

**An Evaluation of the Indiana Plan: Using Presbyters  
to Nurture Relationships Among Ministers**  
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ABSTRACT

This project will examine and evaluate a new system of organizational structure designed and implemented by the Indiana District Council of the Assemblies of God in 2000. The Indiana District, with 241 churches within its area, is part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, which numbers over 12,000 churches in the United States.

Since its early years of development, the Assemblies of God has organized itself by geographical regions called districts, which often follow state boundaries. Within those districts, further organizational structure has evolved with geographical areas within the districts called sections. Each section has always elected its own leader, called a sectional presbyter. That presbyter, who normally also serves as the senior pastor of a church within the section, is typically given administrative oversight of the section's churches and credentialed ministers. The portfolio of the minister would include oversight of all district-affiliated churches (churches that are not self-governing), assisting the district officers in any disciplinary matters among ministers of the section, and organization of regular ministers' meetings.

In 1999 the officers of the Indiana District surveyed their ministers, in which they found that the typical minister was not attending sectional meetings on a regular basis and felt a certain level of disconnectedness from the section and district. It seemed that the priority of relationship-building among the section's ministers was being neglected by the typical presbyter.

Because of these findings, the Indiana District began the process of sweeping change regarding its district and sectional program. In January 2001, the district revised its Constitution and Bylaws to completely dissolve the geographical boundaries of its sections. All sectional

offices, whether elected or appointed, were also dissolved.

In place of the old structure, a new plan was adopted. All administrative and disciplinary matters would now be handled by an expanded executive presbytery board. In addition, twenty-eight new presbyters were appointed, with their primary function being the nurturing of relationships between the eight to ten pastors assigned to them. Monthly meetings, called ministry groups, were organized to meet at least ten times per year. Spouses of pastors were included, and meetings included relationship-building exercises, with some discussion focused on equipping for effective ministry.

This project will give a detailed description of this radical change brought about by the Indiana District. This change is the first ever attempted on this scale by a district within the General Council of the Assemblies of God. Statistical results will be shared, along with an evaluation of the new structure.