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H1

STATEMENT ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The following instructional statement was prepared at the direction of the 1980 General Council (Hartford, Connecticut) and adopted at the 1981 General Council (Anaheim, California).

The early leaders of The Christian and Missionary Alliance sensed a minimal need for a thoroughly defined structure of government. However, through years of growth and God's blessing, The Christian and Missionary Alliance developed from a nonecclesiastical structure to that of an ecclesiastical one, from a missionary society or fraternal union of believers to that of a denomination.

This statement lays a foundation for strengthening the role of elders, allows for local adaptation in the midst of diversity that has always characterized The Christian and Missionary Alliance, and assures the church of leadership that meets the biblical standard.

AN INSTRUCTIONAL STATEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

It is recognized by all that one of the significant ways in which churches differ is in the area of church government. Differences of opinion are deep-rooted and most systems of church government claim some support from Scripture while acknowledging the molding influence of customs and tradition.

In the midst of such diversity the following instructional statement seeks to develop a proper understanding of the biblical evidence regarding church government, what structures it requires, permits, or forbids, and to delineate its application in a Christian and Missionary Alliance form of government.

1. **Biblical and Background Evidence**

- a. **Old Testament.** With the exception of the appointment of "able men out of all Israel" by Moses to be "rulers" (Exodus 18:25), the appointment of elders is not described in the Old Testament. Elders in the Old Testament bore office with diverse functions: representative (Leviticus 4:15, Exodus 3:16–18), judicial (Deuteronomy 21:18–21), pastoral (Deuteronomy 27:1, 31:9), and political (2 Samuel 5:3). Thus they shared broad power with king (1 Kings 20:78) and priest (Deuteronomy 31:9). Deacons, on the other hand, are not found in the Old Testament, although functions normally associated with them are: benevolence (Deuteronomy 14:28–29) and care of property (Numbers 4).

- b. **Synagogue.** In addition to the one Temple in Jerusalem from the Babylonian exile onward, the synagogue, as a house of prayer and religious instruction, became a widespread institution wherever Jews were dispersed with some cities having many synagogues. The synagogue was under the management of “elders” (Luke 7:1–5) who seem to have had disciplinary and administrative authority as well as religious.

The “ruler” of the synagogue (more than one in large congregations, Acts 13:15) had charge of the service, directing it himself or assigning functions to others. Another synagogue functionary was the “attendant(s)” or servant(s) whose work included caring for the building, carrying the Scriptures to the reader (Luke 4:17–20), scourging an erring member, and possibly offering elementary instruction. Other more temporary positions included “deputies” and “interpreters” who assisted in the service and “almoners” for collection of money and distribution to the needy.

- c. **New Testament.** Because of their heritage, New Testament leaders likely knew and used the synagogue models for the organization of the church, further supported by models deriving from the Hellenistic world. This might explain the fact that the New Testament gives no historical record of the institution of the eldership as it does with the Seven (Acts 6). Much of the church’s organization is assumed in the New Testament rather than argued. Such an assumption of development would explain Paul’s earlier lack of instruction on deacons (Acts 14:23) compared with his later teaching (1 Timothy 3:8–13). However, development in the church’s organization is found in the New Testament.

(1) **Origins.** Christian elders are first mentioned in Acts 11:30 as an existing institution. It is possible that some of the first Christians were already (Jewish) elders and were continued in a similar capacity in the early church. The office of deacon is generally understood to have originated, directly or indirectly, with the appointment of the Seven (Acts 6) to administer the supplying of food to the Greek-speaking Christian widows. Throughout the Book of Acts the elders are seen to be leaders of the church (Acts 14:23, 15:2, 20:17, 21:18).

(2) **Office/Function.** Although the New Testament shows no absolute distinction between offices (orders) and functions, a relative distinction can be drawn whereby an office is acknowledged to be more generally operational and more permanent. Thus the early local church leadership was comprised of elders and deacons. A pastor is essentially a ruling elder whose primary ministry is preaching and teaching and who is therefore worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17).

(3) **Terminology.** The terms most obviously used to designate office/functions in the local church are: *episkopos* (overseer, bishop, Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:2), *diakonos* (servant, minister, deacon, 1 Timothy 3:8), *presbuteros* (elder, Acts 14:23, 20:17, Titus 1:6), and *poimen* (shepherd, pastor, Ephesians 4:11). There are also the participles *proistamenos* (one standing before, 1 Thessalonians 5:12) and *hegoumenos* (one ruling, Hebrews 13:7).

