

**NIAGARA MOHAWK DISTRICT
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF
CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES**

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

As amended to September, 2006

**NIAGARA MOHAWK DISTRICT OF THE
INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES**

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Preamble:

Whereas, it is the manifest purpose of God to call unto Himself a people, who being saved by His grace, shall constitute the Church of Jesus Christ, and,

Whereas, it is the solemn prerogative of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ to assemble together for the purpose of worship and Christian fellowship, and,

Whereas, we, as assembly of credential holders and churches of like precious faith, have concurred to join with one another in order to effectuate our common purposes in the gospel,

Therefore, be is resolved, that we formally recognize ourselves to be a representative fellowship of born-again (John 3:3) and Spirit-filled (Acts 2:4) believers constituting the various churches of like precious faith within the boundaries of the Niagara Mohawk District; said fellowship to be designated as the Niagara Mohawk District of the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies, whereof the primary purpose shall be to foster and maintain spiritual unity within the Body of Christ and to concordantly work for the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all peoples. We hereby agree to be governed by the following Constitution and Bylaws.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name and title by which this fellowship shall be known is: Niagara Mohawk District of the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies.

ARTICLE II – OFFICES

The principal office of the Corporation shall be in New York State, United States of America. The Corporation may also have offices at such other places within or without this state as the Board of Presbyters may require, but, within the boundaries set by the Executive Board of the General Council of the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies, located in Transfer, Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE III – BOUNDARIES

This District shall include all of New York State excluding the Eastern District boundary.

ARTICLE IV – AFFILIATION

This District shall be affiliated with the General Council of the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies, with headquarters at 1294 Rutledge Road, Transfer, Pa. 16154-9005.

ARTICLE V – PURPOSES

The purposes for which this Corporation has been organized are as follows:

- A. To promote the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ with a deepening awareness of its incumbent responsibilities:
 - 1. To disseminate the truth to all peoples, irrespective of racial or social status.
 - 2. To thoroughly evangelize all areas at home.
 - 3. To support missionary work on the foreign fields.
- B. To establish and maintain departments as its objectives may require.
- C. To establish and maintain among her adherents a Bible basis of unity, as well as high standards of holiness and dedication.
- D. To exercise a definite course of action, relative to certain doctrines, methods, practices and modes of conduct, in keeping with, and as it is set forth, the clear teachings of Scripture.

ARTICLE VI – PREROGATIVES

In addition to the principles stated above, this District shall have the right to:

- A. Implement any worthy project deemed necessary.
- B. 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 property, real or chattel, as may be deemed necessary for the furtherance of its work; all in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws, or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.

ARTICLE VII – ARTICLES OF FAITH AND CORE PRACTICES

A. Articles of Faith (Our beliefs about God and His Works)

1. The Bible

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. We accept the original autographs as God-breathed, inerrant, infallible and complete, and therefore hold the sixty-six books of the Bible as the complete and divine revelation of God to man and the final authority for faith and life. The Scriptures are to be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 4:4)

2. **The Nature of God**

We believe that there is only one true, eternal and living God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6,8; 45:6), who is Spirit (John 4:24), creator of all things (Revelation 4:11), sovereign (Isaiah 46:9,10), holy (Revelation 4:8b), omnipotent (Psalm 115:3), omniscient (Psalm 147:5), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-17), immutable (Hebrews 13:8), immense (Jeremiah 23:24), immanent (Psalm 23:4a), and transcendent (Job 9:10), who is co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal in three distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 14:26; Mark 1:10,11; John 1:1,14; Acts 5:3,4; Matthew 28:19).

3. **The Lord Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, deity that pre-existed His incarnation (John 8:58; Philippians 2:6-11), the Word made flesh who assumed humanity through the Virgin Birth (Luke 1:27-35), so that while on the earth was fully human and fully God, two natures in one Person, divine and human (John 1:14). He is therefore the only Savior, who in reality suffered death on the cross, not only for the primitive transgression (“original sin”), but also for the actual sins of man (Isaiah 53:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21). We also believe in his sinless life (Hebrews 4:15), his miracles (John 11:47), his resurrection (Luke 24:46), his ascension (Acts 1:11), and his future second coming in power and great glory (Luke 21:27).

