A Movement for God

An Introduction to the History and Thought of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

National Church Ministries
The Christian and Missionary Alliance
P.O. Box 35000
Colorado Springs, CO 80935
CONTENTS

Foreword ............................................................................................................................................ iv
Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... v
1. The Life of A. B. Simpson ........................................................................................................ 1
2. The Early Years ....................................................................................................................... 6
3. Growth in North America ...................................................................................................... 10
4. World Mission .......................................................................................................................... 18
5. Missions and the Local Church ............................................................................................ 26
6. Doctrinal Positions .................................................................................................................. 34
7. Christ our Savior ..................................................................................................................... 42
8. Christ our Sanctifier ................................................................................................................. 47
9. Christ our Healer ..................................................................................................................... 53
10. Christ our Coming King ......................................................................................................... 58
11. Constituted Authority ............................................................................................................. 63
12. National Organization ........................................................................................................... 66
13. District Organization ............................................................................................................... 71
14. Local Church Organization ................................................................................................... 78
Epilogue ......................................................................................................................................... 85
The first sentence of the Vision Statement of The Christian and Missionary Alliance declares:

The Christian and Missionary Alliance will be a movement of Great Commission Christians, who are glorifying God by building Christ’s Church worldwide.

To explain what is meant by the word “movement,” Dr. Peter Nanfelt, former president of The Christian and Missionary Alliance writes:

The C&MA began as a movement and over the years emerged into a denomination. There are many positive factors related to being a denomination, and we need to affirm these qualities.

There are also advantages to being a movement. Movements are generally made up of people who are very committed, vibrant, and focused on the cause which gave rise to the movement initially. They are risk takers, they are flexible, and they are innovative.

The C&MA needs to be an organization that has the stability and accountability system of a denomination while incorporating the positive qualities of a movement.

The purpose of this book is to acquaint the reader with the movement of The Christian and Missionary Alliance: its history, missionary vision, doctrine and governmental structures.

As you read this book, I trust that you will be inspired to join with us in the ongoing ministry of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, which we trust, for many years to come will continue to be A Movement for God.

William A. Paul, Director
Church Leadership Academy
National Church Ministries
The Christian and Missionary Alliance
INTRODUCTION

Any person who is called of God to minister must have a deep love for the church. From among the many church bodies in Christendom, that person must choose a fellowship through which he or she can serve Christ. The level of commitment to that fellowship will be reflected in his or her own understanding of the New Testament Church. This book was written to help those pastors and leaders who have found their home in The Christian and Missionary Alliance. The Alliance, like any other denomination, has its own spiritual culture and organizational structures. In order to serve effectively within this organization, a pastor or leader needs to know as much as possible about the movement.

It is no accident of history that God raised up A. B. Simpson and his fellow workers at the close of the nineteenth century. The Church was in turmoil. Many clergymen in the mainline denominations had endorsed modernistic theology. Questions were being raised by liberal teachers about the integrity of Scripture. Thousands of people became uncomfortable in mainline denominational churches. Where could they go to find spiritual fellowship and sound Biblical preaching? The hundreds of Alliance “branches” planted by Simpson in the great cities of North America during those early years became gathering places for many such concerned believers. As a result of these circumstances, The Alliance began to adopt the forms of a church body while it continued to serve as a leading world mission organization.

A study of the historical roots of The Christian and Missionary Alliance provides an insight into its doctrinal distinctives and ministry. Born in the revival movements of the 1880s, The Alliance continues to reflect the vitality that brought it into being. While not being afraid to innovate, The Alliance holds to the fundamentals of the faith on which it was founded. The brief historical sections of this book highlight the issues that caused our founder and his colleagues to launch a movement to revive an apostolic vision and determination in world evangelism. Their level of commitment was radical. Simpson recruited people he called “irregulars” to overcome the inertia that had paralyzed much of the world missions effort in mainline denominations. The drift from evangelism to institutional ministry had redirected the thinking of many mission leaders. The pioneer missionary spirit was virtually dead.
Simpson and his coworkers issued an urgent plea to evangelize unreached people by the simplest and most direct means. The early Alliance missionary conferences were innovative. The faith pledge method of raising funds for missions produced amazing results. Many of the “irregular” recruits who were sent to the mission field did not meet the sophisticated educational requirements of the typical mission board. But the fresh, dynamic force of their total dedication began to write a new and thrilling chapter in the history of world missions.

The founder of The Alliance was fully committed to the Word of God. With what appeared as simple naïveté to his Presbyterian colleagues, Simpson sought the answers to all of his problems in the Scriptures. His format for the promotion of world missions gave time for preaching the gospel in all its fullness. Teaching the truths of Christ our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King was a part of every conference. Souls were saved and believers were brought into the deeper life in the daily services of Simpson’s unique conventions.

Today, The Christian and Missionary Alliance continues to bear the impact of the religious climate out of which it was born. It is contemporary in its effort to respond to the needs of the modern world, but The Alliance maintains an unwavering loyalty to that understanding of historical Christianity imparted to it by A. B. Simpson. While deeply sensitive to its historical roots, The Alliance has resisted the temptation to build monuments to its past and has directed its energies to opening new frontiers for the gospel of Christ.

This brief survey of Alliance history, doctrine, government, outreach and ecclesiology is meant to be an overview of the denomination. It is designed to give new pastors and workers a short introduction to the dynamics of this movement called The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Now over a century old, it is still on the move for God. The study reviews our Statement of Faith. It examines the polity of the church on the local, district, and national levels. It will acquaint pastors and church leaders with their responsibility to guide each congregation in accordance with Alliance polity and its fundamental understanding of constituted authority.

The need for a non-technical handbook for pastors and local church leaders inspired this attempt to provide a basic guide to Alliance polity. It has been written to help those just starting their ministry in The Christian and Missionary Alliance. They will better understand how this great world-wide family functions, from the local church to the most remote mission field. This text is intended to instill the excitement of a great church, alive and growing. Careful attention has also been given to the practical details, which contribute to the vitality of The Alliance.
Chapter One

THE LIFE OF A. B. SIMPSON

Simpson’s Preparation

The Christian and Missionary Alliance cannot be understood apart from the life and influence of its founder, Dr. A. B. Simpson. Simpson was born of Scotch-Presbyterian parents on December 15, 1843, at Bayview on Prince Edward Island, Canada. When he was three, the family moved to Kent County in western Ontario.

According to custom, Simpson’s father chose one of his sons to prepare for ministry in the church. Since Albert was frail, he was not the one selected. His father felt he should remain at home and apply what strength he had to assist with the family farm. However, as Albert matured, he was not at peace with this decision. Gathering his courage, he voiced his desire to enter the ministry. His staunchly Presbyterian father was impressed by Albert’s obvious sense of urgency in response to God’s call; he gave his consent and blessing.

Presbyterian Ministry

Albert Simpson graduated from Knox College in Toronto in 1866. The same year, he married Margaret L. Henry of Toronto and was installed as the pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church—the second largest in Canada. God abundantly blessed Simpson’s ministry, and during the eight years he served this congregation, the church’s membership grew from three hundred to seven hundred.

Unfortunately, the cold Canadian climate further weakened Simpson’s health. Doctors advised him to move to a milder region. Thus, in 1874, when he was invited to be the pastor of the Chestnut Street Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, he accepted. His six year’s of ministry in Louisville were critical to Simpson’s future. Restless stirrings arose within his spirit. He found himself
A Movement for God

adhering less dogmatically to many of the ideas he had espoused during his seminary years. He hungered for God and began to pray and study more earnestly than before. God answered by bringing him into contact with evangelist Major Whittle and his musician, P. P. Bliss. This first encounter with the Holy Spirit’s power in public evangelism profoundly impressed the young pastor.

Simpson participated wholeheartedly with Whittle and Bliss. Their campaigns brought radical change to his own style of ministry. For the first time, he understood the importance of reaching out to unchurched people. He also realized that traditional, mainline churches were out of touch with large segments of the population, that reaching them would require a change in approach. Never one to ignore God’s prompting, Simpson began holding evangelistic services in a rented theater. The staid leaders in his own church were shocked with this innovation, but decided to go along with their less-than-complacent leader. Great blessing resulted.

Missionary Vision

Simpson didn’t stop with the unreached in the city of Louisville. He caught a glimpse of the “regions beyond.” The gospel was for the whole world. Responding to the passion in his heart, he conceived the idea of publishing an illustrated missionary magazine.

But Simpson’s strength was unable to keep up with his zeal and the largeness of his vision. He suffered a break in health. As if by divine appointment, the recuperation period provided time for careful thought and prayer about what his future should hold.

In 1880, when the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church of New York City invited Simpson to serve as pastor, he accepted the call as from God. This placed him at the crossroads of the Western World, the hub of missionary activity. Before long, Simpson began publishing an illustrated missionary magazine entitled The Gospel in All Lands.

New York City

As Simpson walked the streets of New York City, his burden for the lost increased. He frequently went to the docks, preaching to the rough, mostly-immigrant men who worked at loading and unloading the ships. Crisis came to the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian congregation when the new pastor sought to take into membership a number of Italian immigrants whom he had led to Christ on the city wharfs. Many among the church’s fashion-conscious constituency could not tolerate this. Simpson realized with regret that if he were going to reach immigrants he would have to resign from the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church. He would have to step out in faith.

At the same time, Simpson was struggling with some doctrinal issues. For example, his study of God’s Word convinced him that immersion was the correct
form for baptism. Contrary to Presbyterian practice, Simpson chose to break precedent and follow Christ’s example in baptism by immersion. To him total obedience to his Lord was more important than facing questions of the church hierarchy. He had come to enjoy the fullness of the Holy Spirit and was convinced of the necessity of total obedience. He knew he must live and preach the Spirit-filled life.

Divine Healing

Perhaps the pressures were too great. Again, Simpson faced a health crisis. As his physical condition worsened, he withdrew to the countryside of Maine for rest. This brought him into contact with Dr. Cullis, a physician from Boston whose own study of the Scripture had convinced him that divine healing was not limited to the apostles and the early church. Simpson took his questions about this interpretation to the Lord, studying and praying over the Bible passages dealing with divine healing. He later wrote of a particular day when he was alone in the woods with only his Bible. The Holy Spirit confirmed to his heart that healing was available through the work of Christ for believers here and now. In response, he acknowledged his weakness and by faith appropriated the Lord Jesus Christ for the needs in his body. A remarkable change took place. Within days his strength began returning. From that point until a short time before his death Simpson was able to maintain a more vigorous schedule of preaching, writing, teaching, and administration than many of his colleagues.

The Gospel Tabernacle

With his strength renewed, Albert Simpson decided to leave the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church; he would step out in faith. He placed a newspaper ad announcing a meeting in a rented hall. Only nine individuals attended, but within a few weeks he was able to organize a small group of seventeen faithful members. They moved from one meeting place to another in the early months, but God’s blessing was on the work. Before long the group settled into a building on the east side of Eighth Avenue, near Forty-fourth Street. The site became the permanent home of the Gospel Tabernacle.

In 1882 Simpson established a Bible training school—the first of its kind in North America. The Bible School, which later moved to Nyack, New York, grew out of Simpson’s vision for training and his passion for expediting world evangelism. He found the traditional methods of education too slow and cumbersome to satisfy his compulsion for carrying the gospel to the world.

True to his understanding of the work of Christ, Simpson associated world evangelism with the Second Coming. This theme was central to his thinking and preaching. He saw the fulfillment of the Great Commission as requisite to the Lord’s return. The Gospel Tabernacle became a center for evangelism and a variety of home mission endeavors. It was also a launching pad for foreign missionaries and the hub for a widespread healing ministry. In the midst of it all,
Simpson found time to write, publish and distribute material—his own and that of other evangelicals who had been touched by revival.

Though Simpson was an innovative leader, his vision did not include the establishment of a new denomination. His desire was to inspire all Christians, and he fostered an interdenominational approach to fulfilling the Great Commission.

**Missionary Conferences**

Even as Simpson’s work in New York City grew, a new avenue for expansion came through a campground at Old Orchard Beach, on the southern coast of Maine. Departing from the model of most holiness-style camp meetings, Simpson designed a summer conference, which focused on the deeper life and obedience to Christ’s command to evangelize the whole world. It was here, at the Old Orchard Beach campground, that The Christian and Missionary Alliance was born.

In the summer of 1886, W. E. Blackstone of Chicago, Illinois, was one of the Bible teachers at Old Orchard Beach. He chose the second coming of Christ as his theme. His closing message centered on the relationship between world evangelization and the Lord’s return. Blackstone’s sermon lived on in the memories of all who heard it. The following summer the conference consensus resulted in the formation of an organization to hasten the work of world missions. Its stated purpose was: *Speed the message far and wide, and bring back the King.* In actuality, two organizations were formed at the Old Orchard Beach that summer (1887). The Christian Alliance was organized to promote fellowship and study of the deeper life in the “homeland,” and the Evangelical Missionary Alliance was established to send missionaries overseas. Both were founded on the conviction that, through faith, God would supply their needs. The same principle was espoused by Hudson Taylor, Andrew Murray, and other evangelical leaders in Europe and America. The formation of the two Alliances was a turning point in the life of A. B. Simpson. The rest of his years were devoted to nurturing the movement, guiding it through opposition and doctrinal controversy. Though his intentions were misunderstood by some in the world of church hierarchy, Simpson led courageously and modeled personally the work of Christ, the Lord to whom he was devoted.

Albert Benjamin Simpson was a vigorous, intelligent, innovative man. He wrote over seventy books, thousands of sermons, articles, songs and poems, and he gave himself unstintingly to serve Christ. Simpson introduced many new concepts into church life at the close of the nineteenth century. Among them was the missionary convention (or conference), which has become a method of choice for decades among many evangelical church groups.

Simpson’s conventions drew large crowds. He not only brought outstanding missionaries to his platform but the most gifted Bible teachers from both sides of the Atlantic. Conventions were soon established in other locations, and Simpson
himself was often a speaker. In tandem with the conventions were summer Bible conferences. These events became a means of promoting The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Much of the early growth of the Alliance can be attributed to the Bible and missionary conferences held in major cities across America. Within a decade, without television or radio, Simpson captured the interest of nearly one hundred thousand people.

**Simpson's Legacy**

Our founder was keenly aware of the condition of the church in his day. He sensed the influence of liberalism in mainline churches. He knew that many of his supporters were members of these denominations. Though he had never planned to establish local churches in North America, he became convinced that doing so was essential to the correct application of the Word of God. In 1912, General Council took action to form districts with the explicit intention of establishing churches where they were needed.

Albert Benjamin Simpson completed his task on earth in 1919. He left a great legacy to the Alliance family. In some respects like John the Baptist, he was “a voice crying in the wilderness.” Many hungry hearts responded to his burning passion for the renewal of the church and for a return to apostolic simplicity. Simpson longed to direct all the energies of the people of God toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Not only The Christian and Missionary Alliance, but the entire evangelical church felt the impact of this man of God. Simpson’s spirit was too large for any, single denomination. His horizon was the whole world, and his vision lives on in those whose hearts have been ignited by the same Spirit. You will find them not only in North America but in the nations of the world where The Christian and Missionary Alliance continues to preach the fullness of Christ.
Chapter Two

THE EARLY YEARS

The closing decades of the nineteenth century were filled with religious ferment in Europe and America. Revival swept through the grassroots constituencies of mainline denominations. The resulting spiritual vitality produced dissatisfaction with mere formalism. At the same time, widespread skepticism developed over the encroachment of German higher criticism. It was viewed as a threat to church doctrine. The loss of evangelistic zeal in the institutional church caused many to look elsewhere for genuine spiritual reality and renewed dedication to fulfilling the Great Commission.

Backgrounds in Europe and America

Revived interest in personal holiness began in England and Europe; it gained momentum in North America. Robert Pearsall Smith was a key figure. He brought to America the principles of biblical holiness being taught throughout Germany. The revival movement actually began with Johannes Christopher Blumhardt in the early part of the nineteenth century. Blumhardt graduated from Basel, Switzerland and took a pastorate in the village of Mottligen in Germany’s Black Forest. A young girl who was apparently under demonic influence came to the village church. Pastor Blumhardt struggled in prayer for two arduous years until the girl was finally delivered. This experience made it impossible for him to remain tied to the traditional doctrine he had been taught in seminary. He began seeing the Scriptures in a new light. Blumhardt came to believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit had not been withdrawn, that it was God’s will to heal the sick, and that contemporary believers could experience the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Blumhardt subsequently left Mottligen and moved to Baden-Baden where he directed an institution for prayer and ministry to the sick. His ministry became
the seed-bed for revival which swept through the state church in Germany and quickly spread to England and other European countries.

Simpson was deeply touched by the ministry of Johannes Blumhardt. The two shared a kindred spirit and agreed in their interpretation of apostolic Christianity. Simpson published many of Blumhardt’s writings, as well as his biography. It is highly possible that the two leaders actually met face to face. Blumhardt often was a speaker at England’s Bethshan conference where Dr. Simpson, Dr. Cullis of Boston, and others from North America were known to have participated.

**The Fourfold Gospel**

The stage was being set for the formation of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. The holiness movement was one of its antecedents; premillennialism was another. The Lord’s imminent return became an integral part of the Alliance message. Dr. Simpson included it when he formulated the foundational tenets of *The Fourfold Gospel*. Though the familiar inscription, illustrated in the Alliance logo, has become our defining statement as a denomination, it by no means encompasses Simpson’s complete understanding of the doctrine of the church. It did, however, encapsulate his basic understanding of the work of Christ. Simpson’s own life and work illustrated his total commitment to *Jesus Christ: our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King*.

**The Faith Principle**

The modern missionary movement was well under way by 1887 when the Evangelical Missionary Alliance was formed. Dr. Simpson was impressed with the principles taught by his contemporaries who led *faith missions*; he patterned his own work after them. Living by faith and trusting God for one’s personal, financial needs as well as for the needs of the work was inherent to the philosophy upon which The Christian and Missionary Alliance was built. The principle of personal trust and commitment is still reflected in the denomination’s financial policies. Dr. Simpson believed in a simple life-style and in the practice of economy; in his opinion personal income was a resource for the propagation of the Gospel.

A study of early Alliance history reveals many examples of godly men and women who sacrificed unselfishly for the spread of the Gospel—at home and abroad. Some even sold their homes to contribute to the work. For example, Dr. H. M. Shuman sold a very profitable business, his home, and all of his financial holdings. He planned to enter the ministry but would not do so until he had invested everything he had in the Lord’s work. Then, stepping out in faith, he pioneered a storefront church. Shuman became a prominent leader in the Alliance, ultimately serving as its president for more than twenty years.
Early Struggles

Every movement of spiritual significance seems destined to encounter opposition and face severe testing over matters of doctrinal purity. The Christian and Missionary Alliance was no exception. As the holiness movement gained momentum, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues did as well. Many revivalist campaigns were accompanied by demonstrations accredited to the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. This caused no particular problem in Alliance gatherings until proponents of tongues speaking began to teach that the phenomena was required proof of the filling in the Holy Spirit. This interpretation is known as the evidence doctrine and, simply stated, means that speaking in tongues is the outward evidence of receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Simpson and other leaders became concerned when the evidence doctrine began to invade the Alliance constituency. Dr. Henry Wilson, an Episcopal minister and co-pastor with Dr. Simpson at the Gospel Tabernacle in New York City, was sent to visit churches where tongues had become an issue. He was asked to evaluate the phenomena and determine whether or not its practices were biblical. Wilson reported that while he sometimes found something of God in the practice, he feared that it was too often over emphasized to the point of being “extra-biblical.”