- Many of these terms, however, do not necessarily refer to different positions. Particularly, there is overlap between overseer, elder, and shepherd (Acts 20:17, 28, Titus 1:5–7), which refer in different ways to the same position. The precise function of this elder-overseer-shepherd cannot be arrived at merely on the terms themselves, the emphasis of which is debatable. One must have recourse to the lists of qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9 and the descriptions of their activities in Acts, 1 Peter 5:1–3, and other passages.
- (4) **Lists of Qualifications.** The lists of qualifications for elder/overseer (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1) stress primarily spiritual and personal qualities but also include teaching abilities related to the edification of believers. These lists are best seen as selective rather than exhaustive and the qualities as overlapping. The qualities are also general, being similar to qualities expected in leaders in the secular sphere, stressing the sort of person who should serve. People with all these qualities in a high degree were as hard to find then as now.
- (5) **Descriptive Passages.** The descriptions of the work of elders include: protecting (Acts 20:28–31), shepherding (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1–3), teaching (Titus 1:9), anointing the sick (James 5:14), representing the congregation (Acts 11:30), and making policy decisions (Acts 15:6, 22).
- (6) **Plurality of Elders.** There is New Testament evidence of a plurality of elders in a city (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5), but the evidence is not sufficient to determine whether these functioned as individual leaders of house-churches, as a citywide board, or both. There seems to be in the New Testament a growing pattern of one elder in a community as head of a board of elders (1 Timothy 5:17), something like the pastor of today.
- (7) **Method of Selection.** It is uncertain whether the selection of elders was by election and if so, by whom. The term used in Acts 14:23 originally implied election to office, but the New Testament period had the more general meaning “appoint.” Nor is it clear whether the laying on of hands by the elders (1 Timothy 4:14) was essentially election or “ratification” of an election or appointment made by others. Moreover, it is not clear whether elders were always installed by laying on of hands. Conversely, the principle of popular choice of church leaders is sometimes evidenced in the New Testament (Acts 1:23, 6:1–6).
- (8) **Ordination.** Ordination is the church’s public recognition of the call from God, distinct from human vocational choice, to a man for a lifetime ministry, through speech and exemplary lifestyle, of preaching and teaching the Word of God, protecting God’s people from spiritual enemies and doctrinal heresies, overseeing and promoting the spiritual development of God’s people, and equipping God’s people to fulfill the Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations” for the purposes of knowing and glorifying God by obeying His will and building His Kingdom. The occasion for setting men apart for such ministry is the church’s affirmation of the

- candidate's faithful completion of preparation for ordination through approved education, in-service training, field experience with mentoring for a minimum of two years, and examination by a qualified council of peers.
- (9) **Deacon.** The role of the deacon is more difficult to define partly because the word is often used in a very general sense (servant). Traditionally, deacons, thought to have originated with the Seven (Acts 6), are entrusted with ministries of benevolence. They may be considered caretakers of property comparable to the secondary synagogue officials. Since many of the desired qualities are spiritual and personal (1 Timothy 3:8–13), a deacon's ministry is also partly pastoral.
- (10) **Deaconess.** Recognition of the position of deaconess in the New Testament rests primarily on 1 Timothy 3:11. The description of Phoebe in Romans 16:1 is unclear as to whether it refers specifically to an office. It is uncertain whether 1 Timothy 3:11 refers to deaconesses or to wives of deacons. If it does refer to deaconesses, these would be church leaders comparable to deacons and presumably with comparable functions.
- (11) **Amenability.** The New Testament is not clear on the question of the relationship between a congregation and its leaders. Church leaders have both authority over (1 Thessalonians 5:12) and responsibility to serve (cf. 2 Corinthians 4–5) their flock. Similarly, Christians are exhorted to obey their leaders (Hebrews 13:17) but are also instructed to serve the Lord in all good conscience (Acts 23:1, 5:29, Galatians 2:11). The New Testament does not resolve this tension. It is clear, however, that Christ is the Lord of the Church and that He has both provided for the exercise of power by the appointment of church leaders and ordered that such leaders exercise their power in subordination to His Word (1 Peter 5:3).
2. **Prescriptive Nature of the Evidence.** The biblical patterns of local church organization, particularly in reference to its leadership, are to be seen as prescriptive and not merely as descriptive. Generally evangelical interpreters recognize some prescriptive element (spiritual qualifications) so that the matter is better stated in terms of its extent. The position here is that the New Testament prescribes the principles, not necessarily every detail, of church organization.
- a. Both the nature of the Bible and the nature of the Church would seem to support this conclusion.
- (1) The Bible is the rule of faith and practice. This fact constitutes a reason to accept its descriptions of certain features of church organization as normative unless there are compelling reasons to feel that they are not. The burden of proof rests on those who hold that the patterns are merely descriptive.
- (2) The same conclusion is supported by the nature of the Church. Because the Church is a divinely originated institution, one could expect that basic provision be made in

Scripture for its effective operation and government.