4. **The Demonic Realm**

We believe in the reality of the Devil and demonic spirits who oppose the work and people of God (Isaiah 14:12; 1 Peter 5:8; Luke 4:2; 8:12). Christ conquered them through Calvary (1 John 3:8; Ephesians 1:20,21; 6:11-12; Colossians 2:14,15; James 4:7), and they will ultimately suffer the punishment of eternal torment in the Lake of Fire with the unsaved who are condemned at the Great White Throne judgment (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

5. **Sin**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26,27), but that in Adam’s sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God (Romans 3:22,23; 5:12; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19). Of himself, man is totally and utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. Forgiveness of sin is only achieved through repentance and faith in the shed blood of the resurrected Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22; 1 John 2:2; Romans 3:24-26, 5:9; 2 Peter 3:9).

6. **Salvation**

We believe that regeneration, or the “new birth,” is received through faith in Jesus Christ alone, who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification (1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Romans 3:23-25; 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:17). They who are “in Christ” are those redeemed sinners who by means of Christ’s blood have been made “new creatures.” They had been condemned, but in Christ have been justified, are being sanctified, and will ultimately be glorified. (Romans 5:16-18; 8:30; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

7. The Church

1. We believe that the Church is the universal “body” and “espoused bride” of Christ, which is solely made up of supernaturally born-again persons throughout the Church Age, of which Christ is the Head, (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 3:3-7, 29; 1 Peter 1:23; Ephesians 5:23).
2. We believe that the primary 4-fold mission of the Church is to glorify God (Romans 15:6), edify and disciple believers (Ephesians 4:11, 12), evangelize the world (Luke 24:47), and to be an enlightenment and restraining force in the world (Matthew 5:13, 14).
3. We believe that Jesus Christ left two ordinances for the Church: water baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Communion). We believe in water baptism by single immersion, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as an outward symbol of the inward work of regeneration accomplished by God in the life of the believer who has placed his/her faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3,4). We believe in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper which Jesus commanded his disciples to observe by partaking of the emblems of bread and wine in remembrance of His sacrificial death (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
4. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is mandated in New Testament Scriptures (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 11:19-26; 16:5; Titus 1:5).

8. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

We believe in the baptism with the Holy Spirit as an experience received subsequent to salvation (John 14:17), with tongues as the initial physical evidence of having received the gift (Acts 2:4; 10:45, 46 and 11:15-17; 19:6). Jesus Christ is the baptizer (Matthew 3:11), and all believers within the Church Age are eligible to receive this baptism for the purpose of empowerment, witnessing and ministering (Acts 1:8; 2:39).

9. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

We believe that all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit enumerated in the New Testament were intended by God to endure throughout the Church Age (1 Corinthians 1:7; 12:28). These include the gifts of revelation (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits), gifts of power (faith, healing, miracles), and gifts of utterance (prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues), (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). The purpose of the gifts is for the exhortation, edification and comfort of the Church (1 Corinthians 14:26).

10. Divine Healing

We believe in divine healing. God has revealed Himself in Scripture as the healer and He has not changed (Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). During the Church Age, healing is provided by Christ in the Atonement and is one of the signs that follows believers (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:17; Mark 16:18). God may heal directly, in answer to unction and prayer by the elders of the church, or through spiritual gifts of healing. (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28; James 5:14-16).

11. **The Second Coming of Jesus Christ and Final Events**

We believe in the personal, premillennial, Second Coming of Jesus Christ to raise the dead in Christ and rapture His Church (first resurrection), bind Satan, purge the earth, and establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom, as was promised in the “Davidic Covenant” to the nation of Israel, and in the “Blessed Hope” to the Church, (Psalm 89:3,4; Daniel 2:44,45; Zechariah 14; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6). After the Millennium, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations. Afterwards, he, together with those of the second resurrection who will be judged before the Great White Throne, will be cast for ever into the Lake of Fire. The glorified believers will reign with God in a new heaven and a new earth, in a new Jerusalem (Revelation 20:7-15; 21:1-8).

