

**ARKANSAS DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES OF GOD**  
**THE ARKANSAS DELTA NETWORK**  
**“Hope and Healing for the Delta”**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. A mature vision**

**This regional vision has matured in the hearts of our district leadership team over a significant period of time. Now is the time for this vision to be realized.**

**B. The path to my involvement**

**A fateful meeting at the district office.**

**II. WHAT IS THE ARKANSAS DELTA NETWORK?**

**A. Definition**

**The ADN is a regional church and ministry network designed to address the substantial challenges of declining health and efficiency of the churches in the Arkansas Delta region.**

**B. Geographical boundaries**

**The boundaries of the ADN will be drawn to include sections 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 14. There are differing opinions about where the Arkansas delta ends west of the river, but for our purposes the current sectional boundaries will provide the geographical parameters.**

**C. Purpose**

**The purpose is to intentionally produce healthy and vibrant churches in the Delta by means of a working regional model.**

**The ADN will help by providing a network of resources and training for church leaders to assist with implementation of strategies that are specifically designed to be effective in the Delta (i.e., Church planting, revitalization - Healthy church resources; **Fostering** – Compact; **Crime prevention** – Neighborhood Watch Programs; **Mentoring** – ICVR, Pen or Pencil; **Education** – Academic Enrichment Program, **Addiction** – Celebrate Recovery, **Veterans** – VA Rural Clergy Partnership, **Understanding and combating poverty** - Bridges Out of Poverty, **Local partnerships** – Faith Community Coalition, **Chi Alpha** – coming to UAPB.**

**There has never been a sweeping, collaborative effort with a focused vision, funding, and intentionality designed to reach the Delta region of the Arkansas District.**

**D. Core Values**

- 1. Embrace diversity.**
- 2. Every person matters.**
- 3. Demonstrating love for our community.**
- 4. Model hopeful optimism.**
- 5. Practice Pentecostalism.**

6. **Address cultural challenges.**
- E. **Expectations for ADN churches**
  1. **Theological / doctrinal compatibility**
  2. **Financial support for the ADN through membership**
  3. **Possible support options**
    - a. **\$50/100 a month from the church or 5% of GF income, whichever is less**
    - b. **Non-AG ministers perhaps required to contribute a minimum of \$50 a month from their tithe**  
[The ADN board will decide the fees. Bronze, silver, and gold membership levels are being considered.]

### **III. WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE ADN?**

- A. **A healthier Delta is a healthier District.**
- B. **Intervention vs. Resurrection with developed strategies relevant to the Delta**  
It is time to stop the death spiral. This approach helps us to move away from models and ministry structures that at times limit us to attempts to resurrect Delta churches only after they die. It gives us the opportunity to take an honest look at our churches in their current circumstances and offer a plan, resources, and a challenge to thrive.

### **IV. WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

- A. **Changes in the Delta**  
Population in the Delta has decreased by 5.1 percent (2010-2015)
- B. **Challenges in the Delta**
  1. **The population in the Arkansas Delta is approximately 627,350 (by county) - 21% of the state's population.**
  2. **Of the adult population, 42% have less than a high school diploma or GED.**
  3. **Single parents are raising 41.7% of the children.**
  4. **In the Delta, 36% of children are living in poverty.**
  5. **In the Delta, 55% of children receive SNAP benefits**
  6. **The Delta is home to 16% of Arkansas AG churches.**
  7. **The Arkansas AG has 66 churches in the Delta with a total of 5,458 average Sunday a.m. attendance, which means that .8% of the population in the Delta attends an AG church on Sunday morning.**
  8. **There are 97 communities in the Delta without an Assembly of God church.**

### **V. WHAT WOULD POTENTIAL ADN CHURCH PARTICIPATION LOOK LIKE?**

- A. New church plants (PACs)**
- B. DAC joins the network**
- C. DAC becoming a PAC of another church in the network**
- D. Regional parent churches**
- E. Independent churches that join the ADN as PACs**
- F. Existing GC churches that choose to be a PAC under the ADN**
- G. GC churches that choose to join ADN**

**VI. WHAT WILL THE ROLE OF THE ADN DIRECTOR BE?**

- A. Provide pastoral leadership for all ADN pastors and churches**
- B. Organize Delta outreach events**
- C. Recruit and train pastors for ADN churches and church plants**
- D. Arrange biannual training events**
- E. Mentor new churches and pastors**
- F. Raise support for the network**
- G. Preach in ADN churches as needed**
- H. Recruit independent churches to join the ADN Network**
- I. Coordinate with Sectional Presbyters in Sections 4,8,11,14, 3, 7**
- J. Develop MOU's for churches in the ADN**
- K. Ensure that all churches follow proper procedures - backgrounds checks, insurance, etc.**
- L. Ensure theological agreement across the network**
- M. Build partnerships with other nonprofits and corporations**
- N. Identify community outreach partners and opportunities**
- O. Identify possible land purchases in key future church planting spots**
- P. Think strategically**

**VII. WHAT WILL THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED REGIONAL CHURCHES BE?**

- A. Become a parent church for PAC churches across the Delta**
- B. Be a training hub for church planters / pastors**

**VIII. FINANCIAL IDEAS (Preliminary)**

**Matching grant/funds for each ADN-approved new church plant from the District, CMN, and ADN funds**

**IX. WHAT ARE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS TO BEING A MEMBER OF THE ADN AS A MINISTER OR A CHURCH?**

- A. Relational connection with other churches in the Delta
- B. Shared training, resources, and outreach opportunities
- C. Training in best practices
- D. Mentoring and coaching from network leadership
- E. An annual conference for ADN ministers at no charge to the participants – after District Council
- F. Biannual training meetings at no charge
- G. Access to sermons, special service plans, etc.
- H. Celebration of victories in the Delta with other network members
- I. Participation in annual Delta outreach events – possible “Day of Hope” with Convoy of Hope
- J. Possible match for ½ of a school loan payment for ADN planting pastors
- K. Possible supplement for salaries of ADN pastors when necessary

## X. NEXT STEPS

- A. Identify possible regional parent (or training or “hub”) churches.
  1. Our long-term goal is to have at least one regional church in every section.
  2. Our short-term goal is to establish a regional office at Pine Bluff First Assembly, which will become the first regional church in the network. Regional churches will be something like “hub” churches - responsible to provide pastoral care and community to nearby ADN churches.
- B. Create a technological framework including resources.
- C. Appoint a leadership team
 

There will be an executive board and an advisory board. The executive board will consist of A/G ministers and/or members. The advisory board will consist of A/G minister representatives but also people with Delta knowledge, skills, and connections in areas such as law enforcement, rural housing, prison outreach, financial education, education, state government, etc.

### Thoughts

It's not about color, it's about culture.

Authenticity, particularly in the Delta, is paramount.

Too often in the Delta, we're losing the battle for healthy churches because we are losing the struggle of conflicting and competing cultures.

The idea is not for the ADN to compete with sectional leadership but rather to help complete ministry. With buy-in from sectional presbyters and ministers in the Delta, we can help develop the strategies from our collective ideas and needs. Everyone in the Delta is considered part of the process on some level.