- b. There are passages in the New Testament which do, in fact, prescribe features of church government. Titus is told to install elders in the churches of Crete (Titus 1:5). Paul and Barnabas supervised the appointment of elders in every city (Acts 14:23).
 - c. It can be plausibly argued that the reason why the New Testament is not more explicit in regard to church government is that it presupposes, as prescriptive, familiar principles of organization in use in the Old Testament, the synagogue, and perhaps in Hellenistic institutions.
 - d. Finally, the early postapostolic church understood the positions of overseer and deacon to be prescriptive.
3. **Forms of Church Government.** Beyond the principles enunciated in Scripture, the Church has felt at liberty to develop structures which are functional, appropriate to culture, and not in conflict with biblical principles. Thus there have arisen various historical forms of church government which have attempted to address two concerns: the relationship *between* local congregations and the duties and relationships of leaders *within* a local congregation.
- a. In regard to relationships between local congregations the issue is the vesting of authority.
 - (1) Episcopal: local church is under the control of higher authorities.
 - (2) Presbyterian: local church vests some of its authority in higher authorities.
 - (3) Congregation: local church autonomy is recognized with limited relationship between local churches.
 - b. In regard to structures within the local church, the forms of government are distinguished by the number of elders and the way responsibilities are shared.
 - (1) In one system there is one elder, called the minister (some Congregational), priest, or rector (Episcopal).
 - (2) In another there is plurality of elders, one of these being a teaching elder or minister (Presbyterian).
 - (3) In a third system there is plurality of elders with none as minister (Plymouth Brethren).

In all systems the elder(s) has control over the spiritual affairs and in almost all cases has oversight in the temporal affairs of the church, which are often then carried out by a lower body. Thus deacons are charged with administering temporal affairs but sometimes (Episcopal, some Congregational) are entrusted with some spiritual affairs as well.

4. Form of Government for The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

- a. **Type of Government.** On the basis of the biblical evidence, historical precedent, and practical considerations, The Christian and Missionary Alliance recognizes a form of government which is a combination of elements of the Congregational and Presbyterian systems. Thus local churches are not wholly entities unto themselves but are externally related through the district and national organizations and are amenable to these authorities in such areas as the ownership and transfer of property and the calling of a pastor. On the other hand, within definite bounds, there is considerable self-determination. Internally, the government is through elected representatives (governance authority).
- b. **Amenability.** In Christian and Missionary Alliance local churches all committees and organizations other than the Nominating Committee are amenable to the collective oversight of the elders as expressed through the governance authority. The governance authority is in turn amenable to the congregation and the district superintendent as constitutionally defined. Thus the powers assigned to the governance authority are to call a pastor (in cooperation with the district superintendent), conduct the affairs of the church between annual meetings, call special meetings of the church, elect two members of the Nominating Committee, and direct the work of the trustees; they may ask for the resignation of the pastor in consultation with the district superintendent. The powers assigned to the congregation are to elect its leadership, transfer property (in cooperation with the district superintendent), elect two members of the Nominating Committee, pass bylaws, and direct the work of the trustees. In addition, certain responsibilities are assigned to the elders: membership, discipline, and care of the congregation. Thus while the lines of amenability are varied, the main responsibility of the governance authority to the congregation is to fulfill the trust placed in it under the constitution and bylaws.
- c. **Orders of Ministry.** The Christian and Missionary Alliance issues credentials in the following categories:
 - (1) License
 - (a) Ordained/Consecrated Official Worker
 - (b) Unordained/Non-Consecrated Official Worker
 - (c) Provisional Official Worker
 - (d) Lay Minister
 - (2) Certificate
 - (a) Vocational

(b) Christian Worker

At the local level there are pastors, elders, deacons, deaconesses, and where required by law, trustees.

d. **Local Church.** All church leaders should satisfy scriptural standards.

- (1) **Election.** Church leaders are elected at the annual meeting by the congregation. Their term of office is established by the local church bylaws. The bylaws may also establish whether or not they may succeed themselves in office and whether or not terms of office are staggered.
 - (2) **Commissioning.** New church leaders may be commissioned through the laying on of hands by the elders.
 - (3) **Qualifications.** The qualifications of all officers, elders, deacons, and governance authority members are set out in 1 Timothy 3:1–13 and Titus 1:6–9.
 - (4) **Duties.** The duties of leaders are set forth in the Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches, and the local church bylaws may add to or refine those duties.
 - (5) **Women.** Women may fulfill any function in the local church which the senior pastor and elders may choose to delegate to them consistent with the Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches and may properly engage in any kind of ministry except that which involves elder authority.
5. **Sample Bylaws.** Sample Bylaws, which include three different governmental models, have been developed by National Church Ministries and are available through each church's individual district.

