

**IMPROVING THE COACHING SKILLS OF SECTIONAL PRESBYTERS  
IN THE SOUTHERN MISSOURI DISTRICT COUNCIL**

*Reverend Mark Wootton*

**ABSTRACT**

The first duty listed for sectional presbyters in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Southern Missouri District Council of the Assemblies of God is to promote and assist in the building up of assemblies within their sections. However, current statistics indicate that attendance in Assemblies of God churches in the Southern Missouri District is plateauing. The executive officers of the district are taking several proactive steps to address the plateauing trend. The sectional presbyters' abilities to help combat the trend can be enhanced, if they receive encouragement and training.

The project provides several suggestions for enhancing the abilities of sectional presbyters to coach for growth. First, it is proven that promoting and assisting church growth is a legitimate duty for sectional presbyters. The project proves this duty to be biblically justified, historically precedented, and constitutionally mandated. Second, it is proven that there is a need and receptivity for sectional presbyters to provide growth assistance to pastors within their sections. Third, the project provides models of leadership and church organization that are holistic and adaptable to any church setting in the Southern Missouri District. These models provide guidance and simplicity in coaching churches and pastors into health and growth.

During research for the project, several serious obstacles were mentioned that hinder sectional presbyters from promoting and assisting church growth. The most significant was insufficient time available to assist churches. Uncertainty about coaching

content was also a hindering factor. The independence of some pastors was also mentioned as limiting coaching opportunities. The project provides several suggestions to circumvent these obstacles.

The research and suggestions were presented as a seminar for Southern Missouri District Council sectional presbyters during their 2001 fall retreat. Their receptivity testified to the value of the material. However, the project did not include an extended implementation phase by the sectional presbyters with follow-up. The project indicates that the seminar was appreciated and effective. Therefore, extended implementation and follow-up should only further enhance the ability of sectional presbyters to promote and assist in the building up of churches within their sections. That would be a timely and desirous effect upon Southern Missouri District Council churches and pastors.