

# District Constitution

## PREAMBLE

In order to establish our work on a more efficient basis, to promote greater cooperation, and to secure closer fellowship, we here and now organize ourselves into the South Texas District of the United Pentecostal Church.

## PURPOSE

Our purpose shall be to use greater effort toward evangelizing the underdeveloped territory, and to care for all needy fields in a more efficient manner.

## ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

The South Texas District of the United Pentecostal Church International, as of November 21, 2002, is incorporated and listed with the State of Texas as a non-profit organization.

## ARTICLES OF FAITH

The South Texas District of the United Pentecostal Church International wholeheartedly endorses the Articles of Faith of the United Pentecostal Church International as stated in the current Manual and also endorses all the qualifications of officers stated in the Manual. All elected and appointed officers of the South Texas District must conform to the Fundamental Doctrine of the United Pentecostal Church International.

## ARTICLE I

### DISTRICT OFFICERS AND VOTING CONSTITUENCY

#### **Section 1.** *Names of Officers*

The officers of the district shall be as follows: a district superintendent, the district presbyters, one being elected from each section, and a district secretary- treasurer (may be one or two persons).

#### **Section 2.** *District Board*

The District Board shall consist of district superintendent, district secretary, and the district presbyters.

#### **Section 3.** *Qualifications*

The qualifications for members of the District Board are as follows: Must be a male at least thirty years of age, must have been a minister in good standing with the organization for at least two years, must have been ordained at least one year, must have proven loyal to the organization by cooperation in the upbuilding of the work, and must have been a cooperating member of the district for at least

one year. The only exception to this is that the district superintendent must have been a minister in good standing with the organization for at least five years. All must conform to the Fundamental Doctrine.

**Section 4.** *Voting Constituency*

Those who shall be entitled to vote for the election of officers, or upon any proposal, resolution, or any other business that properly comes before the District Conference shall be accredited ministers of the South Texas District in attendance and in good standing. Those who shall be entitled to vote for the election of officers, or upon any proposal, resolution, or any other business that properly comes before the Sectional Conference shall be accredited ministers of the South Texas District in attendance and in good standing in the following categories:

1. Pastors

2. Assistant pastors and assistants to the pastor

No assembly shall be permitted more than one voting assistant pastor or assistant to the pastor who derives his livelihood from sources other than the ministry. Assistant pastors or assistants to the pastor who derive their livelihood from sources other than the ministry must present a letter to the Roster Committee from the church where he or she has been an assistant pastor or assistant to the pastor for a minimum of six months. The letter must be signed by the pastor or church secretary and will be in effect as long as he or she remains in the position at the same church. Said letter shall remain on file in the district office.

3. Evangelists

An evangelist must be on the field and regularly engaged in preaching revivals, deriving his livelihood from the ministry.

4. All elected or appointed officials who are listed in the Manual

5. Honorary ministers

6. Retired ministers

A retired minister is a minister who, due to advanced age or physical impairment, has retired from the active ministry.

7. Full-time administrators and instructors in all religious projects endorsed by the United Pentecostal Church International

8. Full-time administrators and instructors in Christian schools owned and operated by our churches. All Christian school administrators and instructors must present a letter to the Roster Committee from their local church signed by the pastor or church secretary, stating their active involvement in ministerial service. This letter will be in effect as long as he or she remains in this position at the same church. Said letter shall remain on file in the district office.

9. Accredited ministers who are in between appointments shall be entitled to vote if the time of inactivity has not exceeded ninety days.

**Section 5. Representation**

1. One district presbyter shall be elected from each section of the district.

**Section 6. Objections to Nominees**

1. If there is any objection to any nominee, a request may be made to the chairman that the same be referred to a Qualifying Committee. No details of the objection or questions shall be discussed from the floor. The Qualifying Committee may determine a nominee's qualifications only according to that specified in the UPCI and/or South Texas District Manual under the qualifications given for the office under consideration.
2. The Qualifying Committee chairman shall be appointed by the officer presiding at the time of the objection to the nominee. The committee shall consist of at least three members, but not more than five, including the chairman of the committee. The conference chairman shall, prior to the conference, prepare a list of potential members for the Qualifying Committee. This list shall be composed from the current voting membership. The presiding officer shall select from this list in the event this committee is needed.

**Section 7. Method of Election**

1. The method of election of the district superintendent and district secretary-treasurer by the District Conference shall be the same as that used by the General Conference in the election of officers. This does not preclude the sectional conferences suggesting names for these offices.
2. The method of election of the district presbyters shall be as follows: each section within the district shall elect its district presbyter from within the section at a sectional conference preceding the annual District Conference, with said officers to take office at the annual District Conference.
3. The election of district officers shall be conducted by the general superintendent or his representative.