The consensus among Alliance leaders was to reject the evidence doctrine. Most believed that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were intended for the church today but that God could and did give any of them as He willed. They could not accept that any one, single gift was required as evidence to the filling of the Holy Spirit. Regrettably, The Christian and Missionary Alliance was divided over this decision. A number of pastors left the organization and with them entire congregations. Many individual members left as well. The infant society of believers had gone through its own baptism of fire. The seriousness of the situation demanded official action concerning the organization’s doctrinal position. Thus, in 1906, the Conference on Alliance Truth and Testimony was convened. Various leaders presented papers, and extended periods were spent in prayer. The meeting ended with a fresh assertion of the original position, confirming the stand taken on the tongues issue by the founders. The Alliance has remained firm in this position to the present.

Reorganization

Under the blessing of God, the fledgling society—a term popularly used to describe the Alliance in the early years—survived the formative years. With each test, The Christian and Missionary Alliance grew stronger. In 1912, a watershed year, General Council revised its constitution to assign a democratic character to its government. The new legislation provided for the selection of delegates to represent the interests of the churches and branches at General Council. The society’s highest authoritative body would be a legislative assembly. At the same session of council, the Alliance was divided into districts to foster the
development of the work in North America. The goal was to establish churches where the fourfold gospel would be preached, thus promoting the vision to evangelize the whole world.

The Alliance reaffirmed its core values two years later. The delegates to the 1914 Council were concerned about possible deviation from the original spirit of the organization. They wished to define its character as a lay movement dedicated to world evangelism, especially to the unreached peoples of the world. Alliance founder and president, A.B. Simpson, set forth ten points that spelled out the society’s policies and ideals. This action strengthened the resolve of Alliance people everywhere and deepened their commitment to world evangelism.

Renewed Growth

Like all religious bodies in America and Europe, the Alliance faced serious limitations in finances and manpower during World War I. The international conflict took its toll on every aspect of society. Shortly after the war, Dr. Simpson’s death forced Alliance leaders to seek a new president. Dr. Paul Rader was viewed as the most obvious choice. His international reputation and stature as an evangelist and preacher seemed to fit him for the position. However, Rader found the administrative aspects of the post binding, and his term of office was short. He was followed for a brief period by a quiet and unassuming man named Frederic Senft. Eventually, H. M. Shuman, who had demonstrated his skill as a businessman before answering God’s call to full-time ministry, was elected president. Under Shuman’s leadership, the work prospered, and many new churches were planted.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance in North America was especially productive throughout the 1930s. Despite the depression, the movement grew. Storefront churches sprang up in many parts of the U.S. and Canada. The Alliance was making a necessary change from a foreign missionary society to a church body committed to fulfilling the Great Commission. Interdenominational faith missions did not engage in church-planting in North America. Yet, it was obvious to Alliance leaders that The Christian and Missionary Alliance would need to establish more churches at home in order to broaden its base of support and fulfill its mandate to reach unreached peoples in the remote places of the world. But could the society muster the strength necessary to continue its missionary effort while expanding in America? It could, and did. During this period, The Christian and Missionary Alliance exceeded all other church bodies in North America in maintaining growth overseas and at home. From the decade of the twenties until well into the forties, it was not uncommon for Alliance churches and branches to give fifty percent of their incomes to world evangelism.

Faithfulness to the cause of world missions made the Alliance unique. Its name in the evangelical church community became synonymous with integrity and a devoted commitment to spreading the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Chapter Three

GROWTH IN NORTH AMERICA

The First Fifty Years: 1887-1938

George P. Pardington’s book, Twenty-five Wonderful Years, was the first published Alliance history. Pardington’s account confirms that in the early years the Alliance thought of itself as a para-church, missionary organization concerned with sharing the fullness of Christ. The principal structure employed in the “homeland” was a system of branches. Unlike a church, a branch was organized under the direction of a superintendent, not a pastor. Alliance branches consisted of interested people who met regularly for prayer, study of the fourfold gospel, and concentration on world missions. Branch meetings included reports of Alliance missionary activity. By the twenty-fifth year, one hundred and seventy-five organized Alliance branches were meeting in cities all across the United States and Canada. An additional sixty-seven groups that were not officially organized were meeting on a regular basis as well. Records indicate that a total of one hundred sixty-eight official workers were serving the Alliance in 1912. At this juncture, General Council passed legislation to organize Alliance branches into seven geographical districts: the New England District, Canadian District, Eastern District, Central District, Southern District, Western District, and Pacific Coast District. A superintendent was appointed to each district. Superintendents typically were local church pastors who, in addition to their regular pastoral duties, gave oversight to the branches operating in their respective districts.

Pardington’s account noted that concern for evangelism among the Alliance constituency increased as its first quarter-century of ministry drew to a close. Some mainline denominations accused Alliance people of proselytizing. In response, Alliance leaders encouraged their branches and churches to emphasize evangelism as opposed to membership. Many branches met in homes; others met in storefronts or rented halls. With the exception of fifty or less congregations, the Alliance owned
no church buildings during this period. The few exceptions, scattered across the country, were organized as independent churches affiliated with The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

During those twenty-five years of ministry, Alliance expansion in North America escalated. Social and spiritual conditions in the United States and Canada fostered this growth. Many who were dissatisfied with mainline churches joined newly formed bodies that subscribed firmly to biblical Christianity and worldwide evangelism. The difficulties the constituency faced during The Great Depression seemed to stimulate church growth even further. In the midst of financial hardship, believers became more dedicated to the cause of Christ. The two decades between 1918 and 1938 were marked with significant growth. By 1938 the Alliance roster of official workers in North America had increased to a total of 519, commensurate with the total of existing branches, which also stood at 519. In addition, many Alliance branches were now operating as churches. Branches typically held their meetings on Sunday afternoons to avoid competition with denominational church schedules, but when they organized officially as churches most began scheduling worship services and Sunday Schools on Sunday mornings.

The period of decline in Alliance membership that was associated with the rift among holiness groups over the tongues issue did not stifle expansion for very long. In addition to reaffirming the society’s position on speaking in tongues, the 1906 Conference on Alliance Truth and Testimony articulated a clear message regarding the fullness of Christ, the gifts of the Spirit and the mission of the Church. The organization’s public and corporate recommitment to its historic message seemed not only to stabilize its position but also to promote further growth.

**Extension at Home: 1939-1963**

The growth of the Alliance between its 50th and 75th anniversaries was greater than during any previous period. The 1940s and '50s brought many changes in American culture that affected the evangelical church movement. Income levels improved greatly during this time, and church members began to concern themselves with adequate houses of worship. The Alliance moved from the temporary facilities and “tabernacles” of the earlier days to more traditional church buildings. More attention was given to the maintenance and needs of local congregations.

World War II came and went. For a few years, church growth was retarded by the impact of the war, but soon a new evangelistic thrust broadened Alliance outreach to more and more communities in the United States and Canada. District boundaries changed as new districts were formed. As the vision for extension burned in the hearts of Alliance leaders, fresh and innovative methods were introduced to church planting efforts. The storefront mentality of the first fifty years of the movement was laid aside in favor of developing churches that were more suited to their respective communities. Basic-unit building packages were designed at modest costs, and greater care was given to the selection of appropriate church
sites. Church extension came to be integral to the organization’s ministry philosophy. Alliance leaders in the United States and Canada believed that church growth at home was crucial to missionary recruitment and financial support for the work overseas. In addition, Alliance leaders were committed to being evangelistic at home. True missionary vision was not limited to concern for lost souls at the ends of the earth but for those living next door as well.

Between 1939 and 1963 the stage was set and patterns established for the growth and vitality that has characterized the Alliance in recent decades. Continued growth necessitated a more sophisticated system of oversight in North America. Until the 1960s the “Home Department” (now National Church Ministries) was very small. One of the early “home secretaries” (equivalent to the executive director of National Church Ministries) quipped that all his files could be kept in a shoe box! Documentation from the first seventy-five years of Alliance history reveals that for more than a half century little attention was given to statistics or to any record-keeping for the North American work. Finally, in the late 1950s, Home Secretary Rev. H. E. Nelson established precedent. A system for records and analysis was developed to help national leaders and district superintendents plan for continued growth.

**The Momentum Continues: 1963 to the Present**

The Christian and Missionary Alliance continued to expand in North America during the fifteen year administration of Rev. L. W. Pippert. Building on the foundation of the past, Pippert pressed for even greater progress in church expansion. He proposed and developed a church planting loan fund to provide new plants with adequate resources for purchasing property and building initial units. He encouraged district extension by studying statistics and preparing guidelines for district superintendents. Training sessions on the principles of church growth were offered. And, perhaps most significant, Pippert’s administration refocused Alliance energies at home on evangelism. In 1965, he and several colleagues attended the Berlin Congress on Evangelism. They returned with an even greater burden for reaching the lost in America.

Under Pippert’s leadership, the Alliance called its own congress on evangelism. The event was held in Atlanta, Georgia where more than three hundred leaders gathered to discuss plans for evangelizing North America. District superintendents, Alliance pastors, and lay delegates heard reports from the Berlin Congress. Strategies for growth were discussed, and plans were made for more aggressive evangelism. The Berlin Congress was a turning point in the history of evangelism in North America. Evangelicals from many denominations, including The Christian and Missionary Alliance, participated in a nationwide effort called *Key ’73*. It produced a substantial increase in conversions. As more and more people came to know Christ as Savior, many were baptized; church membership increased to its highest level for many years.
In the 1980s, the development of Intercultural Ministries contributed enormously to the denomination’s growth in North America. Intercultural districts oversee evangelistic efforts in more than nineteen language groups in the United States. Hundreds of ethnic churches were opened in the 1980s and ’90s. Without them Alliance growth would have declined. Intercultural church growth far surpassed that of anglo churches in the 1990s. But putting the numbers aside, it is the nature of the growth among intercultural churches during this time that is most impressive. Growth by conversion (i.e., winning the lost) is by far the most important measurement of church growth.

Clearly, it was the development and expansion of intercultural churches that kept the Christian and Missionary Alliance in the United States on the cutting edge in the closing decades of the 20th century. Through immigration, the mission field has come to North America, bringing a new dimension to Alliance evangelism at home.

In spite of the widespread church decline that came with the culture of the 1990s, growth in the Alliance kept the denomination in the vanguard of evangelical groups. Several factors contributed, but mostly it was its historic commitment to church planting at home and abroad. Council reaffirmed this commitment in the late seventies, in preparation for its centennial, by establishing a goal to double the North American Alliance constituency by 1987. This incredible goal was a testimony of the faith and vitality that has characterized The Christian and Missionary since its inception. Through various efforts, such as the “Easter 100” church planting offensive, “A Thousand More by ’94” and the “Churches Planting Churches” strategy, The Christian and Missionary Alliance remained the leading evangelical denomination in church planting in the 1990s. Creative and innovative methods for church development continue.

Under the leadership of President Paul F. Bubna, the 1997 General Council acknowledged a change in dynamics. Council called for National Church Ministries and International Ministries to join hands with our ethnic brothers and sisters in reaching our multi-cultural nation and world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Several task forces were formed to devise strategies to evangelize targeted cultural groups.

After the sudden death of Dr. Paul Bubna in 1998, Dr. Peter N. Nanfelt was elected president of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. His vision was that the Alliance return to being more movement-like with greater flexibility and innovation in its approach to fulfilling the Great Commission, while retaining the structure of a denomination. He led the way in setting some goals, known as the 2010 Challenge, toward which the denomination is now working.

Dr. Gary Benedict was elected as the eleventh president of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in General Council in 2006. Dr. Benedict’s humble spirit has been an example to all of servant leadership.
The Christian and Missionary Alliance of Canada

From inception, the Alliance churches in Canada operated alongside Alliance churches in the United States under a common constitution and administration.

The Alliance in Canada has enjoyed steady growth throughout our history, providing a strength and vitality of its own. With a rising sense of nationalism, Canadians became more concerned about their separate identity—even in areas such as church governance. Accordingly, many denominations encouraged their Canadian churches to become autonomous.

Because of the close ties between its churches in Canada and the United States, this step was slow in coming to The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Ultimately, however, the changes in political climate and the impact of nationalism on society in general caused Alliance leaders in Canada to consider a plan for autonomy. In 1975, the Canadian Alliance registered with Canada’s Parliament as a distinct corporation. Subsequently, a Canadian Tri-District Conference met in 1975 to begin developing its own programs of evangelism, extension, and Christian education. Steps were taken to allow the Canadian districts greater self-determination in managing their affairs.

A resolution recommending autonomy for Alliance churches in Canada was presented by the Board of Directors to General Council in 1979. It established January 1, 1981, as the completion date, allowing one year for the development of a Canadian constitution and the calling of a general assembly for its adoption and for an election of officers. At its first general assembly in 1980, The Christian and Missionary Alliance of Canada elected Rev. Melvin Sylvester as its first president. Dr. Arnold Cook and Dr. Franklin Pyles have led the Canadian Christian and Missionary Alliance in more recent years.

Up until the late 1990s, the Canadian Alliance continued to send its missionaries through the division of International Ministries in the United States. Under this arrangement, Canadian churches recruited, appointed and provided financial support for their own missionaries but sent them overseas under the jurisdiction of the U.S. division of International Ministries. In 1997, a process was mutually established and implemented to place Canada’s missionaries under the authority of The Christian and Missionary Alliance of Canada.

Auxiliary Ministries

Education

A study of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in North America would not be complete without examining the denomination’s auxiliary ministries and institutions. From early the days of Dr. Simpson’s leadership, The Christian and Missionary Alliance has always placed a high value on training workers. Dr. Simpson’s vision for a missionary training institute was innovative. The patterns he established for training pastors and missionaries have proved to be a blessing to the entire evangelical church, not only in North America but around the world. A number of schools were opened in the early years of Alliance history. Some were
short-lived but, nonetheless, they effectively trained Alliance workers in their time. For the first fifty years all Alliance schools were Bible institutes.

In the early 1950s Alliance leaders began to concern themselves with accreditation. General interest in higher education was increasing, and workers expressed the need for more and better training. In addition, young people enrolled in Alliance institutes were finding it difficult to transfer their credits to other institutions. Eventually, all Alliance schools of higher education completed the accreditation process and became Bible colleges. Not only that, Alliance educators took an active role in the formation of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. With the passing of time, Alliance Schools—Nyack College, Crown College, Simpson University and affiliated Toccoa Falls College—expanded their liberal arts curricula but continued to focus on training professional, full-time Christian workers. In that sense, they have remained as professional colleges. All Alliance schools, including Toccoa Falls College, are accredited, enabling their students to transfer credits to other institutions of higher learning.

Accreditation was particularly important for Alliance ministerial candidates who were interested in seminary training. During the fifties, students chose from a variety of evangelical seminaries in the country. Over time, concern for Alliance higher education grew, and a department of education was formed. Arrangements were made with several leading seminaries for their acceptance of ministerial students coming out of Alliance colleges. As students neared completion of these seminary programs they were brought to Nyack for concentrated study in Alliance doctrine, government, and policies. This program of study was designed to uniquely prepare graduates from non-Alliance school for ministries within the denomination.

In addition, a graduate program for missionary studies was established at Nyack College, called The Jaffray School of Missions. Theological educators across the nation developed similar programs. Thus, through the Jaffray School, the Alliance again pioneered in education—this time in the discipline of missiology. But even more significant, the Jaffray program became the foundation for a seminary. First called the Alliance School of Theology and Missions, it is now officially named Alliance Theological Seminary (ATS).

Traditionally, The Christian and Missionary Alliance has sought the best means possible to provide training for any individual who senses God’s call to ministry. But what could be done for individuals called by God to church ministries who had no opportunity for formal education? Strangely, the answer to this question came from the mission field. Through Theological Education by Extension (TEE), church workers were being trained all over the world, even in the most remote places. Could the TEE model be adapted for use in the United States? National Church Ministries believed it could. NCM established the Office of Alternative Education (now called Church Leadership Academy) for the specific purpose of implementing programs to equip and qualify individuals for ministry in Alliance churches. Two distinct programs are offered: Basic Training, for preparing lay leaders, and the
more advanced Ministerial Study Program (MSP), for training those who are called to vocational ministry. These programs have been the means by which great numbers of pastors have been trained and approved for ministry.

Though the original programs have changed and course offerings continue to be expanded, National Church Ministries remains committed to providing continuing education for leaders wishing to improve their skills and expand their knowledge, as well as training for individuals seeking to qualify for official ministry in the Alliance. The goal is to prepare pastors and church leaders who can reproduce themselves in the context of healthy Great Commission churches. Even as Dr. Simpson drew upon the resources available for training workers in his own time, Alliance leadership is drawing upon the educational and technological resources available in the twenty-first century. For detailed information about programs and course offerings, contact Church Leadership Academy at the National Office in Colorado Springs or visit the C&MA website: www.cmalliance.org/ncm/cla.jsp.

Publishing

We have already noted that Simpson understood the power of the printed page. He published a missionary magazine years before the Alliance was officially organized. In time, this magazine became the official publication of The Alliance. The magazine, having gone through several changes in name and format throughout its history, is now titled Alliance Life. The magazine’s offices are housed in the National Office building in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Alliance Life has enjoyed a large ministry across the United States, Canada, and the English-speaking world abroad. It includes articles for spiritual nurture, news about the Alliance family, and reports from various fields where The Christian and Missionary Alliance is working. In addition to the journal’s missionary emphasis, it continues to set forth the doctrinal distinctives of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

In recent years The Christian and Missionary Alliance has developed a site on the internet, www.cmalliance.org. This has become one of the principal means of disseminating information for the denomination, including news updates, explanations of various C&MA ministries, resources, and a wealth of other information.

Retirement Centers

The story of the denomination’s development in North America would not be complete without mention of its retirement centers. The first Alliance home for retirees was born out of the concern of woman named Jennie Suppes. Her compassion for “tired and weary missionaries” motivated Mrs. Suppes to purchase property in 1920 for a missionary rest home in Glendale, California. In 1948, the Suppes Home was expanded to include housing for the elderly, and in 1950 it was deeded to The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Later, a more desirable location was found in Santa Ana, California. The home moved to its new facility in 1975, now called Town and Country Manor.
The Alliance Home of Deland (Florida) was originally founded in 1954 by the Southeastern District. The district’s leadership recognized a very real need to provide a retirement residence for “the relief of hardships and distress of aged individuals, especially such as are members of the churches of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.” The Deland facility, later known as The Alliance Community for Retirement Living, is now affiliated with Shell Point Village.

Later, a similar home was opened in Carlisle, Pennsylvania to serve the needs of senior adults in the Northeastern states. Known for many years simply as the Carlisle Home, it is now Chapel Pointe at Carlisle.

The largest Alliance retirement facility, Shell Point Village, is located near Ft. Myers on Florida’s gulf coast. Like the other centers, Shell Point’s well-appointed complex offers a nursing pavilion and complete service facilities, including The Village Church.

These centers present a variety of housing options and price ranges. Through the years they have become home to scores of people who have served God faithfully in The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Though the homes were developed primarily to address the housing needs of official workers and/or members of Alliance churches, applications of non-Alliance individuals are welcomed and honored on a space-available basis. They serve individuals from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and experience.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance has done well to provide full-service, supportive communities for its retired workers. And as the population of senior adults in North America increases, the Alliance continues to expand and design new ministries specifically for them.

**Ongoing Commitment**

While Alliance leaders were called upon to develop auxiliary ministries they were careful to maintain the same strong commitment to the missionary endeavor as did our founder. And, though expenditures at home have increased, funding for missionary work overseas has steadily increased to higher levels with each passing year. The continued and renewed commitment of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, as a vital part of the Body of Christ in North America, is to produce healthy Great Commission churches—congregations with a burning passion to fulfill our Savior’s mandate at home and abroad.
Chapter Four

WORLD MISSION

We have seen that a distinguishing characteristic of The Christian and Missionary Alliance—setting it apart from other evangelical bodies in North America—is its compelling concern for evangelizing the world. This is why, without apology, we devote the next two chapters to the subject of missions and its particular place in local church ministry.