12. **The Resurrection and Eternal State**

1. We believe that those who are born twice (“born again”) die once, but those who are born once (unregenerated) die twice (partake in the “second death”). Therefore, we believe there shall be a bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment, (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29).
2. We believe that the dead in Christ are absent from the body and present with the Lord, awaiting the First Resurrection after which they, in their glorified bodies, will bypass the Great White Throne judgment and reign in bliss for ever with the Lord, (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6; 22:3-5).
3. We believe the souls of unbelievers remain, after physical death, separated from God in conscious punishment and torment until the Second Resurrection, after which they will be judged before the Great White Throne and be sentenced to the eternal “second death” in the Lake of Fire, (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6,7; Revelation 20:6,11-15).

13. **Core Practices (Our beliefs about us and our lifestyle requirements in obedience to God’s Word)**

A. **Holy Living**

1. We believe in the necessity of living a consistent Christian life marked by obedience to God’s Word, holiness, and evidencing godly spiritual fruit (Matthew 28:20; John 14:21; 1 Peter 1:15,16; Hebrews 12:14; Galatians 5:22,23).
2. We believe in the necessity to abstain from a life-style which would bring reproach to the Lord, to include separation from all religious apostasy, idolatry, and the world’s sinful pleasures, practices and associations, as commanded by God, (Acts 15:28,29; 16:4; 21:25; Romans 12:1,2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).
3. Regarding sexuality, we also believe that any form of fornication, to include, but not limited to, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex, (Leviticus 18:1-30; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

B. Marriage

1. We believe in the institution of marriage as designed by God the Creator, to be a lifelong union between one man and one woman, and that God hates divorce, (Genesis 2:18,20-24; 1 Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 13:4; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:1-6). We also believe that cohabitation or sexual intimacy outside of the marriage relationship is a form of fornication, (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).
2. We do not recognize and will not solemnize same-sex marriages. We recognize that same-sex marriage violates the divine ideal and that homosexual behavior is clearly and consistently condemned in Scripture as unnatural and immoral (Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:13; Genesis 19:5,13; Romans 1:26-32).

C. Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that life is a gift from God and is precious. We believe God's Word teaches that life begins at conception, that the unborn child is a human being, and that God has allotted our life span according to His plan for each of us. Therefore, abortion and euthanasia are examples of constituting the unjustified taking of human life (2 Samuel 19:15; Job 3:16; Psalm 31:15a; 51:5; 127:3; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1-5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Matthew 10:29-31; Luke 1:44; Acts 17:25).

D. Missions

We believe that God has given the Church the Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel to all the world and to every creature so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must take the initiative to reach all peoples at home and abroad with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

E. Financial Stewardship

We believe that every Christian is a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him and is obligated to financially support his local church and the Great Commission. We believe that God has established the tithe as a model for supporting the local church, but that every Christian should also willingly give offerings cheerfully and sacrificially to support the spread of the Gospel and relief for those in need. We further hold that a contributor relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made, (Genesis 14:20; Proverbs 3:9,10; Malachi 3:6,8-10; Matthew 23:23; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7; Galatians 6:6-10; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17).

ARTICLE VIII - MEMBERSHIP

- A. The voting membership of the District Council shall consist of all members currently in possession of an appropriate ministerial credential issued by the I.F.C.A. who, by their steadfastness in the faith, uphold the principles and objectives of the District Council.
- B. Each local Assembly in receipt of a “Certificate of Affiliation” shall be constituted a bona fide member of the District Council. In consequence thereof – in addition to such members who otherwise qualify by virtue of their ministerial credentials – it is authorized to appoint two official delegates to represent it at any given business session of said Council.
- C. A local Assembly in receipt of a “Certificate of Association” shall be constituted an associated member of the District Council, authorized to appoint one official delegate to represent it at any given business session of said Council.

ARTICLE IX – GOVERNMENT

The ultimate power of this District shall be vested in its entire membership, who shall be in submission to the Word of God, and overseen by a District Presbytery, hereinafter called the Niagara Mohawk District Executive Presbytery.