**Section 8. Term of Office**

1. All officers elected by the District Conference or sectional conference shall remain in office for a term of two years, for a maximum of eight consecutive years. After any district or sectional official has served four consecutive terms in an elected office, he would be required to be elected by a two-thirds vote to a fifth term and all consecutive terms. In the event the incumbent does not receive a two-thirds vote on the nominating ballot, a new nominating ballot shall be called for and the incumbent's name shall be deleted.
2. All district offices shall be part-time and all district officers shall operate out of their church offices in lieu of a district office.
3. In the event that a new superintendent or secretary-treasurer is elected, the out-going official shall continue in office for a period of thirty days following the date of said election.

4. The district superintendent and the district secretary- treasurer shall be elected on alternating years. The North American Missions secretary, Children’s Ministry director, Global Missions director, Ladies Ministry director, Spanish Ministry director, and Youth director shall be elected the same year as the district superintendent. The North American Missions director, Children’s Ministry secretary, Ladies Ministry secretary, Spanish Ministry secretary, and Youth secretary shall be elected the same year as the district secretary-treasurer.

**Section 9. *Death, Resignation, and Removal***

1. Any district officer taking a pastorate or establishing a residence outside of the district between conferences must resign his office.
2. If vacancies happen by death, resignation, removal, or establishment of a residence outside of the district, the District Board may fill such vacancies, with the exception of the office of district superintendent, only until the next District Conference. If there remains a year unexpired in the term of said office, the District Conference shall elect a replacement to serve for that year. In the event a vacancy occurs in the office of district superintendent, the general superintendent shall be authorized to preside over district business until the election of a district superintendent at a special district conference called by the general superintendent, or an assistant general superintendent authorized by the general superintendent, for the purpose of conducting an election to fill this office. Said election shall be held within 60 days after the vacancy occurs.

**ARTICLE II**

**RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS, AND RULES APPERTAINING THERETO**

**Section 1. *District Superintendent (General Presbyter)***

1. He shall be a member of, and shall attend all regular and specially called meetings of, the Board of General Presbyters.
2. In the event he is unable to attend a regular or specially called meeting of the Board of General Presbyters, the District Board, should it be in session, shall select one of its members to act as its representative. Should the District Board not be in session, the district superintendent of said district is authorized to appoint a representative from the District Board.
3. Inasmuch as the office of district superintendent is part-time, the district shall provide to him part-time administrative or secretarial assistance.
4. The duties of the district superintendent shall be:
  - a. To be overseer of the district work in cooperation with the District Board.
  - b. To maintain a spirit of harmony and cooperation between the district and general work, thereby working in harmony and unity with all other districts.
  - c. To encourage the raising of missionary money.
  - d. To assist, when called upon by the pastor or local church board, in dealing with any difficulties that may arise within local assemblies.
  - e. To assist in securing pastors for assemblies in the district.
  - f. To investigate all applicants of the district for credentials or license before signing the applications.
  - g. To sign each credential, license, fellowship card, and church membership certificate issued to

- applicants in the district.
- h. To preside as chairman of District Conferences.
  - i. To encourage a series of Bible and missionary conferences in the various assemblies throughout the district.
  - j. Shall exercise the right to call special conferences when necessary, but when so doing shall give the ministers of the district a minimum of 30 days advance notice in writing of said meeting.
5. In the furtherance of the work in the district, he shall have the right to appeal to any minister who is a member of the district and any evangelist or missionary currently working in the district.
  6. He must be consulted in regard to the organization of new churches within the district.
  7. He shall be empowered to ordain ministers in any district meeting or General Conference.
  8. The district superintendent shall inform the ministers of the district by mail within 30 days of any District Board meeting of all actions regarding changes of policies and procedures relative to the District Constitution and Bylaws, ministerial obligations, and departmental activities.

**Section 2.** *District Presbyters*

1. The district presbyter shall work under the direction of and in cooperation with the district superintendent in carrying out district work.
2. The district presbyter shall oversee the work of the section in which he is elected under the supervision of the district superintendent.
  - a. He shall preside as chairman of all sectional business meetings.
  - b. He shall endeavor to maintain a spirit of harmony and cooperation in the section with all ministers, churches, departments of the district, and general work.
  - c. He shall be in charge of all sectional fellowship meetings or appoint a chairman to serve in said capacity.
  - d. He shall notify the district superintendent of all resignations or impending resignations of pastors in the section, and consult with him concerning any complaints that have been brought to his attention regarding any minister in the section, or any difficulty arising between pastors or churches.
  - e. He shall assist the district superintendent in securing pastors for assemblies in his section.
  - f. As a member of the District Board, he shall examine all applications for license or credentials in his section in advance of their appearance before the District Board.
  - g. He shall supply the district superintendent with whatever assistance or information he may have which would assist him in carrying out the district work.
  - h. In the furtherance of the work in his section, he shall have the right to appeal to any minister who is a member of his section and any evangelist or missionary currently working in his section.