H2

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE—DIVORCE—REMARRIAGE

PREAMBLE

That the purpose of this statement be clear is imperative to its proper consideration. As an “instructional statement of The Christian and Missionary Alliance,” it is intended as an expositional guideline of common understanding to which the 1977 General Council (Calgary, Alberta, Canada) could subscribe as a basis on which to agree or disagree with grace and forbearance.

For some, the interpretation may be too broad and for others, too confining. But a common standard is needed in order to deal adequately with the issues of divorce and remarriage. The position set forth here neither promotes divorce nor weakens the scriptural stance represented in former legislation. The Commission on Divorce Study endeavored neither to take from nor to add to scriptural teaching on divorce.

INSTRUCTIONAL STATEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE*

1. Introduction.

- a. More and more marriages are failing; divorces and remarriages are becoming increasingly common. If couples who live together without the benefit of a registered marriage contract and then separate are counted, half the marriages that take place today in North America fail.
- b. Yet marriage is an essential, sacred institution, a cornerstone of society. It was established by God Himself when the Lord said, . . . *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him* (Genesis 2:18), and marriage has enjoyed divine sanction and blessing across the centuries. Ephesians 5 reveals the sacredness of marriage when the union between Christ and the Church is used to illustrate the husband-wife relationship.
- c. Therefore, the Church today must do everything in its power to encourage and maintain the institution of marriage and on God-given grounds. Some today would set standards for conduct in this area other than by the authority of the Word of God. Among even those who seek to hold to biblical authority are divergent opinions, particularly with respect to the right of divorced persons to remarry. It seems imperative, therefore, that The Christian and Missionary Alliance set forth what we understand to be the scriptural teaching on these subjects.

- d. This statement is designed not to answer all questions and cover all situations but to provide guidelines from which can be drawn scriptural applications to varying situations. This has been written with the social conditions of North America in view. Consequently, some adaption may be necessary in countries overseas because of special social situations.

2. Marriage.

- a. God instituted marriage as an honorable estate (Hebrews 13:4) for the blessing of companionship (Genesis 2:18) and as a continuation of the divine work of creation in the history of the human race (Genesis 4:1). Marriage is not a requirement for perfection of personhood nor is it a necessity for fulfillment in God's highest purpose. Marriage may, in fact, hamper a person's unconditional readiness for the call of God, and there are those who have the gift of refraining from marriage (Matthew 19:12, 1 Corinthians 7:7).
- b. God intended marriage to be a monogamous, lifelong union as clearly implied in Genesis 2:24, *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* Jesus recalled this original order of creation to overthrow the lax interpretation and practice of the Mosaic law (Mark 10:6ff). Although polygamy was sometimes practiced in Old Testament times, the Bible makes clear that God intended marriage to exist between one man and one woman for as long as both of them remain alive. In Romans 7:2 the apostle Paul wrote, *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband* (also 1 Corinthians 7:39).
- c. The strict and lofty terms with which the marriage bond is described in the New Testament has its primary focus on human fellowship and the family. For the Christian the basis of all marital love is the love of Christ for the Church (Ephesians 5:31ff). Marriage is constituted first in mutual covenant. Marriage is a solemn, binding agreement entered into before God and man (Malachi 2:14). Ezekiel 16:8 uses marriage to illustrate the relationship between God and Israel and speaks of this relationship as a covenant entered into on the basis of swearing or an oath or a pledge. Jesus, in John 2, sanctioned by His presence a marriage being recognized and solemnized by a public celebration. Therefore, men and women should enter marriage with a legal contract and pledged vows, preferably under the administration of a Christian minister, not just by deciding to start to live together.
- d. Marriage is a physical union. This is clearly set forth by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:16ff. Marriage is designed to be a unity of flesh and spirit and represents the wholeness of that unity (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5). In 2 Corinthians 12:19–21 the apostle Paul warns the Corinthian church that impenitence of those who committed sexual immorality would necessitate his intervention.
- e. In no case ought any person to enter into any so-called "marriage" with a person of the same sex. Homosexual unions are specifically forbidden in Scripture and are described as

manifestations of the basest forms of sinful conduct which degrade human dignity and desecrate God's creational design (Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:26–27, 32, 1 Corinthians 6:9).