ARTICLE X – OFFICERS

Section 1a. The officers of this District shall be known as the Executive Presbytery and shall consist of: one District Overseer/Assistant General Overseer, one Assistant District Overseer, one Lay Fellowship Director (or Assistant District Overseer/Lay Fellowship Director), one Secretary, one Treasurer (or Secretary/Treasurer), and other officers to be added as may be needed for the District to function efficiently.

Section 1b. There shall be a minimum of three (3) officers.

Section 2a. Honorary Overseers and any General Overseer residing in the District will be considered Ex-Officio members of the Presbytery.

Section 2b. Honorary status shall be determined by the District Presbytery. Honorary Overseers may attend Presbytery meetings by request or invitation. They will have deliberative but non-voting status.

ARTICLE XI – DISTRICT COUNCIL

Section 1. MEMBERSHIP. There shall be a District Council comprised of all those holding a valid credential card issued by the District.

Section 2. VOTING MEMBERS. All registered members shall enjoy the right of expression. Voting shall be restricted to all Ordained Ministers, Ministers of the Gospel, Licensed Preachers and Christian Workers, as well as two authorized delegates from each affiliated church and one authorized delegate from each associated church. The Pastor, when absent, may appoint a delegate to represent him.

Section 3. SESSIONS. There shall be semi-annual District Conferences, time and place to be determined by the Executive Presbytery. A special session may be called by the Presbytery for any emergency or at such time and under such circumstances the Presbytery deems it necessary.

A special session may also be called by petition having been signed by not less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the Council's voting membership and forwarded to the District Secretary.

Section 4. QUORUM. All members registered and voting in any meeting of the District Council of the Niagara Mohawk District shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE XII – AUTONOMY

Section 1. DISTRICT AUTONOMY. This District shall enjoy full autonomy in the conduct of its affairs. It is understood that the deliberations of the District Council shall not conflict with those of the General Council.

Section 2. STIPEND. The District Presbytery is free to assign stipends to the District Overseer and other Presbyters.

Section 3. LOCAL AUTONOMY. Each sovereign church in this District shall be self-governing in the administration of its own welfare. It may adopt its own rules and regulations provided that they do not conflict with the deliberation of the General Council. Affiliated and Associated churches must include a statement of relationship to the District in their Constitutions.

Section 4. RENUMERATION. When the Presbyters render service to a church, it is the obligation of that church to re-numerate them.

Section 5. DISSOLUTION. In the event of dissolution, all outstanding debts and other liabilities having been satisfied, the remainder of assets, if any, shall inure to the General Council, IFCA, to be distributed by the Executive Board of the General Council in projects which are compatible with the original purpose(s) of this District. There shall be representative(s) of the District and of the National Presbytery of the IFCA at a meeting called for that purpose. The meeting shall be within the parameters of State regulations.

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS

Amendments or modifications to this Constitution may be made at any regular or special session of the District Council by two-thirds of all votes cast provided that the said amendment or modification has been distributed in writing to the voting constituency one month prior to said meeting.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I – QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS

Section 1. DISTRICT OVERSEER/ASSISTANT GENERAL OVERSEER. This Presbyter must possess the following features: mature ministerial experience, Pastoral experience, qualities peculiar to leadership, spiritually endowed and possessed of abilities suited for this office. His conduct and ministry shall be above reproach. He must have formerly served as either a member of the Executive Board or a member of one of the District Presbyteries. He shall have a practical knowledge of the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies, the District and its constituents, in which he is Overseer. He shall hold a certificate of ordination and shall have been resident of the District for at least two (2) years.

Section 2. OTHER DISTRICT PRESBYTERS. The Assistant District Overseer (and/or) Lay Fellowship Director, the Secretary (and/or) the Treasurer, and those who may be added to the Presbytery, shall be chosen from among those holding a certificate of ordination. They shall have been a resident of the District for at least two (2) years and shall be able to execute the duties peculiar to their office. They shall be men of mature ministerial experience, of good report, honest reputation and sound doctrine.