**Section 3.** *District Secretary-Treasurer*

1. Inasmuch as the office of district secretary-treasurer is part-time, the district shall provide to him part-time administrative or secretarial assistance.
2. The duties of the district secretary-treasurer shall be:

- a. To take minutes of District Conferences and District Board meetings.
- b. To preserve records of business proceedings and all other papers belonging to the district.
- c. To receive and care for all district funds and the funds of all departments of the district; to make all district and department disbursements; to keep an accurate account of all such transactions; to hold the books open for inspection by officers or members of the district; and to make a report at each District Conference.
- d. He shall mail to each minister of the district a printed report of the consolidated balance sheet and the summary of the district departmental receipts and disbursements at least two weeks prior to the District Conference.
- e. No money should be paid out without the consent of the District Board.
- f. He shall print and distribute to all ministers an updated copy of the District Constitution and Manual annually within 60 days after changes have been made.

**Section 4.** *District Board*

The duties of the District Board shall be:

1. To pass upon all applications for credentials, licenses, or church membership certificates issued in the district.
2. To own as trustees, real estate and personal property which may be acquired by purchase, devise or bequest by the district and for the benefit of the district; to use and deal with such real estate and personal property in such manner as may be consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Pentecostal Church International; to sell, convey, mortgage, pledge, and otherwise encumber such real estate and personal property for the benefit of the district; and to authorize, by proper resolution, its district superintendent and district secretary-treasurer to execute and deliver on behalf of the District Board, as trustee, any such deeds of conveyance, notes, mortgages, deeds of trust, or pledges.
3. To deal with all other matters pertaining to the district that do not infringe upon the power and privileges of the general body.
4. To take action with regard to false doctrine in the district, so long as the action taken does not conflict with the bylaws of the general body.
5. To handle any grievance or complaint against a minister according to Article VII, Sections 7, 8, and 9, of the General Constitution, and according to the Judicial Procedure.

**Section 5.** *Sectional Secretary-Treasurer*

The sectional secretary-treasurer must be a male at least thirty years of age, a minister in good standing with the organization for at least two years, general licensed or ordained at least one year, loyal to the organization and a cooperating member of the section at least one year.

**Section 6.** *Multiple Positions/Offices*

Only one appointed or elected position shall be held per minister on the district and sectional level. If a minister holding a position and/or office is elected or appointed to another position and/or office, he will be allowed to hold both positions and/or offices only until the next business conference. This

does not inhibit any minister from serving on committees or a Bible college board.

**Section 7. *Safeguard of Funds***

1. Centralization of funds
  - a. The district funds and the funds of every department shall be deposited with and held by the district treasurer.
  - b. The district treasurer shall release said funds after proper authorization and a written request signed by the respective departmental treasurer.
2. Standardization of books
  - a. The financial records of all departments shall be standardized by a uniform system of bookkeeping approved by the District Board.
  - b. The duties of the Auditing Committee shall be:
    - 1) To secure and audit annually the financial records of every department of the district and section that receives and disburses funds and report its findings to the District Board prior to the annual district or sectional conference.
    - 2) To make recommendations to the District Board regarding any improvement of the district bookkeeping system.

**ARTICLE III**

**FINANCE**

**Section 1. *Source of Income***

The district treasury shall include all funds received from ministerial tithes and contributions. These funds shall be deposited with and held by the district secretary-treasurer.

**Section 2. *Distribution of Funds***

The district secretary-treasurer shall disburse funds according to and as authorized by the District Board.

**Section 3. *Audit***

A licensed public accountant shall be secured by the district secretary-treasurer, and the district, departmental, and sectional books shall be audited annually using the year January 1 through December 31. The auditor's report shall be read to the District Conference and handed out with annual reports, subject to the acceptance of the District Conference.

**Section 4. *Sectional and Department Accounts***

1. The funds of every department of the South Texas District shall be deposited and held by the district treasurer with the possible exception of a Bible college operation.
2. The district treasurer shall release said funds after proper authorization and a written request signed by the respective departmental treasurer.

3. The district treasurer shall supply a monthly summary of all financial transactions to the district board, departmental directors and treasurers, and the auditor.
4. Sectional secretaries will handle all sectional money within their section as authorized by the sectional conference. The sectional secretaries shall set up their books using the same general ledgers and accounts as is issued by the district secretary-treasurer. A monthly summary shall be sent to the district secretary-treasurer from the sectional secretary each month along with bank statements and canceled checks for the auditor.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **DISTRICT CONFERENCE**

#### **Section 1.** *Purpose*

The District Conference shall be the governing body of the district, amenable to the General Conference.