Enflamed with a passion for “the regions beyond,” Dr. Simpson was disturbed by what he observed in the Presbytery where he served, as well as among churches of other mainline denominations. He believed their missionary programs were stereotyped and unrealistic. He was burdened for the unreached masses from all over the world and raised the embarrassing question, “Why is most of the missionary workforce concentrated in a few, large urban centers?” The rural masses in the interior of remote countries had not yet heard the gospel message.

Simpson’s move to New York City brought him even closer to the missionary endeavors of denominational churches. He collected information and began to publish *The Gospel for All Lands*, the first pictorial missionary magazine ever published. Motivated by the desire to see the gospel taken further, Simpson traveled the world to discover for himself the needs of unreached countries. In 1893, he published his findings in a book entitled *Larger Outlooks on Missionary Lands*.

Simpson offered a solid, biblical basis for world evangelization in the sermons he preached from his pulpit in the Gospel Tabernacle in New York City. His passion to reach unreached people for Christ was theological, not merely emotional—a priority, not a project. He traversed the U.S. and Canada, speaking to Alliance people in missionary conventions. The message was always centered on Christ and the priority of carrying the message of His fullness to the whole world. The November 11, 1899 issue of *The Alliance Weekly* (the forerunner of *Alliance Life* magazine) carried the following statement:
Let us never forget the special calling of our Alliance work. It is not to form a new religious denomination. It is not to duplicate a work already done. It is not to advocate any special system of theology. It is not to glorify any man or men. It is first to hold up Jesus in his fullness, “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Next, to lead God’s hungry children to know their full inheritance of privilege and blessing for spirit, soul and body. Next, to witness to the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as our millennial king. And finally, to encourage and incite the people of God to do the neglected work of our age and time among the unchurched classes at home and the perishing heathen abroad. God will bless us if we are true to this trust.

The Basis for World Missions

The founding fathers of The Christian and Missionary Alliance based their commitment to world missions solidly on the Scripture. Their primary texts were the Great Commission and a passage from Acts 15.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20, NIV).

When they finished, James spoke up: “Brothers, listen to me. Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: ‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things that have been known for ages’…” (Acts 15:13-18, NIV).

In the second reference, James points out to the Jerusalem Council that the purpose of God in this age is to gather from among the Gentiles a people for His name. Alliance leaders believed Jesus has commissioned the Church to fulfill this ministry.

A strong belief in the premillennial return of Christ motivated the leadership even further. Matthew 24:14 was the key text upon which they based this view.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (NIV).

Simpson understood this to mean that Christ would not return until the gospel had been preached to all nations. Since signs of the end of the age seemed apparent to him, he believed the missionary program of the church was more than imperative; it was also urgent. Thus, Simpson and his followers were intent upon pioneering outreach. They endeavored to press beyond the coastal cities to the unreached tribes, to penetrate the remote areas—to reach the last tribe on earth. This sense of urgency, rooted in our founders’ premillennial eschatology, produced a pioneering spirit, which has prevailed through most of Alliance history.
But Dr. Simpson operated from more than a sense of mission. He and his colleagues took the words of Acts 1:8 quite literally.

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (NIV).*

Early Alliance leaders left a legacy of faith in God’s provision. They believed the power required for world evangelism was to be found in the personal, indwelling Spirit of God—the One who, as Jesus promised, would endue called believers with spiritual power for effective ministry.

**Missionary Preparation**

The Christian and Missionary Alliance was unique in its approach to recruitment and training for missionaries. Denominational churches appointed only highly-trained individuals for foreign service. Simpson saw potential in conscripting a band of “irregulars”—people who were not educated academically but who had responded to a call from God and were anointed for ministry by the Holy Spirit. Simpson devised a new strategy for missionary training. He established a short-term Bible institute with a concentrated program designed to equip his irregulars with a working knowledge of the Bible, a clear understanding of basic Christian doctrine, and the fundamentals of ministry concerns. The idea of preparing lay people for ministry, particularly in a short amount of time, was almost unthinkable in Simpson’s day. While a number of his missionary recruits were highly trained, already possessing academic credentials, the majority were not. For these, the Missionary Training Institute was the answer. Scores of its graduates were soon bound for missionary service abroad. The method proved to be effective, and other Bible institutes subsequently were established across the country.

In recent years, academic preparation for Alliance missionaries has been expanded and improved. Educational levels in many overseas countries have advanced as well. Numerous national church leaders have gone abroad to acquire graduate degrees from respected institutions. Missionary personnel must be equipped on at least an equal level. Alliance colleges and seminaries have responded to this need. The Alliance Theological Seminary and Canadian Theological Seminary offer unique programs for those preparing for missionary service. Courses in theology, sociology and anthropology are combined to prepare missionary candidates for translating and applying theology into the cultural contexts to which they are being sent. Many Alliance missionaries are accomplished linguists; some are outstanding authorities in the fields of translation and language analysis. Alliance personnel have contributed significantly to the worldwide missionary effort. The Alliance has shared workers with many para-church organizations such as the American Bible Society and other ministries that distribute the written Word of God around the world.
Basis of Support for Missions

Since its beginning and similar to other missionary agencies, the Alliance has operated on the principle of faith. Every Alliance worker pledges himself to trust God fully for his financial support. However, he does not have to raise that support alone as do workers in some other organizations. Dr. Simpson urged the members of Alliance churches and branches to seek the Lord’s guidance regarding their financial contributions. He encouraged them to give beyond their own capabilities and to trust God for the difference. Spectacular amounts of money were raised in this way. Throughout its history, the Alliance has continued this practice.

The annual budget of The Christian and Missionary Alliance is established on the element of faith. The entire missionary program is built upon the sacrificial, faith-inspired giving of God’s people. Alliance missionaries are not required to independently raise their own support since the society believes that all of God’s people must trust Him together to meet financial needs. This system of providing for missionaries is uniquely different from that of most other faith missions. Yet it remains effective today, as it was when it was first instituted. This financial policy is a distinct part of the genius behind The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Promoting Overseas Ministries

Another legacy from our heritage is the missionary conference (or convention) held annually in each church of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. The conference structure provides the forum for returning missionary personnel to report to North American churches. They are able to share the progress and challenges of their respective fields directly with the supporting congregations. Tour assignments and schedules are assigned by the National Office in Colorado Springs and administered through the districts.

North American church leaders assume the responsibility for keeping the vision and passion for missions alive in the churches at home. Alliance Women Ministries and C&MA Men’s Ministry are auxiliary organizations that are actively involved and praying for, promoting, and supporting the overseas work.

Exposure once a year through the annual missionary conference is not enough to keep the vision alive. Pastors and church leaders are encouraged to bring in missionary speakers for other occasions. The Office of Communications at the National Office in Colorado Springs produces the Alliance Video Magazine, an up-to-date visual presentation of Alliance ministries around the world. And, Alliance Life magazine and the C&MA web page continue to be excellent sources of information.

Alliance churches in other nations, including England, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and various Latin American countries are also involved in missions. They, too, host annual conferences and contribute to the worldwide missionary enterprise. Alliance missions have now come full circle. A number of Third World nations, including some where Dr. Simpson sent his early recruits, are now sending workers to other parts of the world.
A Movement for God

from their own national church organizations. Thus, the force of Alliance messengers serving in the “uttermost parts of the earth” continues to swell. Alliance churches worldwide encourage programs of missionary education for children and youth, as well as for adults. Reaching the world for Christ does and must remain the priority of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

**Administration**

The overseas work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance of the United States is supervised by the division of International Ministries (IM) from the National Office in Colorado Springs. Serving under the vice-president of International Ministries are regional directors, who are responsible for designated, geographical areas. The Regional Directors regularly visit their assigned territories, consulting with missionaries and national church leaders. Since national churches are independent bodies, the IM personnel in each country operate under a contract with the respective national church. Alliance missionaries from North America are to assist in the growth and development of the national church.

International Ministries also maintains an office for missionary candidates. Its director is responsible for overseeing the preparation of those approved for overseas assignment. Ministry at home is an important aspect of missionary preparation. Past records indicate that missionaries must be well established spiritually and experienced in ministry and personal evangelism at home in order to be effective overseas. Thus, The Christian and Missionary Alliance requires two years of home service for every candidate. This ministry experience is carefully supervised by the district in consultation with International Ministries.

Another area of administration of International Ministries is CAMA (Compassion and Mercy Associates) Services, the relief arm of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. CAMA Services provides help in times of disaster as well as community development projects, using these programs as a means of presenting the gospel to those in need.

The International Fellowship of Alliance Professionals (IFAP) supervises Alliance “tentmakers,” people who work in other countries in a professional capacity, but have a burden for sharing the gospel with the people of the country. This is another area of administration of International Ministries.

**The Goal of the Mission**

The missionary arm of The Christian and Missionary Alliance maintains its commitment to evangelism, church planting, and leadership training. Alliance leaders have resisted the idea of establishing philanthropic institutions. Obviously, compassionate care for basic human need is often required, but the Alliance has been careful to carry on medical work and similar ministries with the ultimate purpose of winning the lost and establishing churches. This unique characteristic of Alliance missions has been key to our growth. The magnitude of the Alliance overseas is a testimony to the validity of this approach. We have learned in recent
years that as mission fields have been closed by social and political forces the Alliance church within those countries lives on.

Along with zeal for evangelism, Alliance missionaries have been careful to establish indigenous churches. They have concentrated on training and equipping national church leaders in every country. Once the national church is established, the missionary force consults with the church and supports its ministries of evangelism and church planting. This policy insures the development of national churches that are self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating. This pattern is modeled after the methods of the apostles in the first century. Inherent in it is the passion for carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. The passion is infused into new, indigenous churches even as it is kept alive in older, established ones. Thus, Alliance national churches around the world share our missionary vision. This explains how Alliance missions have come full circle. In addition to sending missionaries from their own ranks, many of our national churches are giving consistently and sacrificially to extend the gospel message to other parts of the world.

Rapidly changing political, economic, and social conditions underscore the urgency of world evangelization. While doors are open, the caring church must move in to reach the lost for Christ. This has been and always will be the first order of business for The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Unlike denominations that devote only a token of their finances, energies, and manpower to overseas missions, the Alliance continues to pour the best of its resources into fulfilling the Great Commission. Alliance churches teach and encourage every believer to pray for world evangelization, to give generously, and to open their own hearts to God’s call. It is the responsibility of local church pastors and elders to pray for the recruitment of missionaries within their own congregations and to plan their annual missionary conferences accordingly. The conferences accomplish more than reporting what is happening around the world and encouraging believers to seek God for what they should promise by faith to give. They also are used of God to open hearts to His call into ministry.

The history of Alliance missions is an exciting and moving drama of the grace of God at work in the lives of Christ’s “sent ones.” From the first missionaries leaving New York City for the Congo, in 1884, to the most recent missionary recruits, devotion and deep consecration to Christ have prevailed. Within its first six years of ministry overseas, the Alliance opened twelve fields and developed forty individual missionary stations, constituting a total missionary force of 180. That force has now grown to over 850 workers, and the worldwide outreach of The Christian and Missionary Alliance reaches more than 60 countries.

Many Alliance missionaries have laid down their lives for the cause of the gospel. The story of Alliance missions cannot be told without also adding the remarkable testimonies of thousands of national church leaders, pastors, and lay people who have devoted their lives to serving Jesus Christ. Many were martyred for His sake. Their dedication and ministry is a story that will be fully known only
when we stand before Christ in that great day when He gathers together His entire church.

**The Alliance World Fellowship**

The growth of Alliance national churches around the world gave rise to the need for a larger forum for interaction. The social, political, and religious forces threatening the unity of the movement prompted the leadership in North America to call together a world conference of Alliance church leaders. The objective was the formation of a world fellowship to strengthen the brotherhood of Alliance national churches in their common goal of completing the task of world evangelism.

The historic conference met in Nyack, New York, May 20-23, 1975. Delegations from twenty-eight countries participated. Each day the conference schedule included reports of the work worldwide, as well as uplifting spiritual messages from God’s Word. The business sessions were devoted to the formulation of a constitution to govern the new organization under the title, The Alliance World Fellowship. Joy pervaded the assembly as delegates signed the official documents and worshipped the Lord, singing together in their respective languages. A spirit of holy celebration descended in mutual acknowledgment of what God had done in the hearts of the gathered Alliance leaders.

The Alliance World Fellowship is not a North American organization. Delegates are sent in proportion to the membership of the national church in each member country. Financial responsibilities are distributed on an equitable basis. Officers are elected from among the delegates and may be from any national church in good standing. Dr. Nathan Bailey was elected the first president of the Alliance World Fellowship and served until his untimely death while traveling in England in 1979. Succeeding presidents have been from Hong Kong, the Philippines, Australia and the Netherlands.

The Alliance World Fellowship (AWF) has stated its purpose in Article II of its constitution. It reads as follows:

1. To affirm our commitment to the Bible, God’s Word, as His complete and authoritative revelation to man.
2. To bear testimony to the particular truths of the Fourfold Gospel: Christ our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.
3. To support and encourage one another in the task of Mission and Evangelism which we understand to be the special calling of the church.
4. To provide opportunity and encourage expression of fellowship among members of The Alliance World Fellowship.
5. To provide a non-legislative means of consultation and cooperation among the world community of the member churches.
6. To share our mutual concerns and insights relating to the various crucial spiritual and temporal issues of the church.
7. To promote ministerial and missionary education.
8. To uphold one another in prayer and administer relief in times of crisis.
9. To advance unity of theological and moral standards among the members of The Alliance World Fellowship.

10. To promote the exchange of personnel in special areas of ministry.

The Alliance World Fellowship convenes every four years, for fellowship, reports and consideration of matters of mutual concern to all member countries. The maximum number of official delegates from any member national church body was set at five. Additional, corresponding delegates may attend without the right to vote.

The AWF’s constitution requires all member national churches to endorse the Christian and Missionary Alliance Statement of Faith in order to preserve doctrinal unity.

A primary purpose of the AWF is to promote worldwide missionary outreach. The North American church is no longer the exclusive sending body in terms of financial support and missionary personnel. Since a number of Alliance national churches now support their own overseas missionaries, The Alliance World Fellowship seeks to coordinate the combined efforts of these national church organizations. The Christian and Missionary Alliance of the United States is a member church among the many national church groups established throughout the history of Alliance missions. Whether or not our founder actually envisioned such a fellowship of nations he would undoubtedly rejoice with us over what God has accomplished through the Christian and Missionary Alliance.
Chapter Five

MISSIONS AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Missionary involvement in a local church lends enthusiasm and vitality to every part of its ministry. Missions and evangelism are closely related. Congregations with a God-given passion for the lost overseas are also concerned for the lost in their own communities. A healthy, Great Commission congregation will want to do all it can to share the good news of Jesus Christ around the world and around the block.

The Pastor and Missions

Developing a missionary perspective in the local church falls, to a large extent, on the shoulders of the pastor. Lack of interest in local evangelism will ultimately result in the death of the congregation’s vision for foreign missions. An effective pastor will recognize his personal responsibility to preach, teach, and practice evangelism, as well as to promote the cause of missionary work overseas. A wise pastor does not view missions as a threat. He recognizes that a healthy interest in missions and faithful financial commitment to overseas evangelism is a source of inherent blessing for the local church. A congregation that remains committed to fulfilling the Lord’s command to reach lost humanity will find that God will supply its ministry needs. Blessing comes when individuals and churches make God’s priority their own priority.

In addition to his own example in personal giving and prayer, the pastor can cultivate a missionary vision among his congregation through preaching. The Old and New Testaments are filled with accounts that illustrate the basis for missions. Careful biblical scholarship will provide numerous opportunities throughout the course of a year’s preaching schedule to explain God’s great plan for the proclamation of the gospel to all the peoples of the world. The implications of God’s plan for the local church are inescapable.
Missionary vision cannot effectively be built upon the spectacular. Television and other media have exposed us to a wide variety of cultures and increased America’s awareness of other peoples. The exotic side of missionary life no longer captures interest as it once did. Instead, churches should focus on the real reason for evangelism—to proclaim the message of redemption to the whole world. Reducing missions to a humanitarian project almost surely guarantees declining interest within a culture where headline news has become big business. The proper and lasting motivation must come from the Lord of the universe.

The LORD God intended the nation of Israel to be His witness to the Gentiles. He grieved when the sons of Abraham failed in that witness. Speaking through the prophet Ezekiel, He declared a day when He would make himself known in the sight of the nations of the world (Ezekiel 38:23). Both Old and New Testaments reveal God’s purpose in proclaiming the gospel to all men, gathering a people for His name from every kindred, and tongue, and tribe, and nation. This is the essence of missionary preaching, and it overlaps other areas of Christian discipleship.

For example, a message on stewardship should touch on the believer’s financial responsibility to support world missions. And one cannot adequately speak about intercessory prayer without pointing to the urgency of the church’s call for continuous prayer for global evangelism. The pulpit then becomes a means of providing the congregation with an understanding of God’s all-encompassing plan for the redemption of mankind.

Sunday School

But missionary education must go beyond Sunday’s sermons. The Sunday School is perhaps the second most strategic church agency for promoting missions; yet it easily can be overlooked in the context of missionary education. The Sunday School provides a year-round opportunity to provide children and adults with a biblical basis for missions and to offer information about specific mission fields. Setting aside one Sunday each month for a missions emphasis is an effective means of raising awareness of the needs of the missionary endeavor. Some excellent tools for missionary education are available. For example, Kids on a Mission is an excellent source of ideas for educating children about their missionary responsibility.

Missionary education can also be interjected into club program curricula. Alliance churches using club curricula, which do not include missions (or which do not include information about Alliance fields) should provide their club workers with supplemental materials. In like manner, missionary resources can also be used to enhance summer ministries for children. Children tend to be somewhat less immunized by the media and usually respond with interest to audio-visuals, crafts, and other resources designed to convey missionary stories.

Ideally, every congregation should appoint a person to be in charge of missionary education, to compile missionary education materials and provide resources for workers in each area of the church’s ministry. He or she should be a
member of the Sunday school executive committee or of the Disciplemaking Ministries Committee. Regardless of title or position, someone is needed to research and collect materials relating to missions, file them properly, and oversee their distribution.

All agencies involved in Christian education in the local church should consider how best to include missions in their curriculum. Leadership training should include methods and resources for missionary education. Even more vital is a solid, biblical theology of missions. The pastor is the key to this, and in small churches he himself may need to give attention to missionary education. Passionate concern for world evangelism must emanate from the pulpit before it can radiate from the pew.

**Alliance Youth**

Missionary education is particularly vital to local church youth ministry. Youth leaders should devote a portion of their program every quarter to focus on missions. Videos, drama sketches, simulated experiences, and a host of interesting program ideas are available. It may be possible to invite a missionary speaker or a “missionary kid” (MK) to speak to your youth group. Youth or adults who have visited a mission field may be willing to share their experiences. Members of the Global Ventures are another good resource for presentations to youth, as well as students from Alliance colleges. And, of course, the LIFE conferences, sponsored every three years by the Life Impact Ministries, will help challenge young people to consider investing their lives to share the gospel with unreached peoples in the world.

Summer missions opportunities have proved to be extremely effective in exposing Alliance young people to the needs of the world. In addition to recruiting a number of outstanding missionaries, these service opportunities have increased the awareness and understanding of our overseas work in local churches as young people have come home and told their stories. For more information on short-term missions trips for young people, visit the web site [www.aymission.org](http://www.aymission.org) or [www.global-ventures.org](http://www.global-ventures.org). Our largest number of missionary candidates are those who have grown up on the mission field—our MKs—or those who have served under Global Ventures or similar programs that actually took them into the field.