Section 3. ALL DISTRICT OFFICERS. They shall have demonstrated (by previous performance, qualifications and disposition) probable calling for the office for which they are being nominated.

ARTICLE II – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. DISTRICT OVERSEER/ASSISTANT GENERAL OVERSEER. This Overseer shall ordain all qualified candidates to the ministry. He shall install pastors in the churches. He shall, to the best of his ability, seek the good order of the District. If a church administration is unable to solve some complex problem, it may summon him for counsel. He shall coordinate all his activities with the Board of Presbyters and shall be amenable to said Board. It shall be his duty to execute discipline when necessary. He shall affix his signature to necessary documents and credentials. He shall preside at any regular or special session of the District Council, as well as at any regular or special session of the District Presbytery. It shall be his responsibility to call the Presbytery into regular or special session. If he cannot preside at either the Presbyters or the Council session because of illness or required absence, the Assistant District Overseer will fill his place or appoint another District Presbyter to do so.

Section 2. ASSISTANT DISTRICT OVERSEER. This Presbyter shall at all times be aware of the work of the Overseer and of District needs. He shall give assistance to the Overseer wherever called upon to do so and shall work in cooperation with him. In case of serious illness or required absence of the District Overseer, the Assistant District Overseer will fill his place or appoint another District Presbyter to do so.

Section 3. SECRETARY. The Secretary shall be responsible to keep a record of all applications of candidates. He shall keep all correspondence from missionaries and evangelists. He shall keep a record of all regular and special meetings of the Council and District Presbytery and shall be the custodian of the District Seal and all documents. He shall issue credentials when authorized by the Presbytery.

Section 4a. TREASURER. The treasurer shall be responsible for all finances pertaining to the District and shall make disbursements as authorized by the Presbytery. He shall render a report at any regular or special session of the District.

Section 4b. All accounts opened in the name of the District shall include the names of the District Overseer/Assistant General Overseer, Assistant District Overseer, and the Treasurer as signatories. A minimum of one (1) signature shall be required to issue authorized disbursements.

Section 5. LAY FELLOWSHIP DIRECTOR. The Lay Fellowship Director shall participate in all Executive Presbyters sessions as a representative of the District's lay fellowships. Together with the other Presbyters, he shall assist, to the best of his ability, in the promotion of the District. He shall act as liaison between the various fellowships in the Niagara Mohawk District and the Presbytery. He shall, in conjunction with the Presbytery, make recommendations to the various fellowships whenever they, the Presbytery, deem it necessary.

Section 6. DISTRICT PRESBYTERY. The District Presbytery shall meet according to the schedule agreed upon by its members and shall be summoned to all such meetings by the District Overseer. At that time, the Presbytery shall review all properly recommended applicants for credentials. The Presbytery shall authorize the Secretary to issue all necessary documents to those who are eligible. The Presbytery shall also review all requests for financial assistance and upon proper investigation and recommendation shall authorize disbursements through its Treasurer. All other matters pertinent to the District shall also be reviewed at each Presbyters meeting.

Section 7. FILES. Upon completion of his term of office, the outgoing officer shall transfer all records, correspondence and legal documents pertaining to his office to his successor within thirty (30) days.

ARTICLE III – ELECTIONS

Section 1. METHOD OF ELECTION. Officers in the District shall be filled as follows:

- A. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the District Overseer and one other Presbyter whose term is not expiring, as well as two (2) members elected from the floor. During the year when the term of the District Overseer is to expire, the Assistant District Overseer would serve as Chairman and another Presbyter would be appointed to the Nominating Committee. The term of office for each elected Nominating Committee member is one (1) year.