#### **Section 2.** *Meeting and Place*

A regular session of our district shall be held annually, the same to be called a District Conference. The date and place shall be determined by the District Board.

#### **Section 3.** *Resolutions*

All resolutions to be presented to the District Conference and all amendments to this constitution shall first be presented to the district office in writing 60 days in advance of the District Conference, for consideration by the Resolutions Committee. Such committee shall pass upon such resolutions or amendments prior to the submission thereof to the District Conference. The resolutions must have the author's signature before being considered by the Resolutions Committee. At least 30 days in advance of the District Conference, the district secretary shall mail to all ministers a copy of the resolutions approved by the Resolutions Committee. The District Board shall have the right to submit resolutions to the District Conference without following this procedure. If the Resolutions Committee shall fail to act upon such resolution or amendment or shall refuse or fail to report its action thereon to the District Conference, or if the Resolutions Committee shall have failed to report favorably on any such resolution or amendment, then by a vote of two-thirds of those in attendance at the District Conference entitled to vote thereat may force such resolution or amendment to a vote of the District Conference.

#### **Section 4.** *Rules of Order*

All business in the District Conference shall be conducted according to and in harmony with Robert's Rules of Order Revised.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **MINISTERS**

#### **Section 1. *Qualifications***

All ministers must qualify according to the qualifications and requirements specified in the United Pentecostal Church International Manual, under Article VII concerning Ministry.

#### **Section 2. *Application for License***

1. All applicants shall complete an application form of the United Pentecostal Church International and file same with the district secretary-treasurer along with the designated deposit for annual budget fee. The application should be filed at least sixty days before the District Board meeting.
2. All applicants shall be required to complete a stewardship form provided by the district, which establishes the fact of faithfulness of tithing for a period of at least one year. This form must be signed by applicant's pastor. Any exceptions to this procedure shall be at the discretion of the District Board.

#### **Section 3. *Obligations and Rules***

1. All ministers must adhere to the obligations and rules specified in the United Pentecostal Church International Manual.
2. Ministerial Membership Dues
  - a. All ministers shall contribute ministerial dues of \$20.00 per month to the district treasury or 100 percent of the tithes on ministerial income, whichever is greater.
  - b. It is understood that ministerial income includes salary, housing allowance, and any other allowance that is not the reimbursement of actual business expenses.
  - c. Ministers under North American Missions status and ministers with exempt status are not required to pay district dues.
  - d. Full-time evangelists shall be permitted to register with the District Board, and upon their approval shall contribute 100 percent tithes into the district treasury. The district secretary-treasurer shall be authorized by the District Board to refund 50 percent of the evangelist's tithes approximately two to four weeks prior to the General Conference for the purpose of defraying actual conference expenses, provided the evangelist notifies in writing the district secretary of his or her intention to attend the conference.
3. Any minister desiring to return to our fellowship having a good report and whose life is clean and consistent with the bylaws of the United Pentecostal Church International, shall be considered for reinstatement without fear of reprisal stemming from the past. Ministers desiring to be reinstated must appear before the District Board for such consideration.
4. No minister, or church congregation pastored by one of our ministers, shall relocate or move an existing church in a city or neighborhood where there is another United Pentecostal Church, without written permission from the District Board. All applications for permission to relocate or move an existing church congregation in a city or neighborhood where there is another United Pentecostal Church must be submitted in writing 30 days prior to the District Board meeting. The

district secretary shall notify the sectional presbyter of the application at least 20 days prior to the District Board meeting. The presbyter shall notify the neighboring pastors, if applicable, at least 10 days before the District Board meeting and invite them to meet with him first, then with the district board, to share input if so desired, and their views shall be considered before a final decision is made.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

#### **Section 1.**

The South Texas District recommends that all churches within our district adopt the Local Church Government as specified in the United Pentecostal Church International Manual.

#### **Section 2.**

All pastors shall be selected in accordance with the United Pentecostal Church International Manual, as detailed in the sections concerning pastor under Article III of the Local Church Government.

#### **Section 3.**

The South Texas District encourages each church to fully cooperate with the promotional fund-raising drives and efforts of all the departments of the district. (See Article VIII.)

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended at any South Texas District Conference by a majority of the votes cast thereon in favor of any such amendment and each amendment shall be voted upon separately. Only those amendments shall be considered at the District Conference which have first passed the Resolutions Committee or the District Board as provided in Article IV, Section 3 of the South Texas District Constitution.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **DEPARTMENTS**

For the purpose of better organization and efficiency, the South Texas District establishes the following departments to conduct the ministries of the district:

1. Children's Ministry
2. Global Missions
3. North American Missions
4. Ladies Ministry
5. Men's Ministry
6. Spanish Ministry
7. Youth Ministry