those outside a monogamous heterosexual marriage and fidelity⁵ for those inside such a marriage. There is also abundant evidence that homosexual behavior, along with illicit heterosexual behavior, is immoral and comes under the judgment of God.

We believe, in light of biblical revelation, that the growing cultural acceptance of homosexual identity and behavior (male and female), same-sex marriage, and efforts to change one’s biological sexual identity are all symptomatic of a broader spiritual disorder that threatens the family, the government, and the church.

This paper is a brief exposition of salient biblical teachings on homosexuality and the application of those teachings to marriage and sexual identity.

I. HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR IS SIN

Historically, homosexuality often has been defined as an emotional (psychological) or organic (physiological) problem. In recent years, some have lobbied mental health organizations to have homosexuality removed from the list of classified diagnostic pathologies, and many have come to see it as nothing more than a morally neutral personal preference or a naturally occurring aspect of human biological diversity. In making moral judgments, we must remember scriptural warnings against depending on our own reasoning or even personal experience to discern truth (Proverbs 3:5–6).

A. HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR IS SIN BECAUSE IT IS DISOBEDIENT TO SCRIPTURAL TEACHINGS.

When God called Israel to be His people in a distinctive sense, He miraculously delivered them from Egyptian bondage. But God did more. He entered into a covenant relationship with them and provided the Law, predicated on love for God and neighbor, by which they could order their lives as a holy people. That law included specific prohibitions of homosexual practice, such as that of Leviticus 18:22: “Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.” Lest the previous injunction be misunderstood, Leviticus 20:13 provides a restatement, “If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable.” “Detestable,” used in both verses, is a strong word that indicates divine displeasure with sin.⁶

The Christian church has historically understood that although the ceremonial provisions of the Old Testament law were no longer in effect after the atoning death of Christ, the New Testament interpretation and restatement of its moral law continues in effect. On the subject of homosexuality, both the Old and New Testaments speak with one voice. The moral prohibitions against homosexual behavior in the Old Testament are pointedly repeated in the New Testament.

To those who witnessed on a daily basis the sexual license of imperial Rome, Paul depicted the results that followed in the lives of those who rejected God and “worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. . . . Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations⁷ for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations⁸ with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts⁹ with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error” (Romans 1:25–27). Paul is referring to both male homosexuality and lesbianism.

In Paul’s day, the city of Corinth was especially notorious for sexual immorality. It was not only a crossroads of commerce, but of all kinds of vice. Because the church was being established in this city, it was important that new Christians come to understand God’s moral order. The record is explicit. Paul wrote, “Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?” Then he continued, “Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral¹⁰ nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders . . . will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9–10 [NIV, 1984]). In this case, Paul is understood to identify male homosexuals in both active and passive homosexual behavioral roles.¹¹

Paul wrote, “Law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals”¹² (1 Timothy 1:9–10, NASB).¹³

An unbiased study of these passages makes it clear that Scripture consistently identifies homosexual behavior as sin. Not only do the Scriptures condemn more flagrant examples of homosexual violence and promiscuity, they also provide no

support for the popular modern idea that loving and committed homosexual relationships between two long-term partners, even if legally married, are morally acceptable. Homosexual activities of every kind are contrary to the moral commandments God has given us.

B. HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR IS SIN BECAUSE IT IS CONTRARY TO GOD'S CREATED ORDER FOR THE FAMILY AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS.

The first chapter of the Bible says, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). After God had created the male, He indicated it was not good for him to live alone (Genesis 2:18). So God created a companion for him (Genesis 2:18). It should be noted that the male's aloneness was not to be remedied by the creation of another male but by the creation of a female. God created two sexes, not just one, and each for the other.

When God brought the woman to Adam, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." Scripture then states, "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:23–24).

In creating humankind God established the order of sexuality by which the race was to develop. Psychologically, the relationship is sound. Physically, the relationship is natural. Sociologically, it establishes the foundation for the family. The biblical order for human sexual expression is that of an intimate physical relationship to be shared exclusively within a lifelong marriage covenant—a heterosexual and monogamous relationship.

When people choose to engage in homosexual behavior, they depart from the God-given nature of sexuality. Their unnatural sexual behavior is a sin against God, who established the order of sexuality (Romans 1:27). And the social unit they seek to establish is contrary to the divine instruction for the man to leave father and mother and be "united to his wife" (Genesis 2:24).

In Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees, He reiterated the order of sexuality that God established in the beginning: "Haven't you read... that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" (Matthew 19:4–5). He pointed out that the only alternative to heterosexual marriage is celibacy for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matthew 19:10–12).

C. HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR IS SIN THAT COMES UNDER DIVINE JUDGMENT.

The name of the ancient city of Sodom¹⁴ has become a synonym for homosexual behavior. While other evils existed in this community, sodomy was prominent. The

homosexuals of Sodom were so depraved that they threatened homosexual rape of Lot's guests. "Bring them ["the men who came to you"] out to us so that we can have sex¹⁵ with them," Lot was told (Genesis 19:5). The biblical record indicates that the mob became violent and tried to break down the door of Lot's house. Only divine intervention spared Lot and his household from their evil intentions, and God subsequently destroyed both Sodom and the neighboring city of Gomorrah (Genesis 19:4–11, 24–25).

God's punishment of these cities was of such severity that it is used as an illustration of divine judgment by both Peter (2 Peter 2:6) and Jude (7). Jude's commentary is particularly apt, "In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire."

The Book of Judges (19:1–30) records an incident in the ancient Benjamite city of Gibeah that has many similarities to the sin of Sodom. Certain "wicked men of the city" (19:22) sought to force a visiting Levite male into homosexual acts¹⁶ with them. Denied their insistent requests, the attackers finally settled for vicious sexual abuse and gang rape¹⁷ of the Levite's concubine that resulted in her death (19:25–30). The other tribes of Israel found the crime so repugnant that when the tribe of Benjamin refused to surrender the offenders, they eventually went to war—decimating the Benjamites (20:1–48).

These are particularly notorious examples of homosexual expression that undoubtedly most homosexual persons today would repudiate. It should be understood that while expressing abhorrence at such rapacious perversion, the biblical writers do not imply that heterosexuals are not capable of sexual atrocities nor that most homosexuals are as depraved as the residents of those ancient cities. Nor should modern Christians draw those implications. It is important to note, however, that wherever homosexuality occurs in the biblical record it is an occasion of scandal and judgment. Homosexuality is never viewed in a positive light.

The biblical writers make it clear that practicing homosexuals, along with sexually immoral heterosexuals and all other unrepentant sinners, will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). Paul also described homosexual conduct as one evidence of God's judgment for humankind's corporate rebellion against Him (Romans 1:26–27). Jesus himself was explicit that at the end of the age "the Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:40–42).

II. HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR IS SIN FOR WHICH RECONCILIATION IS POSSIBLE

While Scripture makes it clear homosexual behavior is sin and comes under the judgment of God, it also indicates that those who are guilty of homosexual behavior or any other sin can be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:17–21).

In the church at Corinth were former homosexuals who had been delivered from the power of sin by the grace of God. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul listed homosexuals along with immoral heterosexuals as those who cannot inherit the kingdom of God. His grammar implies continuing sexually immoral activity until their conversion.

Verse 11 follows with a powerful contrast, “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” They had been homosexuals in orientation and behavior, but now the power of God’s Spirit had radically transformed their lives, and the lives of their fellow heterosexual sinners.

Scripture makes clear that the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ is unlimited for those who accept it. There is no sin, sexual or otherwise, that cannot be cleansed. John the Baptist announced, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

The apostle Paul wrote, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The apostle John wrote, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, people, regardless of the nature of their sin, can be made new creations in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). God’s plan of salvation is the same for all. The practicing homosexual who wants to be delivered from the penalty and power of sin must come to God in the same way all heterosexual sinners must come to God, in the same way all who are now His children have come for deliverance from their sins.

The act of turning to God for salvation includes both repentance and faith. Jesus is both Savior and Lord. He is the one who forgives our sin as we believe in Him and repent. Repentance represents a change of mind in which there is a turning from sin in both attitude and behavior.

Jesus is also the One whose lordship we affirm in holy living. “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God” (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5).

Like the Philippian jailer who asked what he had to do to be saved, those desiring salvation must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30–31)—believe that He

can save from the power as well as the penalty of sin. Obedient faith, like repentance, is a condition of salvation.

III. RESULTANT AFFIRMATIONS

In view of the clear biblical teachings on homosexuality and the application of these teachings to contemporary sexual practices, the Assemblies of God Fellowship makes the following affirmations:

A. WITH REGARD TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

The Assemblies of God defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. (Genesis 1:27–28; 2:18–24; Matthew 19:4–9; Mark 10:5–9; Ephesians 5:31–33).

B. WITH REGARD TO SEXUAL IMMORALITY

The Assemblies of God believes that sexual acts outside of marriage are prohibited as sinful. Sexual acts outside of marriage include but are not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, bestiality, pornography, prostitution, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, polyamory, or same-sex sexual acts. (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7–23; 20:10–21; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27–28; 15:19; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–13; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17–19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4).