- B. Nominating Ballots. Suggested nominee ballots shall be sent to eligible credential holders sixty (60) days prior to the District Council. The credential holders shall return the completed ballots stating their preferences to the Nominating Committee thirty (30) days prior to the District Council.
- C. Nomination for Vacant Offices. Candidates for the several offices that are vacant shall be ratified for eligibility by the nominating committee, then placed in nomination and elected by secret ballot. Two-thirds of all votes cast shall constitute an election.
- D. Absent Nominee. A nominated member who is absent during elections will not be eligible to be voted on, with one exception: i.e. in the event of illness or death of an immediate family member such as husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter, brother or sister, thus preventing them from attending.
- E. Voting Procedure.
 - 1. No proxy or absentee ballots shall be accepted for any office.
 - 2. Should the slate of nominees include more than two candidates, if no election has been declared in either the first or second ballot, the two candidates having the highest number of votes on the second ballot shall be further voted upon.
 - 3. Should the slate begin with or result in only two candidates, if no election has been declared in either the first or second ballot, the candidate having the highest number of votes on the second ballot shall be further voted upon.
 - 4. If a candidate does not receive the required number of votes after the second elective ballot, the candidate with the simple majority of the last ballot cast will be elected to the said position.

Section 2. TERM OF OFFICE. All officers shall remain in office for three (3) years. They are eligible for reelection.

Section 3. TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER DISTRICT. Any member of the District Presbytery who becomes a resident of another District shall be required to send a written notice of his resignation to the District office prior to making transfer.

Section 4. VACANCY OF OFFICE. Should a vacancy occur through death, resignation or disqualification, the Executive Presbytery shall accommodate the vacancy temporarily. The District Council shall fill the vacancy at any regular or special session.

Section 5. NOMINATION FOR NATIONAL OFFICES. Eligible credential holders shall designate their preferences for prospective National Officers when their tenure of service is expired, by submitting not more than two names for each office to the District Nominating Committee. The candidate receiving a two-thirds majority of votes cast shall be constituted the nominee for that office, who then shall be ratified by the National Board of Overseers, and if accepted, shall be voted upon at the General Council.

ARTICLE IV – THE MINISTRY

Section 1. DEFINITION. The ministry may be defined as the call of God separating the man “unto the work whereunto He has called him”, enabling him to minister the gospel of Jesus Christ “according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Acts 13:2; 1 Timothy 1:12; Romans 1:1; Ephesians 4:7).

Section 2. CLASSIFICATION. The ministry in this District shall be classified as follows: Ordained Ministers, Ministers of the Gospel, Licensed Preachers and Christian Workers.

Section 3. ARTICLES OF FAITH AND CORE PRACTICES. Candidates for credentials shall ascribe to and practice fully the Articles of Faith and Core Practices as stated in the District Constitution, Article VII.

Section 4. REQUISITES FOR ORDINATION. The requisites for ordination are enumerated in the Scriptures: 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9. All candidates for ordination shall have been a Minister of the Gospel for at least two years. Candidates for ordination shall be a resident of the District for at least two (2) years or shall be accepted for ordination by a bona fide recommendation from another District.

Section 5. REQUISITES FOR MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL. The requisites for Ministers of the Gospel shall be an evident manifestation of the divine call, the ability to preach the Word of God effectively, and a willingness to devote time and effort in preaching the gospel as much as possible in the District. All candidates for Minister of the Gospel shall have been a Licensed Preacher for at least two (2) years.

Section 6. REQUISITES FOR LICENSED PREACHERS. The requisites for Licensed Preachers shall be an evident manifestation of the ability to speak to edification and comfort, as well as a manifest consecration and willingness to devote time and effort to the work of the Lord in the local church. All candidates for License to Preach shall have been a Christian Worker for at least two (2) years.

Section 7. REQUISITES FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS. The requisites for Christian Workers shall be a clear evidence of their consecration and willingness to devote part of their time and effort to the work of the Lord.

Section 8. IMPROVING ONE’S MINISTRY.

- A. All aspirants to the ministry are encouraged to attend one of the recognized Bible Schools for advanced training. Those who are not free to attend a Bible School are exhorted to take home-study courses.
- B. All applicants for credentials are expected to cooperate fully with any study plan or reading course which the Credential Committee, in conjunction with the Department of Education, may devise or designate for the improvement of the ministry.

Section 9. TRANSFERRING OF CREDENTIALS. Applications by credential holders in good standing with other recognized ministerial bodies shall be accepted on an equal or lesser level at the discretion of the District Presbytery.