- f. A Christian should not marry a person who does not know Christ as personal Savior. 2 Corinthians 6:14 is explicit, *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers . . .* The final few words of 1 Corinthians 7:39 suggest the same standard; widows who remarry are told to do so *only in the Lord*. Love for Christ is never to have second place (Matthew 6:33).

3. Divorce.

- a. Divorce is a departure from the purposes of God. While in the Old Testament divorce was allowed and was apparently easily secured. This, like polygamy, was contrary to God's highest intentions. Jesus explained that provisions for divorce in the Old Testament were an accommodation to "the hardness" of people's hearts and a necessary evil (Matthew 19:8). The prophet Malachi declared, *For I hate divorce, says the Lord the God of Israel . . .* (Malachi 2:16, RSV). Jesus said, *What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder* (Matthew 19:6, also Mark 10:6–9). The Church, therefore, should seek always to discourage divorce as a solution to marital problems. The Bible teaches that even when a Christian is married to a nonbeliever, the Christian should continue to live with his/her mate if at all possible (1 Corinthians 7:12–13).
- b. While divorce is always contrary to God's intentions, there are certain circumstances when it is permitted. Jesus said in Matthew 5:32 and again in Matthew 19:9 that a person is not to divorce his/her mate except for the cause of fornication. The Greek word used for "fornication" refers to habitual sexual immorality for which the synonym "whoredom" may be used, implying all kinds of immorality, including adultery which desecrates the marriage relationship—a view generally accepted by Greek scholars.
- c. The absence of this allowance in Mark 10:6–12 and Luke 16:18 does not set aside the practical conditions for carrying out the Mosaic practice of divorce in the new age Christ establishes. But He makes a sharper interpretation which handles the problem of divorce as a lesser evil to the continuation of an impossible situation. Divorce is expressly denied for the immediate purpose of marrying someone else (Mark 10:11–12). It is incumbent, therefore, that a believer entertain divorce only as a last resort and because of violations through fornication—never as a reason to marry someone else. When one partner of a divorce has become involved in adultery, the offended mate is permitted, though not required, to get a divorce. If an unsaved husband/wife refuses to continue to live with his/her mate and departs, the believer may agree to this separation. *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases . . .* (1 Corinthians 7:15). Such separations may result in divorce, and in that event the Christian is guilty of no wrong.

4. Remarriage.

- a. The remarriage of persons who have been divorced is permitted by Scripture under certain circumstances. If, after being divorced, one of the original marriage partners dies, the remaining partner is free to remarry. Romans 7:2 and 1 Corinthians 7:39 make clear that death dissolves the marriage relationship.
- b. When an adulterous relationship has brought about a divorce, the party that is innocent of adultery has a right to remarry. The words of Jesus, . . . *Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication*, implies the right of remarriage. When He adds, . . . *And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced (the guilty party) committeth adultery* (Matthew 5:32), the right to marry anyone guilty of adultery is denied and also to marry anyone who obtained divorce for the express purpose of remarriage (Mark 10:11–12).
- c. The consistency between the Old Testament and the New Testament is recognized as Jesus interpreted it. The passage in Deuteronomy from which Jesus quoted in Matthew 5:31 and Mark 10:2–12 indicates that the “putting away” of a wife dissolves the marriage and allows remarriage. Jesus did not change the nature of divorce as dissolving marriage and permitting remarriage; He simply rejected all rationalization and excuse for divorce and made clear that only the innocent party whose former marriage was revoked by divorce could remarry without guilt.
- d. According to the teaching of 1 Corinthians 7, which permits divorce when an unbelieving husband/wife of a believer “departs” (Section 3c), remarriage on grounds of desertion alone is not permitted according to verse 11, *But, and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*” In other words, if the unbelieving, deserting party is not deceased and does not remarry, neither should the one who has been deserted remarry.
- e. When two unbelievers have been divorced and one is subsequently converted and neither has remarried, the Christian should attempt to restore the marriage. If the non-Christian refuses, this makes the marriage the same as the kind described in 1 Corinthians 7:15.
- f. If a person is divorced on other than the above scriptural grounds and his/her former partner remarries, that partner by remarrying has, according to scriptural standards (Matthew 5:32, 19:9), committed adultery and has dissolved the original relationship.
- g. Remarriage is never commanded; it is in some cases only permitted. Divorced persons who have scriptural grounds for remarriage should enter into such remarriage only with the greatest caution. Seldom is there a marriage failure for any cause in which one of the partners is “completely innocent.” The applicant for remarriage should demonstrate an attitude of repentance for any part he/she may have had in the original failure. He/she should receive counseling from the church so as to avoid repeating destructive attitudes and actions.