**Alliance Women Ministries**

Alliance Women Ministries have traditionally played a key role in local church missionary education. In some churches this organization tends to be very small and relates only to the ministry of prayer. While intercession is the primary calling of the Alliance Women, the burden for intercession is the direct and immediate result of information. For this reason, the Alliance Women National Committee not only provides information but also suggests ways for using it. A workbook is published each year to help local church Alliance Women leaders plan interesting and stimulating meetings and events. Some Alliance Women’s groups plan special events throughout the year to include the entire church family. Other activities are
designed for women only. Well-planned luncheons or afternoon teas provide a forum for featuring missions. Alliance Women have established their purpose to support missions in prayer, to assist with missionary outfits, and to provide gifts and encouragement for MKs. For more information on Alliance Women, please visit their web site: www.alliancewomen.org.

C&MA Men’s Ministry
The Alliance Men have developed some innovative approaches for lay involvement in overseas work. The pastor and lay leadership should encourage this. Many Alliance Men groups have sent some of their members to the field for short-term work projects, evangelism efforts or prayer journeys. In addition, a missionary vision often can be fostered through outreach programs to men within the local community. Prayer breakfasts and special events sponsored by Alliance Men help promote world missions and evangelism in the church and the community.

Practical Ideas for Promotion
Mid-week Bible studies, home groups and prayer meetings also present opportunities for sharing updates and information that will keep missionary interest alive. Timely information is always available for those wanting to include a “missionary moment.” Perhaps an excerpt from a letter just received from the mission field or a brief summary of news received from the National Office can be included for special prayer. Up-to-date requests from Alliance missionaries around the world can be obtained by visiting The Christian and Missionary Alliance website on the Internet. Keeping a resource file available to church leadership will provide encouragement and convenience for sharing current information. Some church offices are providing dated information via E-mail.

Sunday bulletins and prayer sheets can include missionary needs and biographical information for families and individuals to use in their prayer times. And missionaries are happy to provide picture prayer cards.

Books and publications can also inspire interest. Every church library should devote a section to missionary biographies. Keep in mind that Alliance Life magazine and The Alliance Video Magazine are among the best possible sources of missionary information. Every issue contains reports and inspiring accounts from specific fields. The magazine is essentially the equivalent to an investors report for those who support the Great Commission Fund. Local church congregations might wish to establish the goal of placing a copy of the magazine in every home.

Whatever the forum, information about Alliance missions ought to be shared with the congregation on a regular basis, mentioning Alliance missionaries by name whenever possible. Personal interest in individual missionaries and specific knowledge of their fields and work will insure intelligent and effective praying and faithful, regular giving.
Of course, nothing can take the place of direct communication with the missionaries themselves. With the convenience and speed of Internet communications, keeping in touch with individuals overseas is easier than it has ever been. Alliance Women, Alliance Men and Alliance youth groups may wish to appoint missionary correspondents from among their ranks. In addition, church leadership can encourage individuals in the congregation to maintain personal correspondence with missionaries. They, in turn, can bring fresh information from the field to the congregation at large. Whatever the means, every congregation should seek to maintain regular contact, particularly with missionaries from their own church families. Reciprocal correspondence will be an encouragement to the missionaries as well as to the people back home. Congregations who have not had the privilege of sending missionaries from within can “adopt” an individual missionary or a missionary family they have come to know and love through conferences or other face-to-face encounters.

**Other Practical Means for Involvement**

Many avenues for expressing concern for missionaries are available to a creative congregation; some are very practical. For example, almost all missionaries need transportation during the time they are on home assignment. Local churches may assist by either loaning or helping them purchase an automobile. It may also be possible for a church to provide housing—either a home or an apartment—for missionary families. Regardless of what housing arrangements are made, home furnishings are always needed and gifts of this nature are welcomed. Extending hospitality to missionaries and their children is always appropriate.

It is hard for most of us to imagine the problems faced by missionaries coming home to America for one year out of every five. We often show concern for outfitting them when they return to the field but overlook their needs while they are on home assignment. And what of those times when the children of missionaries reach college age? Some local church families have opened their hearts to these young people, serving as surrogate parents when the missionary parents return to the field. Local churches should remain sensitive to the possibilities of assisting those who are called to overseas ministries.

Obviously, it takes more than an annual missionary conference to keep interest in missions alive. In addition to the annual conference and making missions integral to the educational programs, periodic “mini” conferences or special, world missions events can bring a fresh challenge to local church praying and giving. Such events need not be elaborate or costly. A challenging speaker, a special program or an informational video can remind the congregation of its commitment and inspire church members to continue supporting Alliance work around the world.

There are also very practical ways that a church can become directly involved in the missionary program of the C&MA. The Alliance Ministries Partnerships office tries to link churches in the U.S. with churches or fields overseas to forge ministry
partnerships. For more information please visit the Alliance Ministries Partnerships web site at www.cmalliance.org/im/omm/partnerships.jsp.

Another practical way of interesting and involving people directly in missions is to go on a short-term missions trip. Various opportunities are available, including prayer trips, construction teams, and evangelistic teams, and teaching English as a second language. For up-to-date information on short-term mission trips visit www.cmalliance.org/im/imserve/stmo/stmo.jsp.

Intercession for Missions

Local churches assist world evangelism on three levels—praying, giving, and recruiting. Contemporary churches seem to be better at giving than at recruiting and praying. Early Christians found prayer to be the wellspring of all other blessings. When a congregation is benevolently “infected” with a burden to pray, giving and recruiting follow naturally. What kind of prayer is needed? Private prayer, family prayer and corporate prayer. Some congregations set aside whole nights of prayer. Others designate special days to focus themselves in prayer for evangelism. Prayer groups should be encouraged, but a healthy church will also include times when the entire congregation gathers to wait on God for those who do not know Him. Those times can include prayer for national churches and their leaders. Individual, group and corporate prayer is vital to fulfilling the Great Commission. More is accomplished through prayer than by any other means. The priority of prayer in the local church will affect every other aspect of its ministry. The church that engages in Spirit-directed intercession for the salvation of souls on spiritual battlefronts around the world will not need gimmicks to promote evangelism. The burden of a pastor who is often found in God’s presence will be duplicated in the hearts of his people. They will join him in prevailing prayer for lost souls around the world.

Annual Missions Conference

The annual missions conference (Article XI, Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches) is a high point in the calendar year for Alliance churches. With good planning and much prayer, even the smallest church can have an interesting and vital conference. In addition to the missionaries who have been assigned to visit each church for its conference, other personnel may be available. For example, missionary wives with children living at home are not assigned to conference tours. Yet, if transportation can be arranged, they can provide a fresh, new perspective on missions and the needs of missionaries and their families. Planning manuals and audio-visual resources are available to churches wishing to supplement their conferences. For a list of resources for planning your missionary conference, see www.cmalliance.org/im/omm/mconference.jsp.

The success of a missions conference is directly in proportion to congregational involvement. The pastoral staff should not assume all of the responsibility. A missions committee, representative of the entire congregation, should be
established. (See also Article X, Section 5 of the Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches in the C&MA Manual). An effective conference will include something for all ages and groups in the church. The planning process itself can help train committee members, stretch their perspectives and stir their hearts with a burden for the lost.

The National Office in Colorado Springs publishes helpful, practical tools to assist pastors and local church missions committees in planning their conferences. Promotional kits, complete with attractive posters and fliers are provided for every Alliance church. Of course, the highlight of any conference is the opportunity to hear from the missionaries themselves. They return to the United States ready to share the burden for their work, to report a rich variety of experiences, and to challenge congregations to become personally involved in missions.

Alliance missionaries are supported by the Great Commission Fund which is based upon the faith promises of our constituency and supported by regular financial gifts in fulfillment of those promises. Since the local church’s missions conference is the occasion for taking its annual faith promise, careful preparation should be made. It is wise to inform the congregation of how their current giving compares with the amount promised. Church leaders may want to suggest a church-wide, faith-promise goal for the coming year. God’s people respond to the challenge to trust Him for what He would have them give. Obedience to God’s priorities always produces a sense of expectancy among His people.

Yet the local church must never be viewed as merely a promotional agency for overseas evangelism. It is rather to be seen as the base from which God’s people reach out to the world. It is the base for prayer, for manpower, for financial support, and for Spirit-inspired zeal and enthusiasm. A denomination can do nothing to keep missions alive when interest wanes in its local churches. The health of the missions program of the organization depends upon the health of the churches at home. The challenge is to maintain Great Commission churches—at home and abroad. The church must remain Spirit-filled and fully committed to the Word of God and to the fullness of Christ. It must give itself unreservedly to the mandate of world evangelism. This will require sacrifice, and hard work. Only as Alliance leaders and pastors are able to help churches keep priorities in their proper places will The Christian and Missionary Alliance retain the freshness that is needed to complete our part in reaching the world for Christ.

Where missions in the local church is concerned, the pastor remains the key. His enthusiasm and commitment encourages quality promotion, support and prayer for missions. His oversight of these ministries insures ongoing interest and health.
Recruitment

Regardless of its size, every church can be a missionary church. The backbone of missionary support throughout our nation is comprised of small congregations where pastors and leaders have imparted their own passionate concern to their people. Each Alliance pastor should see his particular church as a link in the vital lifeline of our worldwide missionary endeavor.

The local church is the primary recruiting agency. But how many churches measure their success in terms of numbers, or by the size of their buildings and budgets? The kingdom of heaven is measuring their success in terms of their effectiveness in preparing and sending workers into the harvest field. Every church should have the goal of becoming a sending agency. Through preaching, teaching, and the appropriate promotion of world evangelism, every Christian should be asked to consider the possibility of full-time service for Christ. If a local church congregation is truly burdened for the lost and committed to the Great Commission, the Spirit of God will compel them to share the gospel, not only at home but also abroad.
Chapter Six

DOCTRINAL POSITIONS

The Statement of Faith

The founders of The Christian and Missionary Alliance came from many church backgrounds and represented a variety of theological positions. Nonetheless, they were all Bible-believing evangelicals, committed to a common goal. It may have been due to the diversity among these leaders, that no Alliance doctrinal statement was adopted in the early years. The writings of Dr. Simpson and two of his colleagues provided the only standards for Alliance doctrine at first.

The earliest doctrinal publication was *A Manual of Christian Doctrine* by F. W. Farr, an instructor at the New York Training Institute (later the Nyack Missionary Training Institute). His was a simple treatment of major doctrinal themes drawn from the popular evangelical theologians of the day. The book is a mixture of biblical and systematic theology; it clearly reflects the doctrinal distinctives of Christ our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.

The second Alliance doctrinal work, *Outline Studies in Christian Doctrine*, was written by Dr. George Pardington. This book can still be found in some of the older Alliance church libraries as well as in our Alliance colleges and seminary.

No further doctrinal studies were published by the Alliance until 1927, when theological turmoil in North America prompted the Board of Directors to produce a small booklet addressing doctrinal themes. W. M. Turnbull and C. H. Christman compiled the piece, which was entitled *The Message of The Christian and Missionary Alliance*. Its main emphasis was the fourfold gospel, but the opening chapter established the Alliance position on major doctrinal issues.

The 1965 General Council voted to develop and publish a statement of faith for the denomination. The completed statement was ratified by Council the following year. And when reorganization took place in the 1970s, the Statement of Faith was
incorporated in the Constitution and Bylaws of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

The following doctrines are asserted in these sections: the doctrine of God; the Trinity; Christ’s deity, incarnation, death, and resurrection; the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; the Scriptures; man; salvation; sanctification; healing; the doctrine of the Church; the resurrection of the dead; judgment; and Christ’s second coming.

**Section A – Doctrine of God**

There is one God\(^1\) who is infinitely perfect,\(^2\) existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.\(^3\) (\(1\)Deuteronomy 6:4; \(2\)Matthew 5:48; \(3\)Matthew 28:19).

This simple sentence touches every essential aspect of the doctrine of God. It asserts the mystery of the Trinity that God is one but exists as three persons. The three persons of the Godhead are equal. God has existed eternally as three persons though this revelation was gradually made known in the written scriptures.

God is perfect and has always been so. All of His characteristics and attributes are perfect. He is all knowing, all powerful, and everywhere present. God is unchanging.

The glorious, invisible, and eternal God of the Bible is incomprehensible. What we know of the beauty and perfection of His character, we know only because He was willing to make it known.

**Section B – Doctrine of Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is true God and true man.\(^4\) He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.\(^5\) He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust,\(^6\) as a substitutionary sacrifice,\(^7\) and all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.\(^8\) He arose from the dead according to the Scriptures.\(^9\) He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest.\(^10\) He will come again to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace.\(^11\) (\(4\)Philippians 2:6-11; \(5\)Luke 1:36-38; \(6\)1 Peter 3:18; \(7\)Hebrews 2:9; \(8\)Romans 5:9; \(9\)Acts 2:23-24; \(10\)Hebrews 8:1; \(11\)Matthew 26:64)

In this statement, the Alliance affirms what is inherent in the great creeds of the Christian church, from post apostolic times to the present. The doctrine of Christ’s deity is of supreme importance. The doctrinal statement emphasizes His virgin birth and the perfect union of His divine nature with His human nature. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is essential to the plan of redemption. The value of His shed blood lies in His sinless life. He was a perfect offering.

The remaining sentences of this section declare Christ’s resurrection from the dead, His ascension to heaven, His present intercessory ministry, and His second coming.
Section C – Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a divine person, sent to indwell, guide, teach, empower the believer, and convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 14:15-18; John 16:13; Acts 1:8; John 16:7-11)

The Holy Spirit is a person. The Scriptures make it clear that He is capable of both communion and communication with man. The Holy Spirit is also God. He is the third person of the Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is evident throughout the ages but is especially evident in the Church Age. Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus told the disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit to the world to minister directly to the hearts of men (John 14:16-20, 26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15). The Holy Spirit administers the blessings of Christ to believers. He convicts the unbeliever. He teaches and guides the Church. The successful impartation of the gospel cannot be accomplished apart from the enabling work of the Holy Spirit.

Section D – Doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scriptures

The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice. (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:15-16)

The Christian and Missionary Alliance has from its beginning held a very high view of the Holy Scripture. The Bible is the Word of God and is therefore authoritative. The doctrine of inspiration comes from the Scriptures themselves. The declaration of the inerrant and infallible Word of God is the Bible’s claim for itself.

By supernatural power, the Holy Spirit inspired and directed the writing of the Word of God. He kept the authors from error, inspiring them in what they wrote. What the writers could not have known by any other means the Spirit revealed to them. The Bible is comprised of historical facts and revelations from God that man could not have discovered by his own efforts. Yet, while the Holy Spirit verbally inspired the writing of the Scripture, He did not override the characteristic style of each individual author.

The Statement of Faith declares confidence in the trustworthiness of the Scriptures as the source for sound doctrine. The principles set forth provide the guidelines needed to make correct judgments about Christian practice and conduct. The Bible not only gives the Church her teachings but also her mission, order, and offices. All methods of gospel work must pass the standards set by the Word of God.

Section E – Doctrine of Mankind

Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God, he fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All men are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only
through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{18} The portion of the impenitent and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment;\textsuperscript{19} and that of the believer, in everlasting joy and bliss.\textsuperscript{20} (\textsuperscript{16}Genesis 1:27; \textsuperscript{17}Romans 3:23; \textsuperscript{18}1 Corinthians 15:20-23; \textsuperscript{19}Revelation 21:8; \textsuperscript{20}Revelation 21:1-4)

This very compact statement summarizes Alliance belief concerning the human race. Mankind was created by God in His image. In his original state, man bore the moral likeness of God. The fall of our first parents brought the immediate judgment of God, and death became the wages of sin for all human beings. The entire human race inherited the sin of Adam and Eve. All are sinners by nature as well as by overt acts. Each one must, therefore, accept God’s provision through Christ’s atoning death in order to receive God’s forgiveness.

Each person is accountable to God, his/her Creator, whether he/she chooses to believe or not. He/she will come before God in the judgment. His/her eternal destiny is in the hands of his/her Creator. But God, by His mercy, provided a Redeemer for those in Adam’s fallen race who believe and receive His provision.

**Section F – Doctrine of Salvation**

*Salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ for all men; and those who repent and believe in Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life, and become the children of God.*\textsuperscript{21} (\textsuperscript{21}Titus 3:4-7)

God’s love for mankind moved Him to sacrifice His Son for the salvation of all who repent and believe. The death of Christ at Calvary was not limited; it is for everyone who will receive it (1 Timothy 4:10; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2). The Apostle Paul wrote of God’s desire for man’s salvation (1 Timothy 2:3-4):

*This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth* (NIV).

Paul argues that the Church should pray for all men on the grounds that God desires all men to be saved. This truth is a motive for fervent evangelism. Millions have been lost and will be lost because they did not hear the message of salvation, or because they heard and willfully rejected it.

**Section G – Doctrine of Sanctification**

*It is the will of God that each believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit and be sanctified wholly,\textsuperscript{22} being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to the will of God, thereby receiving power for holy living and effective service.*\textsuperscript{23} This is both a crisis and a progressive experience wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to conversion.\textsuperscript{24} (\textsuperscript{22}1 Thessalonians 5:23; \textsuperscript{23}Acts 1:8; \textsuperscript{24}Romans 6:1-14)

Moving on from Section F, Salvation, this next statement explains the meaning, extent, and practical effect of sanctification in the life of the believer. The phrase *wholly sanctified* implies a deeper work of God than the receiving of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation. This experience of sanctification usually takes place
subsequent to regeneration, beginning with the believer’s conscious surrender and desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Sanctification involves the consecration of one’s whole person—spirit, soul and body.

The Holy Spirit is the agent. Since righteousness is the will of God for all believers, the Holy Spirit places a hunger for holy living in each heart. The crisis of sanctification takes place at the point when the believer becomes aware of his/her need and appropriates Christ’s provision. This often is not simultaneous with salvation but takes place at a time after conversion when an individual comes face to face with his unfaithfulness, carnality, and lack of spiritual power. Recognizing his/her own weakness and inability to live in total obedience to God in his/her own strength he/she is ready to receive by faith Christ’s sanctifying presence. The point of surrender and appropriation which initiates the process of sanctification is what is meant by the “crisis.” The crisis experience is not an end in itself by which the believer is suddenly and completely sanctified. It is the beginning of a process, making possible spiritual progress that was before impossible. (For more on this subject, see Chapter 8, Christ Our Sanctifier.)

Section H – Doctrine of Healing

Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil are taught in the scriptures and are privileges for the Church in this present age. (Matthew 8:16-17; James 5:13-16)

Sickness came into human experience as a result of mankind’s fall into sin. Christ overcame the power of sin and its consequences, including sickness, when He died on the cross (Isaiah 53:4-5). Physical healing was a part of Jesus’ own ministry, and He has imparted that ministry to His Church as well (Matthew 8:17; 10:1; Luke 10:1, 8).

Individual believers, the church, and its elders are exhorted to pray for the sick. When a believer is seriously ill, he should call for the elders of the church to anoint him with oil and pray for his healing in the name of the Lord (James 5:13-16). This biblical practice has never been revoked and should be a part of the Church’s ministry today. Faith for healing must be based on the clear promises of God’s Word, not on human experiences.

The gifts of healing mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28 are to be exercised in the context of the local church and are ordinarily manifest through the eldership of the church.

Section I – Doctrine of the Church

The Church consists of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through His blood, and are born again of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church, which has been commissioned by Him to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the Gospel to all nations.
The local church is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together for the worship of God, for edification through the Word of God, for prayer, fellowship, and proclamation of the Gospel, and observance of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.²⁹ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-47)

The Alliance position on the doctrine of the Church is twofold. The Church is made up of the whole body of true believers who have been brought into vital union with Christ. It is therefore larger than any denomination or man-made organization. While The Christian and Missionary Alliance recognizes itself to be a denomination, it rejects the spirit of sectarianism. As a church body, the Alliance prays for, works with, and fellowships with true believers regardless of their denominational affiliation. The Alliance seeks to do this without compromising its doctrinal distinctives and its commitment to world evangelism.