Section 10. STEWARDSHIP. All credential holders shall be required to meet all General Council and District Council financial support requirements and meet credential renewal requirements prior to each annual deadline. Exceptions may be granted only in proven extenuating circumstances. Such exceptions must be verified annually and documented at the time of the annual Credential Renewal, to be included with request of credential renewal. Credentials shall be withheld from those who fail to cooperate in their financial obligations to the General Council and the District Council.

Section 11. PULPIT VACANCIES. Local churches with pulpit vacancies shall notify the District Presbytery, who shall recommend available IFCA ministers.

ARTICLE V – LAY FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

Section 1. Lay Fellowship ministries shall include: Youth Ministries, Women’s Ministries, Men’s Ministries, Children’s Ministries, Home and Foreign Missions, Vista Liaison, and any other ministry which may be deemed necessary by the District Presbytery.

Section 2. The directors of those various lay ministry departments shall be appointed annually by the District Presbytery at the annual District Council.

Section 3. Those appointed to such offices are to be members in good standing of a local church, receive pastoral recommendation, and hold the appropriate level of credential as deemed necessary by the District Presbytery.

ARTICLE VI – DISCIPLINE

Section 1. THE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTERY. Any member of the Executive Presbytery may be temporarily suspended from office by other members of the Presbytery for any of the following reasons: unscriptural conduct, doctrinal departure, incompetence in office. His suspension shall remain pending investigation and final decision in his case by the Department of F.O.C.U.S.

Section 2. THE DISTRICT COUNCIL. Any member of the District Council may be temporarily suspended by the Executive Presbytery for any of the following reasons: unscriptural conduct, doctrinal departure, or serious violation of I.F.C.A. General Council and/or District Council Constitution and By-Laws. His suspension shall remain pending investigation and final decision in his case by the Department of F.O.C.U.S.

Section 3. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS. Members of the District Council whose lives and conduct prove to be a reproach to the cause of Christ, shall have their credentials recalled or their endorsement rescinded.

- A. General inefficiency in the ministry, failure or inability to correctly represent our IFCA testimony, a contentious, uncooperative spirit, the assumption of dictatorial authority over an assembly, failure to seek a peaceable settlement of difficulties in order to avoid the incidence of a schism in the local assembly, arbitrary rejection of counsel offered by the District or Executive Presbyters, a public avowal of critical change in doctrinal views, the habit of running up debts, contracting a marriage in opposition to our constitutional stand on marriage and divorce, and such inconsistencies may furnish cause for recall of one's fellowship certificate.
- B. Termination of a credential holder's status or the removal from office of a duly elected official shall require a decisive action of the District Presbytery or department of FOCUS. Said action shall supercede any decision made at any level, save that of the Executive Board.
- C. If, after repeated counsel and warning by the District Presbytery and the Executive Board, there shall be no appreciable change of character or attitude on the part of the offending minister, the officers of the District Council may recommend to the Credentials Committee that their name be dropped from the Ministerial Directory of the General Council.

Section 4. APPEAL. All Credential Holders whose fellowship card has not been renewed, or whose name has been removed from the official list through recommendation of a District Presbytery or by the Department of FOCUS, may appeal this decision to the Executive Board for reconsideration. The decision of the Executive board (acting as a Board of Appeals) shall then be deemed conclusive and final.

Section 5. REINSTATEMENT. Only those ministers who may subsequently qualify for the endorsement of both the local District Presbytery and of the Executive Board may be reinstated to fellowship by the Credentials Committee.

ARTICLE VII – LITURGICAL PRACTICES

Credential Holders are free to perform the rite of Baptism, Holy Communion, Matrimonies, Funerals, and other sacred liturgical practices according to New York State law and/or Local/County law. This includes all levels of credentials except Christian Worker.

ARTICLE VIII – ORDER OF BUSINESS

The regular order of business for any regular or special session of the District Council shall be: Devotional, Reading of the Minutes, Reports, Roll Call, Unfinished Business, Elections, New Business, Adjournment.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these By-Laws may be made at any regular or special session of the District Council by a simple majority of all votes cast.