- h. Persons who remarry after being divorced on other than scriptural grounds are guilty before God of adultery. Jesus said in Matthew 5:32, . . . *Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.* Such marriages should not be performed by a Christian clergyman.
- i. Persons who have been divorced on other than scriptural grounds who subsequently become Christians are not absolved from the necessity to remain unmarried by having become Christians. While it is true that we are made new creatures in Christ, we continue to bear legal and moral responsibilities that existed before conversion. A person, for example, that contracted a debt as a non-Christian is not absolved of an obligation to pay that debt by becoming a believer. A man who brought children into this world as a non-Christian must still provide for those children after his conversion. A man who contracted a marriage while a non-Christian must honor the terms of that marriage contract even after he is in Christ.
- j. Persons who were divorced and remarried without scriptural grounds prior to conversion should not feel obligated after conversion to withdraw from the subsequent marriage. The remarriage that was entered into wrongly constituted an act of adultery that broke the former marriage.

With his/her former marriage having been dissolved, the remarried person is responsible to be faithful to his/her new contract. Having broken the former marriage, he/she is “living in adultery only” if he/she is unfaithful to his/her present marriage contract.

- k. Persons who are divorced or divorced and remarried on scriptural grounds are entitled to the full privileges of fellowship and membership in the church. A believer who was divorced or divorced and remarried on other than scriptural grounds while still a nonbeliever should likewise be received into full Christian fellowship. The grace of God in Christ forgives all sin; the person in Christ is a new creation.
- l. Discretion, however, must be exercised in the choice of divorced and remarried persons for places of leadership in the church. While all believers are equal members of the body of Christ, not all members are qualified equally for every office in the church. The offices of elder (spiritual leader) and deacon (business leader) in the church are to be filled by those of high moral and spiritual qualifications, whose pattern of exemplary Christian living is so established that it may be followed.
- m. A believer who knowingly secures a divorce on other than scriptural grounds, or a believer who knowingly marries someone who was divorced on other than scriptural grounds, or a believer whose divorce was granted on other than scriptural grounds and who remarries should be disciplined by the church and be granted the full privileges of Christian fellowship only after a demonstration of genuine repentance for deliberate departure from scriptural standards.

**Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations throughout this section are from the King James Version of the Bible.*

H3

STATEMENT ON THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The following statement on the ecumenical movement was adopted by the 1970 General Council (Toronto, Ontario, Canada).

ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATION

The Christian and Missionary Alliance has studied the record of the ecumenical movement as represented by the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. It is our conviction that within these organizations the trends toward apostasy from the historic Christian faith are open and pronounced. Therefore, The Christian and Missionary Alliance is not now and cannot be a member of these organizations. We hold that this position is based upon the clear teachings of the Scriptures.

H4

STATEMENT ON ABORTION

The following statement on abortion was adopted by the 1981 General Council (Anaheim, California).

The church, as well as the general public, is confronted with the moral issue of abortion. Because of the importance of this issue to society, the General Council of The Christian and Missionary Alliance has chosen to make a statement concerning its position on the subject of abortion.

The moral issue of induced abortion ultimately involves a decision concerning those circumstances under which a human being may be permitted to take the life of another. We believe that life begins at conception and that this life is to be considered as human at that time.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance believes that abortion on demand is morally wrong. We cannot allow the current social climate of moral relativism and sexual permissiveness to dictate our responses to moral and social dilemmas.

The Word of God teaches that each individual is known by God from before the foundation of the world (Jeremiah 1:4–5, Psalm 139:13–17). Our Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent God has pronounced His blessing upon the life of a child according to Psalm 127:3–5.

Since all life exists for God's purposes and all human lives are equally sacred, it is our belief that the life of the unborn child is blessed of God and must be preserved and nurtured. The Christian and Missionary Alliance, therefore, is opposed to induced abortion.*

**Only in the rarest instances, when it is impossible to save the life of both the mother and the unborn child, should the question of an induced abortion be considered.*

H5

STATEMENT ON THE DESTINY OF THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER HEARD

The Christian and Missionary Alliance believes that natural revelation is insufficient for salvation, that Christ's death and resurrection is the only sufficient ground for salvation, that one must personally repent of sin and turn in faith to Christ to receive the gift of salvation, and that Christ's atonement is the necessary basis of salvation because humans do not live up to the light received from natural revelation according to Romans 1–3.