The Alliance believes the local church to be the visible expression of the Body of Christ. The teachings of the New Testament identify the Church as the vehicle for carrying out the ministry of Christ on earth. Christ is now building the Church through the immediate workings of His Holy Spirit. The Savior has commanded the gathering of believers in His name. This is the norm. The local church is comprised of those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and who, therefore, are born from above. It is, thus, a believers’ church. Its gatherings are essential to the spiritual welfare of believers. The Alliance doctrinal statement clearly delineates the purpose of the church as it relates to the proclamation of the Gospel and the community of believers. The local church provides worship, edification, prayer, fellowship, preaching, teaching, and observance of certain ordinances. All new Christians should be baptized and encouraged to become active members of the local church for their spiritual development (Acts 2:42; 1 Peter 1:3-9; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

Section J – Doctrine of the Resurrection

There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust; for the former, a resurrection unto life;³⁰ for the latter, a resurrection unto judgment.³¹ (1 Corinthians 15:20-23; John 5:28-29)

Christ and the apostles taught the hope of the resurrection. Jesus Christ is called “the firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18). He was the first to rise from the grave to die no more. Others who had been raised from the dead still faced ultimate death, but Jesus arose never to die again. He ever lives, and from His throne in heaven He intercedes for believers. The power of death has been broken. As children of God, we have the assurance that we will live again in new bodies, free from our present limitations. Our new bodies will be glorified like the resurrection body of Christ. For the Christian, death is a defeated foe.

The unjust (meaning the unsaved) will be resurrected and appear before God in final judgment. Their deeds will condemn them, and they will be cast into the lake of fire to endure eternal punishment (Revelation 20:11-15; John 5:25-29).
Section K – Doctrine of Christ’s Second Coming

The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent and will be personal, visible, and premillennial. This is the believer’s blessed hope and is a vital truth which is an incentive to holy living and faithful service. (Hebrews 10:37; Luke 21:27; Titus 2:11-14)

Christ Himself announced His second coming (Matthew 24:30; John 14:3), and the angels confirmed it to the disciples (Acts 1:11). By revelation, the apostles taught the literal, personal, bodily return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Jude 14, 15; 1 John 3:2-3). The blessed hope, which inspired the early church remains as the vital hope of the Church today.

The return of Jesus Christ is premillennial. The literal manifestation of Christ’s rule over the nations of the world and His reign over Israel will not come to pass until His Second Coming. For now, the Church here on earth—the Bride of Christ—persists in the task of world evangelism while she awaits the coming of her Lord (Matthew 24:14). Hastening the return of Jesus Christ is strong motivation.

From a biblical perspective we know that the Second Coming of Christ is a part of a sequence of events relating to the consummation of history. Nonetheless, His return is imminent. That is, He may return at any time, and that is our incentive for holy living and devoted service. The Christian who truly looks for his Lord’s return serves faithfully, even as he watches and waits.

The Bible describes Christ’s return as the blessed hope. At His coming, those who have died in the Lord will be resurrected, those who are alive will be caught up in the air, and together we will enter into the immediate presence of Christ (Romans 8:18-23; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14).

Church Doctrine

In addition to the foregoing statements of faith, the Alliance constitution for local churches addresses other matters relating to doctrine. Its preamble is as follows:

The New Testament teaches that the local church is the visible organized expression of the Body of Christ. The people of God are to live and serve in obedience to the Word of God and under the Lordship of Christ.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance operates on the presupposition that the congregation finds broader meaning and outreach in fulfilling its biblical responsibilities within the life and witness of the denomination.

This statement explains the local church’s relationship to the district and to General Council. Christian and Missionary Alliance congregations do not merely constitute an association of churches. They are connected to one another; that is, their membership to the greater body—in this case, The Christian and Missionary Alliance—weds them to each other.

This is why only General Council possesses the authority to alter the local church constitution. This interconnection and interdependence of churches
guarantees a certain uniformity of general practice but provides each local church with the liberty to adopt bylaws suited to its individual circumstances.

**Church Membership**

The local church constitution establishes a doctrinal basis for membership. Sections 2 and 3 of Article III, Membership, establishes the minimum doctrinal requirements for church membership.

2. **Belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as originally given; in the vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; in the eternal salvation of all who believe in Him; and in the eternal punishment of all who reject Him.**

3. **Acceptance of the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.**

These brief statements condense the Statement of Faith and are in every way consistent with the eleven assertions it contains. The next four chapters will focus respectively on Jesus Christ: our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.
Chapter Seven

CHRIST OUR SAVIOR

Salvation is the great, overall theme of the Bible. From eternity, God anticipated man’s lost condition and his inability to save himself. God was moved by His mercy to do for man what man was not able to do for himself. Salvation is the work of God, a divine plan for rescuing man from the inevitable results of his sin. Before Christ was born, God revealed to Joseph that Mary’s son would be the Savior of the World.

*She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins* (Matthew 1:21, NIV).

God’s program for bringing salvation to man centers in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel writer put it this way,

*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost* (Luke 19:10, NIV).

The Bible declares salvation to be directly related to Christ’s incarnation—His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension to heaven, and His second coming. The Scriptures contain many titles for Christ, and each reveals something of His person and His power. The first mention of Christ’s office as Savior is found in John’s Gospel; the Samaritans said of Jesus,

*... we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world* (John 4:42, NIV).

Christ is the Savior, not only of the Jews; He is also the Savior of all men. Christ’s provision, in His death and resurrection, is great enough to redeem all of mankind. But man’s unbelief and continuing sin keeps him from the Savior.

The Apostle Paul addressed the theme of Christ our Savior more than any other New Testament writer. He saw true salvation as a complete, perfect, and finished
work—accomplished for the repentant and believing sinner by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Paul delighted in Christ’s role as Savior.

Christ, through His incarnation, came into the world to carry out man’s salvation.

*Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—it of whom I am the worst* (1 Timothy 1:15, NIV).

Salvation is the deliverance of the sinner from the effects of sin. Our understanding of this must take into account man’s lostness. Sin has so completely devastated mankind that he cannot by any effort of his own free himself from it. He is a victim of sin’s power, guilt, and condemnation. Christ entered the world and took upon Himself everything human, yet He was without sin. Because Christ was sinless in thought, word and deed, He was able to offer Himself as a substitute for sinners. By His substitutionary death, Christ broke the power of sin.

**Justification**

Paul identified justification as the first great result of the Savior’s death. The Apostle was guided by the Holy Spirit to express the believer’s new position before God. He borrowed the legal term, justification, which stood for one who was no longer counted guilty by the court. Without Christ, everyone stands before God as a condemned sinner. Yet, all who place their personal faith in Jesus Christ’s atonement for sin are given new standing before God. Based upon the work of Christ, God the Father declares the believing sinner “not guilty.” The justified sinner stands before God in Christ as a saint, a holy one.

**Cleansing**

Salvation not only changes the sinner’s standing before God; it also changes his condition. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses all sin. For the sake of His Son, our Savior, God mercifully forgives the trusting sinner (1 John 1:9; Ephesians 1:7). The redeemed could not accept his new standing before God if his heart were still defiled with sin and burdened with guilt for his wrong doings. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). In the words of the Psalmist, He has removed our sins from us “as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:11, 12).

**Redemption**

Christ redeems those who believe on Him from past sin. He also delivers them from the power of Satan. Sin produces spiritual slavery. In spite of his desire to reform, the sinner is held fast by the Evil One. Through His death on the cross, Christ broke the power of sin, setting free those enslaved by it. *Redeem* comes from a Greek word meaning “to buy back.” Christ bought us back from the bondage of sin. By His mercy he set us free when we had done nothing to deserve freedom. The redeemed sinner trades his slavery to sin for loving obedience to his new master,
Christ the Savior. He need not fear the threats of his old master, for Christ has delivered him and placed him safely in the kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13). Jesus willingly gave Himself as the ransom to deliver us from Satan’s power, freeing us to walk in righteousness (1 Peter 1:18-19). The result for the believer is true joy.

**Mediation**

Christ our Savior is the mediator between man and God. Sin brings hostility, separating man from God who cannot look upon sin. Before Christ’s provision of salvation, man had no one to speak on his behalf to God, nor was he able to do it for himself. Christ, the sinless sacrifice, went back to His Father in heaven and there presented His bleeding wounds in propitiation (compensation) for mankind’s sinfulness. Because of Christ’s reconciling work, God will draw near and make Himself known to the repentant, trusting sinner (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

**Regeneration**

The ultimate result of sin is death. Man in his fallen state suffers both spiritual and physical death. He is described as being dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1-3). In this state, he cannot enjoy communion with God. Even if men and women were forgiven, cleansed, redeemed and justified, they would still not be able to live the Christian life without regeneration. Christ, our Savior, sent His own representative from heaven, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit infuses the very resurrection life of Christ into the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit quickens those who believe and trust, bringing them to life spiritually, and feeding that new life by His own presence (Titus 3:5-6). Christ’s life within transforms redeemed sinners into changed persons. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, believers receive a new nature that loves God, desires righteousness, chooses to walk according to the will of God, and seeks purity of heart. This newly created life is the end result of salvation.

Regeneration is a miracle of Christ’s saving power at work in the believing heart. It is completely different than man-made doctrines of salvation, which trust in human effort—good works, rituals, ceremonies, and conformity to a set of rules. Human effort can never save a sinner. Only Christ is able to save. Christ raises the sinner from spiritual death to new life (John 5:24; 10:10).

**Sonship**

Christ, the only begotten Son of God, came into the world to bring many sons into God’s family (Hebrews 2:10). Christ’s saving power makes it possible for those who believe in Him to become true sons of God. Concurrently, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption. He assures the believer that he is God’s child (Romans 8:14-17). Sonship provides the believer with many wonderful privileges. He can call God his Father; he can approach God in prayer through the name of Christ; he experiences the witness of God’s Spirit in his heart; and he therefore knows that he has passed from death to life.
Eternal Life

Christ’s work as our Savior includes the gift of eternal life (John 3:16; 1 John 5:11-13). Because sin brought death, every redeemed sinner must receive new life from Christ. Eternal life is much more than living forever. It brings a new quality of life. The deepest longings of the soul are satisfied as the very life of Christ is imparted to the believer. Jesus described this to the woman at Jacob’s well as “a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14). To be saved is to be refreshed and renewed by the water of life. The quality of the life believers can expect in eternity becomes in some measure the immediate possession of those who are truly saved.

Proclaiming Christ our Savior

A. B. Simpson was the product of a mainline Protestant denomination. He was aware of the danger of relying on church membership and opposed the widespread practice of receiving people who had no personal encounter with Christ. He believed those received into church membership should exhibit the fruits of salvation in their personal lives. His evangelistic efforts were designed to confront both the churched and the unchurched with the claims of the gospel. The Christian and Missionary Alliance was founded firmly on the principle that Christ alone is the means of salvation and that each individual must accept His redemptive work through personal belief and commitment.

The underlying tenet of salvation declares that no human merit, sacrament, or self-effort can save the soul.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8, NIV).

Biblical salvation is a divine work. It may be imitated, but it cannot be duplicated. The man or woman who puts his or her personal trust in Jesus Christ as Savior becomes a new creation. The believer’s character is changed. He walks with God in the newness of life. Baptism is the believer’s outward witness to the work of grace done in his heart.

Simpson warned,

There are those who try to cultivate character by some ethical process apart from its root in the cross of Calvary and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a Christian idealism that fails because it ignores the evangelical element.

Therefore Christianity begins with a new creation, a new nature, a new heart, a divine root and principle of righteousness, goodness, virtue and holiness. Christ does not ask unregenerate men to be good. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. The Gospel simply asks the sinner to stop all his doing, to give up his dead works and to receive Jesus Christ, for through Him that divine life will in its own inherent nature lead
him to love the good, to hate the evil and to follow righteousness by a law of the fitness of things. This is the Gospel.
Chapter Eight

CHRIST OUR SANCTIFIER

Dr. A. B. Simpson proclaimed the gospel as the good news of the full provision of Christ. Jesus Christ Himself is the sum of all truth. He indwells human lives as Christian believers accept Him by faith (Ephesians 3:17). The indwelling Christ is more than our Savior. He is also our Sanctifier.

The Believer’s Experience

When a believer accepts Christ as Savior he experiences the rich benefits of forgiveness, justification, regeneration, and hope. But as he begins to walk in this new life, he discovers his ongoing need for God’s enabling presence. The struggles of his heart demand a deeper work, and he hungers for a more complete reliance upon Christ in his life. This desire leads him to Christ the Sanctifier.

Sanctification is the intended result of biblical salvation. The Word of God calls for God’s people to be holy even as He is holy (Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:16). Yet, holiness is not an inherent human quality, because sin has devastated and corrupted human nature. Having received a new nature at conversion, the believer still finds that the inclination to sin is deeply imbedded within him. The Bible describes this selfish inclination as the sinful nature. The Apostle Paul warned that no good thing dwells in us, because of our sinful nature (Romans 7:18). The new convert quickly discovers that his selfish nature strongly resists the will of God. In this sense, the sinful nature is the enemy of every Christian—not his physical body, but his inward willfulness.

New believers are easily frustrated over this outbreak of spiritual conflict within. They struggle against sin and selfish desires only to find themselves spiritually defeated again and again. Their only hope for deliverance from the struggle is through daily, moment-by-moment surrender to Christ’s sanctifying presence.
Sanctification is not merely a doctrine, a philosophy or a life style. It is the manifestation of the righteousness of God as found in the spotless, sinless life of Jesus Christ. The writer to the Hebrews expressed it this way,

*Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers (Hebrews 2:11, NIV).*

Christ took on human flesh to save *and to sanctify* us from the power of sin. Since His Word demands holiness in those who claim to be His disciples, it is reasonable to believe that He has also made it possible to live a holy life. When Christ died on the cross He provided for man’s sanctification (Hebrews 10:10, 14). Jesus’ death on the cross, the shedding of His blood, provided eternal sanctification for those who believe and accept the provision (Hebrews 13:12).

Satan seeks to deceive believers into thinking that God’s requirements for holiness (or sanctification) can be met by their own efforts or self-discipline. Not so! A Christian can no more sanctify himself than he can save himself. It is all of grace through the finished work of Christ.

The word *sanctification* means to be *set apart from sin* and *set apart to God*. Biblical sanctification is therefore both negative and positive. Both Old and New Testaments indicate that sanctification is a condition of purity within the human heart. The believer’s life is cleansed from the defilement and residue of sin. Any complete definition of sanctification must include the manifestation of Christ’s character and enriching presence within.

The writer to the Hebrews defined sanctification through Christ’s death in doctrinal terms. And, in his letter to the Romans, Paul described how, through His death, Christ sanctifies the believer. Not only did Jesus die *for* the sinner, the sinner also died *with* Christ (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:4-11). By faith, the believer can appropriate this transforming truth. He identifies himself as having died with Christ. Paul pointed out that the ordinance of water baptism illustrates this process of death to sin and self. As the baptismal candidate is immersed in water, he symbolizes his own identification with Christ’s death. The believer emerges from the water in a public testimony of his faith and position in the resurrected Christ. In a sense, baptism is like a rite of initiation. This seems to imply that being dead to self and alive unto God is a reality that should be experienced early in the believer’s new life.

**A Crisis Experience**

Paul’s teaching in Romans 6 infers a crisis experience, a definite point in time in which the believer understands and accepts his need to die to self. Death is certainly a crisis! Simpson often spoke of the “crisis of the deeper life,” referring to the point at which the believer despairs of the weakness of his own sinful nature and chooses to identify, by faith, with Christ’s death and resurrection. It is then that he experiences the sanctifying work of Christ within. Dr. Simpson interpreted the
Scriptures to mean that the Christian is sanctified *positionally* the moment he trusts Christ as Savior, but *experiential* sanctification occurs at a point after conversion.

    *This comes to us (experiential sanctification) not as an evolution, but as a revolution; not as a slow development and gradual growth, but as a definite crisis, clear-cut and immediate as the crossing of the Jordan by the children of Israel ...*¹

The crisis of sanctification comes through an awakening to the need for holiness and an understanding of Christ as the Sanctifier. There is a sense in which the Holy Spirit convicts the Christian of his need for sanctification just as He convicts the sinner of his need for salvation. The Spirit reveals to the hungry heart the glory of Christ the Sanctifier. He so exalts Christ and illuminates His person and righteousness that the spiritually awakened soul responds with the desire to be like Him. The longing heart looks to Christ alone. It is preoccupied with the One who blesses rather than with the blessing itself. Some Christians have made the unfortunate mistake of focusing on experience. (This, in fact, is one of the misleading aspects of the tongues movement.) Simpson chose instead to emphasize the glory of Christ, the One who is our Sanctifier. Holiness, then, is not an attainment, or a lifestyle that can be emulated by human strength and will. It most certainly is not a product of self-righteousness. It is the manifestation of the indwelling presence of the Holy One of God. In Simpson’s own words,

    *Regeneration brings us into Christ, sanctification brings Christ into us. “Abide in Me, and I in you,” implies a twofold relation. “In Him” is to be saved; “in you” is to be sanctified. It is the indwelling life of the Lord Jesus in personal union and manifestation to the soul.*²

**The Product of Sanctification**

The sanctified heart experiences a God-consciousness that blesses the life with quietness and inner peace. It is a life free from the impossible struggle for self-righteousness—an abiding life, which depends upon Christ for the strength to live a godly life. The Apostle Peter summarized the doctrine of sanctification when he said,

    *Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (2 Peter 1:2-4, NIV).*

Peter, like Paul, exalted the Sanctifier. The increasing knowledge of the person of Christ and His righteousness is the key to godliness. And, as this passage implies (see vs. 8), the attributes of holiness may not be instantly achieved, but will increase as the believer increases in his knowledge of Christ. The crisis point of recognition
and appropriation of Christ’s sanctifying presence is only the beginning of a process that continues throughout the believer’s life on earth.

The central truth of sanctification is that believers may participate in the divine nature. The holiness of Christ’s divine nature is the only holiness the believer can claim. According to the Scriptures, the holiness of Christ is both imputed and imparted to those who trust Him.

A Work of the Trinity

God the Father and God the Holy Spirit share the work of sanctification with God the Son. When Paul prayed for the sanctification of the believers in Thessalonica he addressed his petition to the Father.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NIV).

Paul also made it clear that it was God the Father’s will for each believer to be sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3). God calls each one of His children to holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:7). Indeed, it was the Father Himself who conceived the plan by which the redeemed are sanctified. He sent the Son, who by His death and resurrection made it possible.

When His task on earth had been completed, Christ returned to the Father in heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to minister sanctification to all who believe. Sanctification cannot be achieved without the work of the Spirit, whom Dr. Tozer called “the other person of Jesus.” He is absolutely essential to the experience and practice of holy living (I Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). The Holy Spirit reveals the things of Christ. In answer to trusting, obedient faith, Christ—by His Spirit—indwells the heart of the Christian (Ephesians 3:16-17). As the believer yields himself to Christ, accepting by faith the promise of the Spirit’s endowment of power, the Holy Spirit fills him and purifies him (Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8).

A Progressive Experience

To save confusion and protect individuals from discouragement in their spiritual journeys, it is important to point out that sanctification is also a process. True, the initial crisis of sanctification is instantaneous. But the maturing of the cleansed heart is gradual. This explains the use of the term, progressive sanctification. Paul wrote,

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God (2 Corinthians 7:1, NIV).

The Apostle makes it obvious that holiness, or sanctification, must be perfected—completed. It is a journey with God. The prophet Isaiah spoke of the
highway of holiness. This metaphor suggests that the sanctified life is ongoing, developing as the believer makes spiritual progress.