C. WITH REGARD TO SEXUAL IDENTITY

The Assemblies of God believes that God created humankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. The Fellowship supports the dignity of individual persons affirming their biological sex and discouraging any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex—including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or nonbinary “genderqueer” acts or conduct. (Genesis 1:26–28; Romans 1:26–32; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

D. WITH REGARD TO SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The Assemblies of God affirms the sexual complementarity of man and woman and teaches that any and all same-sex sexual attractions are to be resisted. Consequently, believers are to refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered. (Genesis 1:27; 2:24; Matthew 19:4–6; Mark 10:5–9; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

IV. A WORD TO THE CHURCH

The Assemblies of God believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, baptism, and faith in Jesus Christ. Our Fellowship welcomes and treats with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts and are committed to resisting sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and transforming their behavior in the light of biblical teachings. (Matthew 11:28–30; Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 2:1–10; Hebrews 2:17–18; 4:14–16)

Believers who struggle with homosexual temptations and sexual identity confusion must be encouraged and strengthened by fellow Christians (Galatians 6:1–2). Likewise, they should be taught that while temptation to sinful behaviors is universal, temptation itself is not sin. Temptation can be resisted and overcome (1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 12:1–6).

The moral imperatives of Scripture are incumbent upon all persons. However, believers should not be surprised that unbelievers do not honor God and do not recognize the Bible as a rightful claim on their lives and conduct (1 Corinthians 1:18). Peter writes clearly of the conflict and contrast between believer and unbeliever in his first letter:

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:1–5).

As Christians we must both exhort believers to live in moral purity and express in word and deed Christ's love for the lost. Aware of the claims of God on every aspect of our lives, we must emphasize that we are called to holiness. To unbelievers we must reach out with compassion and humility. We must hold no malice toward, or fear of, homosexuals and those struggling with sexual identity—such attitudes are not of Christ. At the same time we must not condone sexual behavior, homosexual or heterosexual, that God has defined as sinful.

Christians should also do all they can to assist the person who has struggled with homosexual behaviors and desires to change and find deliverance. Change is not always easy but it is possible. It may require the help of others in the body of Christ, such as counselors and pastors, as well as a supportive church fellowship. Christian organizations are also available to help those who seek to change their lifestyles.

We desire all to be reconciled to God—to experience the peace and joy that stems from the forgiveness of sin through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God

does not want any to perish in their sins; He invites all to accept His offer of eternal life (John 3:16). As part of His church, we issue that invitation to life in Christ to everyone.

ARTICLE IX

MEETINGS

Section 1. Quorum.

- a. At least two-thirds (2/3) of the active members of the assembly shall constitute a quorum, without which no regular or special business meeting shall conduct business.
- b. A majority of the members present for any called meeting of the Official Board shall constitute a quorum providing all members have been notified to be present. In the event the assembly is without a Pastor, the Official Board shall empower the Chairperson to transact business for the assembly.

Section 2. Order of Business. The regular order of business for the annual business meeting of this assembly shall be:

- a. Roster report
- b. Call to order
- c. Devotional
- d. Reading of previous minutes
- e. Report of the Treasurer
- f. Unfinished business
- g. Elections
- h. Committee reports
- i. New business
- j. Adjournment

ARTICLE X

FINANCES

Section 1. Pastor's Remuneration.

- a. The Pastor shall be remunerated regularly with adequate financial support for his/her services as determined by the Official Board.
- b. The Pastor shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred while in attendance at General Council, District Council, and local assembly functions according to the ability of the assembly.

Section 2. Official Disbursements.

- a. The disbursements of all funds shall be under the supervision of the Official Board.
- b. Detailed listings of all funds shall be made under the supervision of the Official Board.
- c. All disbursements from the church funds are to be made by check with execution of dual signatures at the time of disbursement excepting one pre-signed check to be available for emergencies.
- d. The annual budget for church operations is to be presented and approved at the annual business meeting.

ARTICLE XI

CHURCH FACILITY USE

Facility Purpose Statement

The Church's facilities were provided by God's benevolence and the sacrificial generosity of its members. All church property is consecrated and set apart to worship God (Colossians 3: 17), and therefore is to be used exclusively to glorify God and edify the body of Christ. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, the church makes its facilities available to approved members and non members on a case-by-case basis as a witness to its faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

The Church's facilities may not be used for activities that contradict, or are inconsistent with, the Church's beliefs, as summarized in the Church's Statement of Faith. This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two reasons. First, the Church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or promote beliefs that are contrary to its faith (2 Corinthians 6: 14; 1 Thessalonians 5: 22). Second, the Church must present a consistent public witness to the community through its stewardship of its property. Allowing facilities to be used in a way that contradicts the Church's Statement of Faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the Church strives to promote and could cause confusion and scandal to Church members and the community. Therefore, only events that are consistent with the Church's religious beliefs, as determined by [Pastor/elders/official designee] shall be permitted.

Approved Users

The pastor [Pastor/elders/official designee] must approve all Church facility use request. Priority shall be given to Church members and Church-sponsored groups or activities.