We continue to adhere to what we believe to be the clear witness of Scripture that those who do not hear the gospel are lost as surely as those who hear the gospel and reject it.

H6

STATEMENT ON THE DEFINITION OF CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY

The term “constituted authority” is a biblical concept (Romans 13:1) applied to organizational principles within The Christian and Missionary Alliance. While the term itself cannot be found in Holy Scripture, the principles by which Alliance churches govern themselves and their relationships to one another are rooted in God’s Word. These principles include, but are not limited to, such biblical ideas as servanthood (Matthew 23:11), submission to one another (Ephesians 5:21), and respect for and obedience to those who are over us in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:12, Hebrews 13:17).

The various constitutions, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines of The Christian and Missionary Alliance incorporate the biblical principle of constituted authority. They regulate relationships between churches as well as the relationships between denominational officers, district superintendents, and other licensed personnel in order to achieve The Christian and Missionary Alliance’s common goals and objectives in ministry. Therefore, those who serve Christ in The Christian and Missionary Alliance agree to do so in submission to these authorities and documents.

H7

STATEMENT ON HOMOSEXUALITY

The basis for this official statement of The Christian and Missionary Alliance is section [d] of its Statement of Faith:

“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.”

SCRIPTURAL BASIS:

The Old Testament reveals God’s original design to make human beings in His image, male and female. Each person’s completeness is realized in relationship to one who is alike in nature but opposite sexually (Genesis 2:10-24), unless a person is given the gift of celibate singleness (1 Corinthians 7:1, 7-8).

In the New Testament, Jesus confirms the heterosexual creation of human beings: *God made them male and female* (Matthew 19:4). Throughout Scripture heterosexual families consisting of a father, mother, and their children (unless they are unable to bear children) are the norm of society. The New Testament reinforces the teaching of heterosexual love and sexual relations within marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5).

Alongside this clear biblical teaching on God’s design for heterosexual marriage are found specific instructions that prohibit homosexual conduct, for example: *Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable* (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13). Homosexual conduct is detestable because it is out of harmony with the purpose for which God created human beings.

The New Testament states: *They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion* (Romans 1:25-27). Worshipping the creation more than the Creator not only alienated human beings from God but also distorted their heterosexual identity as created by God. Homosexual conduct is one evidence of the universal human rejection of God’s supreme glory and, like all forms of sexual behavior that violate God’s original design, it is sin.

The New Testament further states: *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God* (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

But the same passage of Scripture strongly affirms the liberating power of the Christian gospel from all former sinful patterns of life, including homosexual behavior and inclinations: *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God* (1 Corinthians 6:11).

POLICY:

The highest standards of life and conduct are enjoined upon those who serve in official and ministerial capacities in the Church of Jesus Christ and upon those who are received as members of local churches. Homosexual conduct is incompatible with Christian teaching and cannot be condoned. Therefore, persons who engage in homosexual conduct and/or relationships may not be accepted as candidates for ministry, issued licenses, ordained or consecrated as ministers, or appointed to serve in The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Neither shall they serve in church ministries, nor shall they be issued membership in an Alliance church. Likewise, in conformity with this Statement and the C&MA's Statement on Marriage–Divorce–Remarriage which states that “In no case ought any person to enter into any so-called ‘marriage’ with a person of the same sex,” no licensed worker may, under any circumstances, sanction, bless, conduct, or officially participate in a civil or religious ceremony that would result in a marriage or civil union of persons of the same sex.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance encourages its churches and members to treat persons who engage in homosexual conduct and/or relationships with compassion and to extend the gospel of repentance, forgiveness, and transformation through Jesus Christ to such persons without reservation.

H8

STATEMENT ON SANCTIFICATION

The following Statement on Sanctification was adopted by the 1996 General Council (Indianapolis, Indiana).

The Meaning of Sanctification

The basic idea underlying biblical sanctification is separation, and this separation is first and foremost to the Lord. While the separation is from sin, impurity and all that is unholy, primarily it is a separation to the person, life and characteristics of God in Christ. Dr. A. B. Simpson stated that being sanctified means possessing

the thoughts of Christ, the desires of Christ, the will of Christ, the faith of Christ, the purity of Christ, the love of Christ, the unselfishness of Christ, the single aim of Christ, the humility of Christ, the submission of Christ, the meekness of Christ, the zeal of Christ and the works of Christ manifest in our mortal flesh so that we shall say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."¹

Christ and Sanctification

The New Testament declares Jesus Christ to be the believer's sanctifier. This teaching derives from four interconnected events: Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

The Son of God condescended to take on human nature so that "both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family" (Hebrews 2:11). As a human person subject to temptation and sin, Jesus became the first person to live a totally holy life (2 Corinthians 5:21). Then, His perfect life was offered up to God in death as a perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 2:17, 18; 9:13, 14, 28). Christ not only died, He rose again to restore humanity to fullness of life (John 10:10). Finally, He ascended to the Father where He is "Head over everything for the Church, which is his body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Out of His finished work, Christ has made His gracious Holy Spirit available to us, and the Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ to our lives. Christ Himself, then, is our Sanctifier and our sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Genuine Conversion

The foundation for sanctification is the union with Christ into which the believer enters at conversion.