Paul describes the progressive aspect of sanctification as “walking in the Spirit.” It is not enough to be filled with the Spirit in a crisis experience; the Spirit-filled believer must learn also to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

Spiritual maturity is acquired progressively. Every child of God should be encouraged to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). The true Christian life begins in spiritual babyhood but develops into full adulthood in Christ (Ephesians 4:13-15).

In his book, The Larger Christian Life, Dr. Simpson focused on the principle of spiritual growth. He made it clear that we do not grow into sanctification, but grow from sanctification into maturity. Simpson pointed to the description concerning Christ Himself in the opening of Luke’s Gospel. “The child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40) Surely no one would dare to say that Christ grew into sanctification. He was a sanctified child and grew into manhood. Further, in Luke 2:52 is this description of Jesus at the age of twelve: “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

As the believer walks with Christ the Sanctifier, he learns more and more of the divine provision for a holy life. He grows in faith, knowledge, love, and inner peace. The evidence of this growth of the sanctified life is the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). The sanctified believer grows in qualities of Christ-likeness.

Progressive maturity in the life of the believer is the Spirit’s objective.

Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13, NIV).

All that is needed for a holy life has been made available by Christ on our behalf. Dr. Simpson emphasized that,

... we have to take these resources and materials moment by moment, step by step, and transfer them into our lives.

In summary, the Alliance Statement of Faith defines sanctification as both a crisis and a progressive experience. The crisis is that turning point of faith and consecration when the believer presents himself to Christ the Sanctifier according to the terms of Romans 12:1. Progressive sanctification is growth in maturity and experience as one walks faithfully and constantly with Christ the Sanctifier. True sanctification involves both.

The steps to sanctification can be summarized as follows:

1) **Recognize** that Christ alone is my sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30).

2) **Repent** of my self-effort and self-centeredness (Galatians 5:17).
3) **Reckon** the victory of Christ to be my very own (Romans 6:11).

4) **Receive** by faith the fullness of God the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

5) **Remain** in Christ by walking daily in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 25).

We are called to be like Jesus (Romans 8:29, 1 John 3:3). Rather than commanding us to imitate Him, the New Testament reveals a truth more profound and dynamic. The New Testament teaches that the life of Christ can be lived in and through us (Galatians 2:20). Jesus Himself indwells us by His Holy Spirit and lives out His life in and through us. In the words of Dr. Simpson:

> This is the end to which the Spirit is always working, not to develop in us a character, a set of human virtues and high qualities that we call our own, but to form Christ in us and teach us to live in constant dependence upon Him.\(^5\)

---

Chapter Nine

CHRIST OUR HEALER

Physical healing through divine intervention is recorded in biblical history. Traces of this doctrine appear in Genesis and gradually unfold throughout the books of the Old Testament. In the New Testament, God’s provision for healing took center stage through the ministry of Jesus. He demonstrated divine power over physical infirmity in a measure never previously seen.

Two Kinds of Healing

Christ healed great numbers of people during His earthly ministry, and the gospel narratives seem to indicate that He often healed people regardless of their spiritual condition. In several instances, however, Jesus asked the individuals who sought Him for healing to exercise faith.

According to the New Testament record, Jesus healed to certify His deity and His messianic role. But it is clear that He also healed out of compassion for suffering men and women. The disparity between these two motives for healing can be resolved by distinguishing two kinds of healing. Signs — instantaneous miracles of healing performed by sovereign authority — authenticated the power and glory of God. This is probably the least frequent and the least understood kind of healing.

Dr. Simpson described a second category of divine healing — applying only to Christians — as the Lord for the body. He based his interpretation on the fact that Christ ministers to the believer as a whole person. This kind of healing is not always immediate. For the Christian, the correction of a physical condition sometimes requires the correction of a spiritual condition. The believer does not seek healing as an isolated experience. It comes within the context of his total walk with God.

Many contemporary healing ministries focus solely on the spectacular. Failure to make any distinction between signs and the Lord for the Body can leave seekers in a state of confusion. They come looking for instantaneous deliverance, knowing nothing of God’s provision in answer to trusting Him for daily strength. They go
away disappointed and skeptical. This often repeated pattern has created ambivalent attitudes toward the doctrine of divine healing. Some church groups deny the teaching altogether. The abuses seem to have obscured the Word of Truth. Yet the New Testament clearly teaches, in the Gospels as well as in the Epistles, that the church is to engage in healing ministries. Christ, the exalted Head, is our example.

**The Ministry of Healing**

Healing in the church was validated first in Jesus’ training of the twelve apostles. Moved by compassion for the multitude, Christ said to His disciples that the harvest was great and more workers would be needed. He commanded them to pray for more workers and then commissioned them to go out into the villages. He gave them authority to heal the sick and cast out evil spirits. They were not only taught to preach the gospel, but also to heal the sick (Matthew 10:1-8).

Had it been only the twelve who were commissioned to heal, we might have assumed that healing power was a special privilege for a select few. However, Luke records that seventy unnamed disciples received the same training and commission. These unnamed followers also were authorized to heal the sick and cast out demons (Luke 10:1-20).

In addition, as recorded in Mark’s Gospel, Jesus included healing in His command to go and make disciples. He asserted that the sick would be healed through the ministry of the church in His name (Mark 16:17, 18). While some of the older Greek manuscripts do not contain these verses, evidence to support their deletion is far from conclusive. For example, the book of Acts confirms that healing was administered alongside the proclamation of the gospel. And church history, from post-apostolic times until now, bears this out by providing frequent testimonies that validate the church’s ongoing ministry of healing.

The first miracle performed after Pentecost was the healing of a lame man who lay at the temple gate. Peter’s explanation of this man’s instantaneous cure provides a theological basis for healing.

*By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see* (Acts 3:16, NIV).

The early church preached Christ and saw many remarkable recoveries. Christ the Healer was a focal point of the apostles’ teaching, and many first century Christians came to faith in Christ through manifestations of His healing power. In times of testing, the church asked God to demonstrate the power of Jesus’ name by healing the sick (Acts 4:30). Physical healing seemed to take place wherever the gospel was preached. The Acts account of apostolic Christianity argues for the fact that Christ endowed His church with a healing ministry and that He intended it to continue until His return.
The Epistles add further confirmation. Writing on the subject of church administration and the exercise of spiritual gifts, the Apostle Paul identified healing among the essential gifts God bestowed upon the church (1 Corinthians 12:9, 10, 28-31). The gifts of miracles were often associated with unusual, instantaneous healings. No evidence can be found that these gifts were ever revoked or that they were restricted to a certain period of history. The popular theory that some gifts were permanent while others were temporary has no basis in Scripture. This theory was born out of an attempt to explain the decline in divine manifestations that came in later centuries of church history. The apparent cessation of these phenomena is explained much more plausibly by spiritual decline in the church. This is substantiated by the history of revival, which reports the emergence of such gifts whenever the church is quickened by a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle James, first pastor of the Jerusalem church, gave specific instructions for exercising healing in the church.

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective (James 5:13-16, NIV).

Christ assigned responsibility for healing the sick to the elders of the church. The practice of anointing with oil reminds both the sick and the ministering elders that the agent of divine healing is the Holy Spirit. The authority for healing rests in the power of Jesus’ name. James made it clear that healing includes spiritual cleansing. The sick are required to search their hearts and correct any spiritual conditions that hinder them. Faith is a predominant condition for receiving divine healing. The New Testament instruction for healing calls for prayer, not only among the elders but on the part of the congregation as well. The church today must follow the New Testament example. Most of the abuses of so-called “faith healers” who function independently from the local church can be attributed to their departure from the principles laid down in James 5.

Healing in Christ’s Redemptive Work

Consideration of Christ the Healer must go beyond His specific office as Healer. By virtue of His being the Son of God, Christ is the Healer (Exodus 15:26). He is also the Healer as the direct result of His atoning death and resurrection. Through Christ, God became incarnate to redeem men from every effect of sin. Both Old and New Testaments teach the moral, ethical, spiritual, and physical ruin that sin produces in the human personality. Every aspect of mankind’s complex makeup suffers from depravity. It hardly seems conceivable that the plan of redemption
would provide no immediate relief for man’s physical frame while providing fully for his ultimate and permanent physical recovery in the day of resurrection.

Since physical illness is the result of man’s fallen condition, it seems logical to assume that the atonement offered through the blood of Christ includes healing. But the church did not arrive at this position by mere logic. The Scriptures speak of this provision in clear, propositional terms. In his prophecy concerning the suffering and death of Christ, Isaiah twice mentions healing as a fruit of the Messiah’s vicarious death.

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:1-6, NIV).

The full meaning of Isaiah’s prophecy is found in Matthew, the eighth chapter.

When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases” (Matthew 8:14-17, NIV).

Christ shed his blood to make a full atonement for sin. The Scriptures do not say specifically how physical healing is manifest in the atonement, but the Matthew passage does clearly link healing with God’s redemptive act. All the blessings of redemption come to the believer through Christ’s atoning blood. Obviously, some are immediate and some future. The conditions are delineated in the statements of Scripture. Healing in man’s present state can be only temporary. Its purpose is to glorify God—to enable us to accomplish His will for our lives. Healing, then, is governed by the sovereign will of God.

**Healing and the Resurrection**

Our Lord’s death and resurrection redeemed the believer from the power of sin and death. Every instance of divine healing constitutes an immediate touch of resurrection life. This aspect of the doctrine of healing is explained best in Romans.
And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you (Romans 8:11, NIV).

Just as He is the agent of sanctification, the Holy Spirit also is the agent of healing. By the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, the Spirit gives life to the believer’s mortal body. The mortal body, while capable of death, is not dead. Paul speaks of quickening people while they are still in this life. Every healing is a foretaste of the day of resurrection when our bodies will be healed completely and eternally from every effect of sin.

Healing and Consecration

The doctrine of divine healing cannot be correctly understood apart from its relationship to a dedicated walk with Christ. The body’s physical resources and limitations must be understood and guarded by a life of practical sanctification. A believer who disregards or misuses his body has no right to claim healing until he deals with the sins he has committed against his body. Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning their sacred responsibility to care for their bodies. “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food” — but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body (1 Corinthians 6:13. NIV).

Since the believer’s body is a member of Christ’s Body, its care is important to Him. Christ our Healer longs to see the bodies of Christians consecrated as temples for God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). They are God’s dwelling place; His concern. Thus, Christ is for the body as well as for the soul and spirit of each believer.

The Epistles speak clearly regarding the association between our spiritual nature and our physical nature. John the Apostle seemed to infer that the prosperity of the soul has a wholesome effect upon the body when he wrote:

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well (3 John 2, NIV).

The wonder of biblical salvation is Christ’s indwelling presence. He lives in us as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King. Each glorious office relates to the other. The gospel is “good news” because it rests in the full provision of Christ.
Chapter Ten

CHRIST OUR COMING KING

The message of Christ’s fullness comes to its climax in the proclamation of Christ our Coming King. In Psalm 2, God declared through David that the Lord, the Anointed One, is King. The Magi, who sought the infant Jesus, recognized Him as a king. The multitudes in Jerusalem spread palm branches and their own garments in the road before Him in public testimony of His royalty. Pontius Pilate nailed a placard over the Savior’s cross, naming Him “King of the Jews.”

Yet Jesus’ simple lifestyle belied His royalty. Some wrongly concluded that He was not a king and others that His kingdom was only spiritual in nature. The mystery of Christ’s kingship can be understood only in the light of His Second Coming. Jesus came to the world the first time as a gentle lamb to suffer death on the cross in behalf of sinners. But He is coming to earth a second time as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The New Testament speaks 318 times of Christ’s second coming. His glorious return to earth will be visible, personal, and corporeal. The promises concerning His Second Coming are literal. They cannot be spiritualized without doing great injustice to the message of the gospel.

On the day of Christ’s ascension, angelic visitors testified to His Second Coming.

*Men of Galilee, they said, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven* (Acts 1:11, NIV).

The Scriptures include the apostles’ teaching about Christ’s return. The New Testament epistles are rich in detailed announcement of this glorious event. They emphasize the importance of this truth to each individual believer as well as to the church. Nothing in the Bible encourages vain speculation about the Second Coming of Christ.

58
The Blessed Hope

The apostle Paul referred to the Lord’s return as a hope. Hope is more than a wish. True hope has every expectation of fulfillment. Hope is faith standing on tiptoe! Across the centuries of church history, suffering believers have found the hope of Christ’s return to be their consolation.

Paul sent Titus, a young pastor, a concise statement explaining the significance of the blessed hope.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good (Titus 2:11-14, NIV).

Some wish to attack this teaching as impractical. Paul’s explanation disproves that criticism. The overriding benefit of proclaiming Christ’s return is its practical effect on the lives of those who believe it. It not only gives hope to sustain the soul, it also tends to shape one’s lifestyle. The believer who lives with the hope of the Lord’s return finds the world less attractive. He adjusts his priorities to make the most of every opportunity to serve Christ.

Remembering that Christ is our Coming King promotes holiness of heart. John’s first epistle bears witness to this truth.

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure (1 John 3:2-3, NIV).

The more a believer learns to live in the reality of Christ’s return, the more he will seek personal purity. He wants to be ready at any moment.

In addition to teaching us to expect Christ’s return, the Epistles also urge the church to prepare for His coming. James’ letter exhorts believers to be patient and strong-hearted since we do not know the day or the hour of the Lord’s return (James 5:7, 8). And Peter wrote, So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him (2 Peter 3:14, NIV).

We should prepare for his return by not only living a holy life, but by also proclaiming the gospel of Christ in every corner of the globe. Jesus promised, And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14). The expectation of the return of our Lord should spur us to making disciples in all nations.

Jesus also taught His disciples to be watchful for His return (Matthew 24:42). Those who look for Him will be on the alert and ready (Hebrews 9:28). Their lives will not be governed by carelessness and indifference but by spiritual preparation and joyful anticipation.
Some New Testament passages describe Christ’s return as His coming to gather the believers. Others speak of Him publicly appearing to all the world. Many Bible scholars explain the differing accounts by the implication that the Second Coming of Christ will embody a series of events—all related to the end of time.

The Rapture of the Church

The Scriptures present Christ’s coming as imminent. The word *imminent* means that it can take place at any time; it can happen momentarily. God’s Word exhorts the church to be ready at all times (Matthew 24:44). First century Christians looked eagerly for Christ’s return and lived in joyful anticipation of meeting Him in the air. Bible scholars have commonly referred to this as the rapture of the Church. The word “rapture” itself is not found in the New Testament, but the concept it describes—being caught away to meet the Lord—is recorded in two, key passages.

*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am* (John 14:1-3, NIV).

*According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever* (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, NIV).

At the Last Supper, Jesus told His disciples that He would personally come again and receive them to Himself (John 14:1-3). He would come to take them to the place He had prepared for them. Paul, who had a particular reason for writing about this, explained exactly how Jesus will come to take His own. The Thessalonian believers had misunderstood his earlier teaching on the subject. Paul wanted them to know that at the Second Coming all those who had died in Christ will have their bodies instantly changed from mortal to immortal (see also 1 Corinthians 15:51-53). Then all believers will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

The Tribulation

Many Bible scholars believe there will be a time of terrible tribulation on the earth. This, however, has been the subject of considerable debate, based on varying interpretations of the related scriptural texts. Still, regardless of the timing, the Apostle Paul’s instructions to Timothy made it clear that God’s people would endure persecution (2 Timothy 3:12) and there would be apostasy in the last days (1 Timothy 4:1-3).
During this tribulation, God will allow Satan, through his “masterpiece” — the Antichrist — to bring the nations of the earth under his spell. Israel will face the greatest suffering she has endured in all of history. The only bright hope during this period will come from those who believe in Christ.

The time of tribulation will culminate in a war called Armageddon, and demonic forces will stir the nations of the world to gather their military forces in the Middle East (Zechariah 14:1-3; Revelation 16:12-16). At the point when it seems that the human race is about to destroy itself, God will intervene. Christ Himself will usher in the Kingdom of God (Revelation 19:11-19). He will come out of heaven with a great army of angels and saints. His glory and power will be so great that He will destroy the hosts of wickedness with the brightness of His coming (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The Millennial Kingdom

With the return of Christ, the kingdom about which poets and philosophers have dreamed will come to pass. After human efforts have utterly failed to produce a perfect society, Jesus will return and establish the kingdom of heaven here on earth (Zechariah 14:4-9). Peace cannot come to the world until the Prince of Peace returns.

Men and women have longed for a time when righteousness will be practiced everywhere. But, from the time of man’s fall into sin, the presence and power of Satan have prevented this. When Jesus returns to earth, He will destroy Satan’s power over mankind by binding him and confining him to an abyss (Revelation 20:1-3). Christ Himself will be King, and His saints will rule with Him.

Israel will at last be restored, not only politically, but also spiritually, and Christ will be her king. Israel rejected Christ at His first coming but will receive Him at His Second Coming. The chosen people will repent of their sins and be born again, producing the greatest mass revival in all of history.

The Apostle John declares that the reign of Christ on earth will last for one thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6). Righteousness will be enforced during this period. God’s government and God’s servants will prevail. The Scriptures describe the glory of our Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14). And though the millennium will come to a close, Christ’s kingdom will endure from everlasting to everlasting.

Eternity Begins

At the close of the millennium, all those who died in wickedness will be resurrected, and will appear before the Great White Throne to be judged, and the condemned will be cast into the lake of fire to suffer eternal damnation (Revelation 20:11-15).

The righteous will enter into their eternal home, the city of God. The present heavens and earth will be purged by fire, and God will bring in the new heavens
and the new earth—the place of righteousness (2 Peter 3:10-13). This sets the scene for eternity (Revelation 21, 22).

Differing interpretations abound concerning eschatology (the theology of death, resurrection, judgment and immortality). Equally respected biblical scholars disagree concerning the actual sequence of events surrounding the Lord’s return. Avoiding the controversial, non-essential points, The Christian and Missionary Alliance Statement of Faith supports a basic belief in the undeniable, biblical assertions of a bodily resurrection and judgment (Section J) and declares that Christ’s return is “imminent and will be personal, visible and premillennial” (Section K). We must remind God’s people in the here and now that we have a never-ending future as bright and glorious as Christ Himself.

Our focus concerning the future is upon our Coming King. He is indeed the “Blessed Hope.” For when He, who is our life, appears, we will appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4). Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), and our King is preparing a place for us there (John 14:3). When He comes in His Father’s glory, He will reward each person according to what he/she has done (Matthew 16:27). For the Christian, the emphasis is on reward, not on punishment. What better incentive to “holy living and faithful service” (Section K) than to keep our eyes on Christ our Coming King?
Chapter Eleven

CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY

As The Christian and Missionary Alliance grew, its organizational structure was adapted to meet current needs, provide necessary services, and assure unity in doctrine and practice. A simple but effective system of government developed gradually with the movement’s expansion in North America and overseas.

Most systems of church government fall under one of three basic types: episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational. However, Alliance government cannot be defined specifically by any single one of them. It employs elements from both the congregational and presbyterian forms. The Alliance might best be described as a network of congregations united in a pattern of districts with a national hub. Thus, local churches in the Alliance are not wholly independent bodies. They relate to a district conference as well as to the national organization.

The relationship between Alliance churches and their respective districts, which are amenable to the C&MA National Office is defined as constituted authority. In simple terms, this means that the brotherhood of Alliance churches has agreed that all legislation passed by the national body through General Council, and all legislation passed by one of its district conferences is binding upon that district’s constituent churches. When these legislative assemblies act within the parameters of Scripture and the constitution of the denomination, their actions are authoritative.