In the Church's sole discretion, Church facilities may be made available to members and non-members or outside groups (the "User") meeting the following qualifications:

1. The User must affirm that the planned facility use does not violate the Church's faith and practice.
2. The User must submit a signed "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form.
3. The User must agree to abide by the Church's rules of conduct for facility use, as stated below and as described in any additional instructions by Church staff.
4. The User must take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used.

Event Requests and Scheduling

Facility use requests shall be made to [Pastor/elders/official designee] by submitting the “Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement” form. The event will be reserved and placed on the Church calendar only when the [Pastor/elders/official designee] approves the use.

Fees

Use of church facilities is subject to a security deposit and a non refundable maintenance fee (which may be waived in the [Pastor’s/elder’s/official designee’s] sole discretion). Church members’ pay by donation and are exempt from a maintenance fee because maintenance at the facilities are derived from member tithes and offerings. Amount of fees to non-members are to be determined by [Pastor/elders/official designee] on a case-by-case basis considering what facilities are used and number of people at event. All fees charged are for the express purpose of recovering costs associated with ministering to users by making our church facility available and not for the intent of making a profit.

Facility Use Guidelines

1. Users may only enter and use those areas of the facilities that have been reserved.
2. Food and beverages should be approved for location and content by the [Pastor/elders/official designee].
3. Alcohol: no alcohol may be served or consumed on Church property.
4. Smoking is prohibited in any indoor Church facility.
5. Sex-specific changing areas, restrooms, and showers are to be used by members of the designated biological sex only.
6. Church equipment must be returned to original placement, unless arranged otherwise prior to the event.
7. Thermostats will not be changed from their current position.
8. All lights must be turned off and doors locked upon departure.
9. Abusive or foul language, violent behavior, and drug or alcohol use are strictly prohibited on Church premises. Any person exhibiting such behavior will be required to leave the premises.

Insurance

For all non-Church-sponsored events, the User must obtain liability insurance coverage in the amount of \$_____., naming the Church as an additional insured. The User must also sign a “Facility Use and Indemnity and Hold Harmless” agreement.

Church Facility Reservations Request and Agreement

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Website:

Please state whether you are a: Church member Non-member

Church Sponsored Ministry Non-member group or organization

For non-member groups, please state the organization's purpose and mission.

Requested date: _____ Requested time: _____

Describe the proposed event/activity:

Estimated number of attendees:

Rooms needed (check all that apply): Sanctuary Chapel Kitchen

Fellowship Hall Classroom (#____) Parking Lot

Equipment, room set-up, or A/V needs:

Wedding Addendum:

The Church believes marriage to be a religious institution. All weddings held on Church property must conform to the Church's marriage and wedding policy which is available upon request.

If you are requesting use of the Church's facilities for a wedding and/or wedding reception, please list the names and contact information of the bride groom and efficient:

Bride: _____

Groom: _____

Please list the name, contact information, and religious affiliation of the person officiating the wedding:

Officiant: _____

Please describe the marriage preparation counseling or training undertaken by the bride and groom:

I, the User, affirmed that:

1. I understand that the Church does not allow its facilities to be used in a way that materially conflicts with its faith.
2. To the best of my knowledge, the purpose for which I am requesting use of the Church's facilities will not contradict the Church's faith, and I commit to promptly disclose any potential conflict of which I am aware or become aware of to the Church staff.
3. I understand that the church does not allow its facilities to be generally available to the public, and that my use of these facilities is subject to [Pastor/elders/official designee] approval, which is conditioned in part on my agreement to the requirements in the Church facility use policy, a copy of which I have read and understood.
4. I understand that upon approval of my facilities use request, I will need to provide a security deposit in the amount of \$_____, a certificate of insurance for at least \$_____ of coverage, and any other fees required by the church.
5. I understand that I will be responsible for any damages to the church facilities resulting from this proposed use of facilities.
6. I understand that the Church believes disputes are to be worked out between parties pursuant to Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 6, without recourse to the courts. Accordingly, I agree to attempt resolution of any disputes through Christian mediation.

Name: _____ Date: _____

ARTICLE XII

PROPERTY

All rights of the church shall be set forth in the Constitution, Article 2, Prerogatives, Section 2, Ownership of Property and Constitution, Article XI, Property, Sections 1-3.

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the members of the assembly who are present at any regular or special business meeting. The proposed Amendment shall be read by the Pastor or the Secretary on two (2) Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.

ARTICLE XIV

INDEMNIFICATION

Each officer or former officer of this corporation and his or her legal representative shall be indemnified by this corporation against liabilities, expenses, counsel fees and costs in connection with or arising out of any action, suit, proceeding or claim in which he or she is made a party by reason of an event that occurs at a time when he or she is serving as an officer of the corporation.

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“I give and bequeath to the Assembly of God in Newton, Kansas, an organized church under the laws of the state of Kansas, the sum of _____ dollars, to be used for the work of the Lord and the spreading of the gospel by the said organization.”