Ruling Bodies

Alliance government places the legislative assembly as the ruling body on all three levels of jurisdiction: the local church, the district conference, and the national assembly (known as General Council). The legislative assembly of a local church convenes at its annual congregational meeting and at other properly called meetings of all members in good standing. The pastor, the church governing board, and all church officers must report to the annual meeting and are subject to the
actions of that assembly. The congregation may enact any legislation it deems advisable providing that it does not conflict with the legislation of the district conference or with the actions of General Council.

The legislative assembly at the district level is comprised of representative delegates from the churches within that district. They are chosen on the basis of the district constitution and bylaws. The district superintendent, the district executive committees and all other officers and committees must report to this assembly, referred to as the district conference. The district conference has authority to adopt bylaws for the district it represents and such other legislation as may be necessary. Such legislation must not conflict with the constitution, policies, regulations, or other legislative actions of General Council.

**Representation**

As provided in the By-laws of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, the highest legislative body is the General Council. The General Council meets every other year in a location determined by the Board of Directors. All official, licensed workers are accredited delegates to the General Council and are issued credentials by their respective district offices. Each organized church has the privilege of sending a minimum of two lay delegates to the General Council (in addition to the pastor). Lay delegates must be selected by the governing board of the local church. Additional lay delegates may be sent in accordance with the rules found in the Manual of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (see Section 6.2, on page A2-6). Local churches are requested to pay the expenses for their pastor to attend General Council. Lay delegates cover their own expenses or receive expenses from the local church. The right to representation at General Council is a privilege that should not be taken lightly. This biennial convocation is important to each church and each official worker. If the historic principle of constituted authority is to be effective, every church must exercise its right to send delegates to General Council.

All official delegates to General Council have the right to vote and the privilege to participate in debate. This system insures that the rules and regulations which govern Alliance churches are not handed down by a hierarchy of officials. They are the collective action of the Council delegates.

The bylaws governing the Alliance General Council call for the selection of committees to give careful and detailed consideration to all reports, resolutions, and recommendations coming before the Council. To assure fairness and provide an opportunity for all districts to participate in committee work, the bylaws state that each district conference and each organized intercultural district shall elect one member and an alternate to each of the select committees of Council. In addition, any accredited delegate may request permission to bring an issue before the appropriate council committee. In such cases, appointments must be made in advance with the committee chairman.

The General Council elects the denomination’s officers as well as its Board of Directors. The terms of office are spelled out in the Alliance Manual. Elections are
Constituted Authority

staggered so that the president may nominate the vice presidents of divisions following his election. The terms are four years in length and no officer may serve more than three consecutive terms in a given office.

The Board of Directors is the highest executive body of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. It cares for the business of the denomination between the meetings of the legislative assembly. This same principle applies at all levels, from the General Council to the local church. Each district has its own executive committee which does for it what the Board of Directors does for the denomination as a whole. Likewise, each officially organized Alliance church has a governing board to fill this role at the local level.

Constituted Authority

The principle of constituted authority safeguards the Alliance. This principle of government was adopted by General Council as a means of insuring that the concerns of every member, every local church, and every officer can be expressed. It provides each local church the freedom to address the needs of people in its specific community, while providing for unity and cooperation with other member congregations across the country. Local churches, elected officers, executive bodies and legislative assemblies are all governed by the constitutions, bylaws, procedures, and regulations found in the Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. These constitute the principles by which the denomination is organized. The bylaws amplify the constitutions by showing how the principles apply to local conditions.

See also the Statement of the Definition of Constituted Authority in the Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Section H6.
Chapter Twelve

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

General Council, the highest legislative body of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, convenes every two years for business and spiritual inspiration. This assembly has played an important role in the development and growth of the movement. It has served as a catalyst for the diverse and widespread ministries of the Alliance. This body developed a system of polity for The Christian and Missionary Alliance in the United States and, at the same time, shaped policy for its worldwide outreach. General Council is unique in that it is the only legislative assembly where Alliance missionaries and American church leaders participate together. This biennial gathering of ministers, lay persons and missionaries has enabled the constituency to maintain a unity that is in many ways stronger than would be possible with restrictive legislation. General Council provides a continuing opportunity for asserting the doctrinal distinctives that characterize The Christian and Missionary Alliance. While the council platform is open to evangelical leaders of many denominations, the preaching there is consistent with the message of the fullness of Christ. At Council, Alliance pastors, educators, evangelists, officials, and missionaries consistently proclaim various aspects of the fourfold gospel.

The Composition of General Council

Council delegates are representative of the entire denomination. All credentialed workers are delegates to Council. Credentials for Council delegates are issued by district superintendents. Each congregation has the privilege of appointing two lay delegates to Council in addition to its pastor(s). Larger churches are allowed additional delegates, based on the size of their membership. Lay delegates are chosen by the church governing board and must be members in good standing. The names of appointed Council delegates are sent to the district office, and credentials are issued by the superintendent. The local church is requested to pay council
expenses for its pastor and, when possible, to provide financial assistance for its lay
delegates as well.

Lay delegates to Council include the presidents of the district organizations of
Alliance Men and Alliance Women Ministries. Alliance educational institutions also
are allowed representation. The bylaws outlining the basis of representation to
Council provide for representation from all segments of the denomination. Retired
ministers and missionaries have the privilege of registering as voting delegates to
Council as well.

**The Format of General Council**

Special on-site seminars are offered at Council most years, designed for the
training and inspiration of lay and ministerial delegates to Council. These usually
focus on evangelism, church growth or Christian education. International Ministries
sponsors events for missionaries on home assignment as well. In addition to these
meetings, the national committee for Alliance Women conducts a business and
planning meeting for its leadership.

The first official session of Council is a public service. The usual pattern is a
public service each evening and each morning. The schedule always includes a
communion service for the entire assembly as well as a special time for prayer and
anointing for those seeking healing. Also included on the council agenda is an
annual address from the president, and it is his prerogative to schedule this as he
sees fit. Traditionally, one of the highlights of Council is the missionary rally.
However, there is no hard and fast rule restricting the council agenda. Other
options in scheduling have been sought to insure the best attendance for special
events such as the rallies presented by National Church Ministries and International
Ministries. In particular, these two segments of the Council venue are focused on
the Great Commission. They help fan the flame of evangelism and missionary zeal
within the hearts of the Alliance constituency.

General Council centers on worship and inspiration, solid biblical preaching and
significant times of prayer. It also provides a forum for fellowship and the renewing
of ties within the Alliance family. Colleges usually arrange receptions or special
events for their alumni, as do districts and other special interest groups. A delegate
attending General Council for the first time will come to understand that the
Alliance is not just an organization, it is people. A visitor once described the
experience to a friend as “tasting the spiritual flavor of the Alliance.” Perhaps this is
why General Council has maintained its vitality through the years.

Though Council is a time for worship, teaching and inspiration, its practical
purpose is to conduct the business of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.
Reports are received from the officers of the denomination and distributed to the
delegates. In conformity with the constitution and bylaws, council committees
carefully consider the reports. The committee may bring appropriate
recommendations to the legislative assembly. When the report comes before
Council, any recommendations are open for debate by the delegates. They may be
amended or defeated according to the will of Council. Legislation passed by General Council is binding. And since this is the highest legislative body of the denomination, all Alliance districts and churches are obligated to carry out its legislative actions.

Committee work is one of the most important aspects of Council. Delegates assigned to a council committee should view this responsibility as a sacred trust. If thorough work is done in the committee sessions, Council delegates will have better information on the issues to be considered by the entire body, and less time will be needed to answer questions during debate. The overriding purpose for committee work is to analyze the reports and proposals and guide Council in considering the matters of first priority.

Any accredited delegate may ask to speak with a council committee providing the matter he or she presents relates to the report to which that committee is assigned. Delegates wishing to exercise this privilege should contact the respective committee chairman to arrange an appointment. When necessary, time limits are placed on such presentations so that all who wish to speak may have the opportunity. Following these presentations, delegates are dismissed to allow committee members the opportunity to speak freely about the matters under consideration. The workload of the standing committees varies each year and is commensurate with the number of recommendations or the importance of the legislation proposed within a given report. Each committee member must take his assignment seriously and attend all the sessions called by the chairman.

Two standing committees and six select committees are named in the Alliance manual (see Special Rules of Order of The Christian and Missionary Alliance General Council, Section A-3 of the Manual). However, the bylaws provide for special committees to be assigned by Council as needed to study a specific issue and report to Council at its next session or to the Board of Directors.

The order of business for Council is provided in Article III of the Special Rules of Order for General Council, as found in Section A-3 of the Manual. Managing the details for observing this order is assigned to the Committee on Agenda. At the opening of each business session, the chair calls for the reading of the report of the Committee on Agenda. Frequently, the committee secretary will make a motion to grant the chair the privilege of adjusting the agenda as necessary. For example, if a scheduled report is late, the chair may proceed with the next report.

Matters that typically appear before General Council come from the Report of the President, recommendations from the Board of Directors, and/or recommendations from any special study commissions asked to report to General Council. The President’s Report is published on the Alliance web site, and may be downloaded by the delegates prior to Council. Delegates are expected to read the material carefully in advance of the session. Delegates can expedite the business of Council by coming prepared with an understanding of the issues under discussion. Delegates will also find it useful to avail themselves of a copy of the Manual of The
Christian and Missionary Alliance. In addition, for an individual unfamiliar with parliamentary procedure, it may be helpful to bring a copy of Robert’s Rules of Order.

New matters of business, such as resolutions to change existing legislation or introduce new legislation, must be submitted to the appropriate council committee before they can be presented on the floor of the council.

When a district wants to present a matter to General Council, the district superintendent presents the issue to the District Leadership Forum, held at the National Church District Leadership Conference. The District Leadership Forum considers the matter and either recommends it be presented to the Board of Directors or not. The Board of Directors then considers whether the matter should be presented to General Council. In this way new legislation or changes in legislation may be presented by a district conference.

The election of officers and board members is an important item of business at General Council. The report of the Nominating Committee is presented initially as a “first reading,” that is, for information only. When it is presented as a “second reading,” the floor is opened for delegates to offer further nominations. Because Council constitutes the general assembly of the entire denomination, many delegates may be unfamiliar with the candidates for office. To address this problem, the Nominating Committee provides printed, detailed information about each candidate. To allow time for the information to be digested, elections do not take place until a day after the second reading of the committee’s report. Elections usually are designated as a “special order” of business, which is accomplished by passing a motion to schedule them at a specified time.

The outcome of the elections is far-reaching. The Alliance has chosen this process, as a system under God, for selecting its leaders. Much prayer is focused on the entire process—on the Nominating Committee and on nominations received from the floor. It is the concern of Council to choose candidates who qualify for office, as well as by their gifts and experience. When General Council adjourns, the administrative responsibility for the body as a whole, within the guidelines laid down by its legislative assembly, falls upon the elected leadership.

The Important Role of General Council

Pastors and lay people should never take lightly the privilege and the responsibility of participation in General Council. In situations where church boards question the expense of sending delegates, pastors may find it necessary to explain the importance of Council. Usually, if the pastor himself makes every effort to attend, board members will be encouraged to do their part in giving the church’s approval.

Though General Council is the highest legislative body of the Alliance, the smallest church can be represented. The basis of representation has been designed intentionally to encourage ministers and laity from all member churches to take part in shaping the worldwide ministry of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. General Council charts the course, frames the regulations and develops the policies
by which the denomination’s outreach is guided. It is the guardian of pure doctrine. Council becomes the united advocate of the Alliance to our culture. For more than a century, this assembly has faithfully created and preserved a spirit of remarkable unity in a ministry that embraces many diverse elements.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of The Christian and Missionary Alliance is the national executive body of the denomination. It consists of 28 members, which are elected by General Council, for a four-year term. The Board of Directors is composed of pastors, missionaries, district superintendents, educators, and lay people. The C&MA president, corporate vice president and corporate secretary are ex officio members of the Board. The Board meets several times during the year to decide matters that affect the work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in the U.S., and the missionaries working overseas.

General Council establishes the broad policies of the denomination, and the Board of Directors bases its decision within the framework of the policies of General Council. The Board of Directors not only handles the business matters of the denomination between Councils, but also spends time in intercessory prayer and meditation on the Word. (For more information see Article III of the Amended and Restated Constitution and Bylaws of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, section A2 of the Manual.)

National Administration

The President of The Christian and Missionary Alliance is elected by General Council for a four year term. He is the chief executive officer of the denomination. He works with a staff of leaders who supervise the various divisions of the administration in the National Office of the C&MA in Colorado Springs. The executive team is nominated by the President and approved by vote of General Council.

The Corporate Vice president is also elected by General Council, and takes the place of the President, when the occasion arises. He serves as an advisor to the President.

The Corporate Secretary is responsible for making sure that the minutes of General Council and the Board of Directors are properly recorded and kept. It is usually through the Secretary’s report to Council that much of the new legislation or changes in bylaws are conveyed from the Board of Directors for consideration in General Council.

The national administration in Colorado Springs does not direct the work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, but uses its resources to serve the districts and the churches.
Chapter Thirteen

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

The district is key to the organizational structure by which The Christian and Missionary Alliance functions. The Alliance began as a para-church organization with no particular hierarchical system in place. But as the movement grew, the geographical distribution of churches necessitated a more structured approach. In 1912, General Council adopted a constitutional change, dividing North America geographically into districts. The following year Council passed legislation authorizing local churches as official elements of those districts. The legislation established a pattern for district jurisdiction. In time, district responsibility and authority was defined more clearly; its functions gradually developed into the system that currently characterizes The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Strangely, no official statement of the philosophy for district leadership was adopted until reorganization took place in the mid ’70s. At that time, statements defining the philosophy and ecclesiology of district leadership were included in both the district and local church constitutions. Their preambles trace the relationship of the local church to the district and establish the proper place for both units in the total framework of the denomination. The local church does not exist to promote the denomination. On the contrary, the denomination exists to serve the local church. A strong commitment to this philosophy has protected the Alliance from developing restrictive ecclesiastical power structures.

The opening paragraphs of the Uniform Constitution for Districts (Section A4 of the Manual) establish the district as the vital link between the local church and the denomination at large. This document governs both geographic and constituted intercultural districts.

Preamble

District organization in The Christian and Missionary Alliance is designed to help churches grow and to provide for the regional relationships which are indicated in the
New Testament. While the local assembly is the primary visible form of the church, the relationships beyond the congregation are essential if the local church is to fulfill its function in fellowship, evangelism, church development, extension, and world missions.

Therefore, The Christian and Missionary Alliance churches of this district are united in governance, fellowship, and service in order to promote unity of faith in the fullness of Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King, and to facilitate the spread of the gospel at home and abroad under the guidance and enabling of the Holy Spirit.

The local church is the primary visible expression of the Body of Christ, but it does not function in isolation. The ministry of churches who share the same faith, who apply biblical principles in the same manner, can be enhanced as they coexist in relation to one another. According to Alliance polity, under the authority of General Council, the district is the unit of government whose responsibility it is to connect churches to one another and, in turn, to the national church.

For practical reasons, the national church body reserves the power to determine the number of districts and their geographical boundaries. National Church Ministries periodically evaluates the demographics relating to district boundaries and suggests changes or the creation of a new district by making recommendations to the Board of Directors through the president’s report. The convening conference for any new district is called by National Church Ministries. District boundaries are determined, not only according to the proximity of church locations but also according to a region’s demographic, business and cultural milieu. Not all districts are divided geographically. In the case of intercultural districts, this is determined by language and ethnic heritage. Most territories served by superintendents in intercultural districts are scattered across the country.

The Various Roles of the District

The district is organized with an executive and a legislative branch. The District Prayer Conference is the legislative body of the district. It functions according to the Uniform Constitution for Districts (Section A4 of the Manual). The district conference is empowered to create its own bylaws providing they do not conflict with the Uniform Constitution for Districts. The conference elects a district superintendent who serves as the chief executive officer of the district. He is elected for a four-year term and is allowed to serve a maximum of three terms. The conference also elects a district executive committee, which is representative of the regions of the district; the district superintendent serves as its chairman. In essence, the district executive committee functions as a board of directors for the district.

The district constitution also provides for a licensing, ordaining, and consecration council. The members of this committee must be ordained ministers since it is their responsibility to examine candidates for licensure, ordination or consecration. The committee may be elected by the district conference or appointed
The District executive committee, as provided in the bylaws adopted by the district conference.

Until the closing decades of the 20th century, ministries among specific people groups within the geographic boundaries of the continental United States were viewed as “home mission” projects. With the influx of large numbers of refugees from Southeast Asia and other regions of the world, The Alliance became more and more active in establishing culturally specific ministries within the U.S. An expanded system of governance was needed to guide them. With the approval of Council, the division of National Church Ministries established the office of “Specialized Ministries,” later changing its title to “Intercultural Ministries.”

Intercultural Ministries grew rapidly and many new churches were established. Gradually, districts were established to minister to specific ethnic groups. Most are fully constituted now, and governed alongside the geographic districts under the Uniform Constitution for Districts of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. The primary role of the district organization is to coordinate the work of the churches in their geographical or cultural contexts and to promote the evangelistic and missionary interests of the denomination. The district is directly responsible for the oversight of the churches within its boundaries. The district superintendent is in some respects seen as the district pastor and, in like manner, the district executive committee as its eldership.

The Relationship of Pastors to the District

Each official worker has a special relationship with the district. While the pastor is called by the local church and is responsible to the congregation, he is licensed by the district and appointed to his place of ministry by the district superintendent. The district is also responsible for administering discipline. This arrangement serves a two-fold purpose. It allows the larger body to maintain a strict watch over the quality and doctrinal integrity of all official workers and, at the same time, assures local churches that the pastors to whom they have been directed are credible in doctrine and lifestyle. In the event that a minister falls into moral failure or doctrinal heresy, discipline is administered by the district rather than by the local church. This helps to protect a local church congregation from conflicting opinions over how a pastor is treated.

Guidelines for disciplinary measures appear in the Uniform Policy on Discipline, Restoration and Appeal (Section E8 in the Manual). It prescribes principles and procedures for church discipline at all levels, from the local church to the national office. This document assures fairness on the part of the accused and is designed to protect the rights of official workers. Alliance pastors should acquaint themselves with this procedure and should instruct their church elders concerning its biblical basis and practical application.

Each pastor should look to his district superintendent as an overseer, as one to whom he can turn for counsel in personal or church-related matters. In addition, by his own loyalty and cooperation, the pastor can encourage the local church to
A Movement for God

support district ventures. As in other areas, the local church will generally reflect its own pastor’s attitude toward those in authority.

The church as well as the pastor needs the guidance and encouragement the district offers. No local church can fully carry out the spirit of New Testament unity in isolation. Local churches thrive in an organizational framework that provides the kind of spiritual fellowship and mutual strength that comes from sharing their resources. Combined efforts promote the work of the gospel. A group of small churches working together can accomplish more than the sum of their independent parts. This is particularly true in the area of church planting. Few churches have the strength to independently plant a daughter church without district help—that is, the combined energy provided by the network of district churches. And it involves more than money. People are the essential resource for church extension. Pastors and lay leaders who are interested in involving themselves in church planting should contact their district superintendent and/or church multiplication leadership.

Other District Functions

The district has traditionally promoted disciplemaking ministries (Christian education) through a committee elected by its conference. This committee takes responsibility for the oversight and development of district or regional youth and children’s camps. Most districts provide events to encourage young people in their Christian walk and commitment. The Disciplemaking Ministries Committee also is responsible for offering consultation and training for workers ministering to children, youth and adults throughout the district. Each district is free to develop its own approach but is given access to resources through the national Disciplemaking Ministries Office. Many districts maintain a library of resources for churches to use for their own teacher-training sessions and Sunday school workshops. A pastor will find that the personnel and resources of the district disciplemaking ministries committee can provide valuable support for his ministry.

Another area of ministry that the district promotes is missions mobilization. The Missions Mobilization Committee’s responsibility is to promote missionary vision and participation in the worldwide work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance among the churches in the district.

In keeping with its commitment to world evangelism, The Christian and Missionary Alliance provides teams of missionaries to make it possible for every Alliance church to hold an annual missionary conference. The district office coordinates the conference tours. Each church, regardless of size, is able to participate.

In addition to planting churches, providing ministry resources, and giving general oversight to district matters, the district leadership also plays a key role in evangelism. The district office charts growth by keeping statistical records of conversions, baptisms and church membership. The goal is for each church to
become a Great Commission church. In addition, some districts appoint an evangelism committee to help churches plan and develop ministries of outreach.

The district superintendent serves as a consultant to guide churches in building or expansion programs. He offers guidance to pastors, gives general oversight to churches and supervises the candidating process when there are pastoral changes. When serious internal problems arise within a church, the district superintendent acts as an arbitrator; when necessary he can call for the assistance of other district officers or outside consultants.

**District Conference**

Geographical districts convene their conferences in the spring of the year. Some of the intercultural district conferences are scheduled at other times. In conformity with national legislation, the Board of Directors sends a representative to each conference. The representative is responsible for presenting the report of the President to the conference, for representing the Board of Directors, and for answering questions relating to denominational matters. By virtue of his office, the board representative is a full member of the district conference. The secretaries are responsible to provide the board representative with copies of all reports and the official minutes of all sessions of the conference. These are reviewed by the president and sent to the vice president of National Church Ministries for study and evaluation.

Legislation has been adopted to allow district conferences to express themselves to the Board of Directors and/or to General Council. The district can voice a particular concern or submit a proposal to the District Leadership Forum, which may forward the matter to the Board of Directors and/or General Council.

**Delegates to District Conference**

The district conference is the highest legislative body of the district. It is comprised of all credentialed workers and representative lay delegates from the district churches. The basis of lay delegation to district conference is the same as to General Council—two lay delegates from each church and one additional lay delegate for each 100 members above 150. Lay delegates must be elected by the church governing board.

In addition to pastors and lay representatives, licensed workers under other categories are eligible for delegate status as well. Any Alliance military or federal chaplain serving within the boundaries of the district and any retired ministers and missionaries who live within the district are credentialed as conference delegates. Resident evangelists and ministers-at-large who are licensed by the Board of Directors also are eligible. District presidents of Alliance Women and Alliance Men are official delegates by virtue of their offices.

**The Conference Schedule**

The district superintendent presides as chairman. The conference schedule is similar to General Council in that some sessions each day are devoted to
inspirational ministries, usually one in the morning and one in the evening. It is also customary to serve communion at an appropriate time so that the district family may partake together. Most conferences include an annual message from the district superintendent. This affords him an opportunity to share his vision and spiritual concerns with the district constituency as a whole. This annual address helps promote the unique and close bond of fellowship that exists within each Alliance district.

The business opens with the presentation of reports. The recent trend has been to distribute printed copies of all reports and thereby dispense with a public reading with the exception of a select few such as those of the president, the district superintendent, and the district secretary. Reports are formally received in the opening session, referred to the proper committees and placed on the agenda for consideration and reporting back to the conference. The pattern for committee work follows that of General Council. Each district determines its own standing committees based upon its bylaw requirements and provisions. The committees are nominated, either by the executive committee or by a committee on standing committees, and elected by the conference. All committee members must be accredited delegates.

The general business sessions of conference consist of committee reports and of action taken in response to the recommendations they contain. Free and full debate is permitted on all properly presented items of business. District elections are similar to the national elections held at General Council. The nominating committee presents its report as a first reading. At a second reading of this report, nominations can be made from the floor. In most district conferences, elections are scheduled as a special order of business, customarily on the last day of conference.

The district executive committee (DEXCOM) is chaired by the district superintendent. It encompasses the basic officers of the district plus as many pastors and laymen as the district’s bylaws mandate. At its first meeting after conference, the DEXCOM may name a subcommittee to act with the superintendent between regular meetings. In such cases, the actions of the subcommittee are then reported to the executive committee. The constitution for Alliance districts designates the DEXCOM as the body authorized to provide administrative oversight between conferences. This constitution can be altered only by General Council. However, the constitution provides latitude for each district to adopt bylaws that are uniquely suited to its own ministry as long as those bylaws in no way conflict with the constitution.

The district’s annual operational budget must be adopted by its conference; it becomes the guideline for the district superintendent and the DEXCOM in matters relating to finance during the year. Funds for the district operational budget, often referred to as the DOB, come from contributions made by district churches. Each district is free to determine its own method of raising funds. Some request an established contribution per each active member. More commonly, others base their income on a percentage of the operating budget of each local church, excluding
missions giving and mortgage payments or rental. Pastors and lay delegates are responsible for sharing their own church’s financial obligation to the district with their governing boards and congregations. Generous support for district ministries comes back to the churches in better administration, resources and training. The privilege of franchise in the district legislative assembly carries with it the responsibility to support the district cooperatively and financially.

Local churches should consider it a privilege for their pastor(s) or lay delegates to be elected to district committees. Time spent in district work should be encouraged and celebrated. The Alliance family realizes mutual blessing and enhanced effectiveness as local churches and their respective districts assist each other in fulfilling Christ’s Great Commission.
Chapter Fourteen

LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION

As the Alliance grew in size and shifted from a para-church organization to a denomination, its leadership began to focus more attention on the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology). In the early years, many Alliance bodies were little more than loosely structured evangelistic centers. Most were referred to simply as “branches” and were rarely if ever viewed as churches. Most members of Alliance branches also held membership in mainline denominational churches, which accounts for the fact that most branches conducted their meetings on Sunday afternoons. A residual effect of these beginnings was that as late as the 1940s a number of Alliance churches still maintained afternoon Sunday schools.

The rise of liberal theology in mainline churches at the beginning of the 20th century compelled many Alliance adherents to forsake denominational affiliation. For the first time, people began looking to Alliance branches as they would to a church. Still, the unique expression of church life in the branches continued with few alterations. Many used tabernacle in their name to distinguish themselves from more conventional churches. The tabernacle concept originated in urban settings where crowds could gather for city-wide evangelistic campaigns, Bible conferences, and missionary conventions. Large temporary buildings were constructed, many with sawdust floors and rough benches. Seating capacities were as large as a thousand, though the core groups that supported them often consisted of only thirty or forty people. Nonetheless, in some locations this aggressive, evangelistic approach was so successful that spiritually hungry people left mainline churches in great numbers. Some of the tabernacles grew into sizable congregations.

Social change and new trends in American religious life eventually brought the tabernacle movement to a close. Though a number of Alliance branches and churches retained the title of tabernacle, their styles of worship and ministry changed significantly. Their organizational structures changed accordingly, and they began to look more like typical churches. Thus, a loosely structured system of branches
developed into a network of congregations in need of ecclesiastical leadership. This need sparked renewed interest in the biblical principles exemplified in New Testament church life. The theological implications of congregational order and practice took on fresh significance, and the office and role of church elders grew in importance.

Over time, a pattern for church governance was established within the Alliance. In the late 1970s, General Council revised the C&MA church constitution to reflect a polity that was born out of the movement’s composite experience. Since that time, the constitution has been evaluated and revised as necessary to keep up with Alliance growth and development. In this sense, it reflects the wisdom of the years. No local group could hope to produce from its own limited experience a comparable guiding document. The Alliance church constitution is broad and appropriate for churches of all sizes. While laying down the basic principles for church government, it allows for adaptation to the needs of each individual congregation. Every local church pastor, governing board member and elder should be familiar with its contents.

**Basic Concepts of Local Church Government**

The organization of a local church must begin with the recognition of New Testament authority. The Alliance church constitution defines the local church in relationship to the Body of Christ as a whole. Though the Alliance acknowledges itself to be a denomination, it rejects any spirit of sectarianism. The Alliance declares that Church of Jesus Christ is much greater than its own constituency and welcomes the fellowship and cooperation of all Bible-believing and Christ-honoring churches. Having accepted this fundamental reality of the church at large, the Alliance believes denominational structures to be consistent with the scriptures and practical for accomplishing the church’s purpose.

Each local church in The Christian and Missionary Alliance is constitutionally related to the district of which it is a part and to the denomination as a whole. Alliance churches are not independent. Each Alliance congregation is an integral part of the greater denomination. The constitution for the local church is not the product of a powerful hierarchy; it came from a consensus of representative leadership from Alliance churches across the United States. General Council is the general assembly of the grass-roots national church; and, concurrently, each district conference is the general assembly of all the local church congregations within its respective geographical or cultural region.

The church constitution recognizes the place of civil incorporation for the local church and clearly defines the corporate relationship that exists between local congregations and the national and district organizations. The constitution is the basic governing document of the church, but it does not make the church a corporation. Incorporation is accomplished through legal process. Requirements for incorporation vary from state to state. A church wishing to incorporate should seek the counsel of its district superintendent for procedural requirements. In addition,
the Alliance Manual includes a Form of Charter for Churches (see Section A6 of the Manual). Each state has its own laws of incorporation, and in some states there may be several ways to incorporate. The district superintendent will be able to advise the church about how to incorporate in a manner that is consistent with the Alliance constitution. Churches are incorporated in a “not-for-profit” category. It is wise to engage the services of an attorney to draw up a legal charter of incorporation, which must be presented to the congregation and formally adopted. Church charters should be submitted for review by the district office before final adoption to insure compliance with the provisions of authority under the Alliance constitution. Once a charter has been adopted by a congregational vote, it must be registered with the appropriate government office. The original copy of a church charter should be kept in a secure place (e.g., a safety deposit box). A copy also should be sent to the district office to become a part of the church’s legal file.

Incorporation is important because without it a church can neither buy nor sell real estate, nor can it issue tax-deductible receipts. Property purchased by newly planted, unincorporated churches can come under district entitlement and can be transferred to the church after the congregation has grown large enough to be formally organized and chartered for incorporation.

Most districts have implemented a preliminary, provisional constitution for churches that are not yet officially organized. Such a document allows for limited organizational structures, thus providing oversight for a church in its beginning stages. During this transitional period, the pastor and other officers are usually appointed by the district superintendent. This practical approach encourages the involvement of a core group of the new church’s leaders and includes them in the decision-making process.

Consistent with the concept of constituted authority, the local church constitution places the membership of the congregation as the highest legislative body of the local church. This structure matches the district conference and General Council. The legislative body consisting of the members of the local church has an annual meeting for the purpose of elections and reports. Other congregational meetings may be called as prescribed by the church’s bylaws. The congregation constitutionally delegates the church governing board to act as its executive body between meetings of the church membership. Since the governing board serves as a delegated authority, it must operate within the guidelines established by the congregation. Some of the responsibilities of the governing board are provided in the constitution under Article VI of section A5 of the Manual. The local church may enlarge those responsibilities in its own bylaws. The legislative actions of the annual meeting, such as budget approval, are binding on the governing board. However, some congregations have authorized their executive boards to create and approve budgets. A governing board must always secure the permission of its congregation for approval of loans that encumber the property of the church. The constitution requires local church governing boards to consult with the district superintendent.
on all matters relating to church property (see Section A5, Article XII of the Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches).

**Local Church Bylaws**

The church constitution sets forth the general framework for local church government. It determines the basic officers, the annual meeting, and the relationship of the local church to the larger church body. It describes the church’s governance authority and its major functions, and the minimum requirements for membership. Based upon this framework, the local church is then responsible to adopt bylaws that will apply the constitution to its own specific ministry.

The Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches of The Christian and Missionary Alliance calls for a leadership group of at least five officers including the senior pastor. Over and above the required five, each congregation has the right to designate the appropriate number of board members to serve them best. The size of the congregation is a determining factor. The composition of the board must also be determined by the congregation. For example, are all the elders to serve on the board? Should the board include any members-at-large? The Alliance Manual contains a section entitled “Instructional Statement on Church Government” (Section H1). This document was approved by action of General Council to assist local churches in interpreting the church constitution and in formulating church bylaws. The instructional statement includes suggestions for the size and composition of a church governing board.

**Check List for Local Church Bylaws**

Church bylaws are concerned with other matters as well. Areas not prescribed by the constitution but requiring bylaw provisions are as follows:

- The bylaws must determine the name of the local church. The church’s official, corporate name should be written in the bylaws even in cases where a church may use a shortened name for advertising itself in the community. If the corporate name is unwieldy, a church can amend its charter to bring the chartered name and the common name into conformity. However, “The Christian and Missionary Alliance” must appear in the charter as part of the official name.

- The date for the annual congregational meeting should be established by the bylaws.

- If the local congregation desires to expand its requirements for church membership, the additional requirements should be included in the bylaws.

- The required number of elders, deacons and deaconesses must be approved by the local church and prescribed in the bylaws. Any
additional responsibilities assigned to these committees should also be stated in the bylaws.

- Any additional standing committees established by the congregational meeting should be named in the bylaws, along with information about the size and function of these committees. For example, the membership may determine a need for a finance or church budget committee, which shall, with the pastor and the financial officers, review the church accounts and make recommendations to the board.

- Some states require churches to provide trustees to care for the legal aspects of owning property and signing official documents. In such cases, the church bylaws must establish the number of trustees and the duties they are to perform. (Note: some churches assign trustees the responsibility of maintaining church properties. Others assign these matters to deacons.)

- The bylaws should indicate which committees are elected by the congregation and which are to be appointed by the church board.

- Article XIV—Elections, found in the Uniform Constitution of Accredited Churches, reads. “Other nominations may be made from the membership.” It is, therefore necessary for the bylaws to specify a procedure by which the congregation makes its nominations. The bylaws should specify whether or not nominations shall be allowed from the floor. (If so, the congregation may wish to include a provision that the person being nominated give prior consent, thus expressing willingness to serve that office if elected.) Another method employed by some churches is to ask members in good standing to present their nominations to the nominating committee in advance of the congregational meeting. Under this system, all nominations are presented by the nominating committee. Consultation with the district superintendent on this procedure would be advisable.

If a pastor discovers his church has no bylaws or that its existing bylaws are inadequate, he can ask the governing board to appoint a committee on bylaws. A rough draft of proposed bylaws should be formulated and submitted to the district office for review. When all additions or corrections have been completed, a final draft of the bylaws should be distributed to the membership in advance of the congregational meeting during which they will be considered. Be sure to adhere to any directions concerning advance notice that may appear in the church’s incorporation charter. Generally speaking, a two-week notice is sufficient.

Church bylaws are adopted by following normal parliamentary procedure. It is good practice to consider any new or revised bylaws seriatim (item by item), thereby providing the congregation ample opportunity to debate and refine them.
Organizing the Local Church

Local church organizational structure is intended to be a blessing, not a burden. God’s Word calls for the business of the church to be conducted “in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Corinthians 14:40). However, organization for organization’s sake is more of a burden than a blessing. Good judgment should be the rule in church governance. A preponderance of detailed rules is counterproductive. A church needs only enough structure to effectively serve its people and reach out to its community.

Small churches and new churches can operate with the barest requirements prescribed by the constitution. Some congregations may be so small that they have only two elders. Elders must be recruited with care, making sure that the New Testament standards for eldership are met. Jesus taught His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest that He might thrust forth laborers. The pastor can ask God to identify men in the fellowship who possess the gifts and qualifications for eldership. He should then encourage and train them. The most effective way to train an elder is through mentoring—a discipleship process. God is building His church and will distribute among each local church body those spiritual gifts that are needed for that church’s unique ministry.

Disciplemaking Ministries

In most cases, the Sunday school is still the largest of the disciplemaking ministries of the church. It should be given priority as a primary teaching arm of the church. Good organization helps the Sunday school accomplish its purpose. The disciplemaking ministries committee should be composed of the pastor (as ex officio), Christian education director (where one has been appointed), and any officers of the Sunday school, departmental directors or age-group coordinators.

As a small church grows and develops in these areas of ministry, more guidelines in the bylaws may be needed according to the circumstances.

The Alliance Manual also includes constitutions for C&MA Men’s Ministry and Alliance Women Ministries. These vital auxiliary organizations offer many opportunities for ministry and service to the men and women of local Alliance churches.

The Manual as a Guide Book

As the official document of the denomination, the Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance serves as a guide book for lay leaders as well as for pastors. Pastors should not assume that leaders understand Alliance organizational structure. Each time new individuals take office, a pastor should take time to discuss with them how the manual applies to the unique context of their congregation’s ministry.
The Pastor as Overseer

As the shepherd of the flock, the pastor is responsible for overseeing the organizational operation of the church. He inspires leaders to consistently carry out their specific responsibilities—by example, by preaching and teaching, by training and leading. The pastor is called to be a man of prayer, an initiator for evangelism, a teacher, and a counselor. He must also be a leader, and if he does not himself possess strong gifts of administration, he must at least provide for this aspect of church ministry. The Scriptures prescribe a plan for church leadership. Part of the pastor’s work is to learn how to recruit strong leaders and to train them to serve the Lord through the local church.
EPILOGUE

We began with Albert Benjamin Simpson, which is, of course, where The Christian and Missionary Alliance began. We saw that Dr. Simpson was a man whose life centered on the all-sufficiency and glory of Christ. His love for Christ became a compelling force to do all he could to fulfill the Great Commission.

Though he was himself a pastor, Dr. Simpson did not at first recognize that maintaining support for his growing force of missionaries to foreign lands would require an organized home base. In his later years he came to see that this was necessary. Nonetheless, Simpson probably never envisioned the formation of an actual church denomination. Yet, were he to witness a gathering of the Alliance World Fellowship with representatives from over ten thousand constituent churches, his heart would undoubtedly be thrilled.

Research gathered through the church growth movement in the latter half of the 20th Century links a church body’s strength and potential for growth directly to the measure in which it commits itself to fulfilling the Great Commission. This explains what some have termed the genius behind The Christian and Missionary Alliance. The real genius, of course, is God’s. The Great Commission is the final element in His great plan for the redemption of mankind.

Our health as a denomination depends on our continued commitment to the following Healthy Church principles:

- Winning the lost
- Building the believers
- Equipping the workers
- Multiplying the shepherd-leaders
- Sending the called ones

Though he never described his strategy in these exact terms, they were the guiding principles of Dr. Simpson’s life and the ministry he founded. The leadership of The Alliance is deeply committed to establishing and nurturing
churches in which a balance of each of these elements is present. We define them as follows:

**Winning**
Winning is designed to present Jesus Christ to non-Christians. The goal is to see them accept Christ as Savior and Lord. The call at this level is to provide a point of entry for every person to “come and see!” A winning ministry intentionally helps believers reach their friends.

**Building**
Building helps Christians follow Christ more completely and consistently. The goal is to help believers enjoy an abundant, fruitful life (John 10:10). We want believers to experience Christ as their Sanctifier and Healer and to be rooted and established in the faith (Colossians 2:7).

**Equipping**
Equipping is the training of workers to share in the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). A great part of Jesus’ time was invested in preparing His disciples to do the work that He commissioned them to do after His ascension. We also are to equip others to do the work extending Christ’s Kingdom.

**Multiplying**
Multiplying involves leadership training and is designed to prepare those who are ready to shepherd a segment of the flock so that they might multiply themselves and multiply the impact of the ministry.

**Sending**
The sent ones are those who have been won, built, equipped, and are now being sent to other places with the Good News of salvation. These individuals are now ready to multiply themselves in the lives of others.

The Church was God’s idea. She is the vessel He has chosen and equipped to fulfill the Great Commission — to make disciples by taking the Good News of redemption to every people group on planet Earth, baptizing the believers in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything He has commanded us. The Christian and Missionary Alliance has determined to remain on the cutting edge of this great work by building healthy churches focused on completing the Great Commission — at home and abroad. We will do this by *Living the Call Together*. 