At conversion the repentant sinner is justified (Romans 5:1), and fully pardoned for his sins (Ephesians 1:7). He is sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14), is adopted into God's family (Ephesians 1:5) and is brought under God's favor (Romans 5:2). He also is regenerated,

born from above, made alive with new spiritual life (1 Peter 1:3, 23). He is made a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) and becomes an heir of eternal life (1 Peter 1:3-4).

Having been united with Christ, the believer is raised up with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-6, Colossians 3:1) and is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). He participates in Christ's death and resurrection by which he is enabled to live in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

He is positionally sanctified. Paul refers to the Christians at Corinth as "those sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:2). The Greek verb is in the perfect tense, indicating a completed past action with continuing results. This means that the Corinthian believers were sanctified through their union with Christ and that this sanctification continued to be their status before God.

In First Corinthians 6:11, sanctification is again coordinated with justification as a definitive act of God. "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." Just as believers were justified once-for-all in Christ, so also believers have been sanctified once-for-all in Christ. This teaching is confirmed both in Acts 20:32 and 26:18, where the texts speak of believers as "those who are sanctified."

The ground for all Christian experience, then, is that significant transformation of an individual that occurs the moment he is united with Christ.

Beyond Conversion

The Call to Holiness

While the believer is sanctified positionally through his union with Christ, Scripture also calls the Christian to holiness and fruitfulness in daily practice through his union with Christ. Peter admonished believers, "Be holy because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews urges, "Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and let us go on to maturity" (6:1). And Matthew, reflecting on the conditions for participating in the Kingdom of God, wrote, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Romans 8:4 tells us that we have been delivered from condemnation so that the righteous requirements of the law actually might be fulfilled in us. Because by His death and resurrection Christ has broken sin's dominion over us and because in Christ we have life, we are urged to live and walk in the victory which is every believer's birthright in Him.

The Conflict in the Believer

However, the Christian's desire to know, love, and please God does not always result in consistently holy and devout living. The movement from the believer's privileges in Christ to the actual experience of Christ's power over sin and selfishness is not automatic. While the believer is genuinely new in Christ, he is not yet totally new in daily practice.

Galatians 5:16-17 describes a conflict in the believer between the "flesh" and the "Spirit":

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Romans 8:5-8 discusses this same conflict within the believer:

Those who are living according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of the sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace, because the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Thus, the Christian who is controlled by the flesh will continue to respond to the enticements of sin. Paul admits this possibility even when imploring believers in Romans 6:12, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires."

Additionally, the believer is unable in his own strength to overcome sin, to act righteously in every circumstance, and to serve God effectively. Romans 7:14-21 depicts the ineffectual struggles of an individual who seeks to measure up to the righteous demands of the law of God by his own ability and determination. Though he may affirm the validity of God's laws and want to meet their demands, he finds himself unable to do so.

The Control of the Spirit

The solution to both the unholy inclinations of the flesh and the problem of human weakness is to be found in Christ. Through the Savior's victory over sin at Calvary, we can overcome the flesh. Christ's Resurrection gives us power to live as we ought for God. Christ's life and power sanctifies the believer, and life and power that is made operative in us by the Holy Spirit.

Holy living, then, results from the control and the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:12 says, "Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it." Instead we are to live according to the direction and enabling of the Holy Spirit.

The Decisive Aspect

Every Christian, then, must consciously and deliberately yield his life to the Holy Spirit. The word "crisis" in Article 7 of the Alliance "Statement of Faith" is a term that is capable of many interpretations. However, in this context it should be understood as a decisive surrender of one's self to God (Romans 6:13).²

This turning point in our Christian walk may come about as the result of our concern over some glaring failure. It may be precipitated by a struggle over a particular issue. But as completely as we know how, we will give ourselves to the Lord. Dr. Simpson said,

Through His gracious influence, we present our bodies a living sacrifice, yield ourselves unto God in unreserved consecration, hand over to Him the old life of self and sin to be slain and buried forever, and offer ourselves to His absolute ownership, possession, and disposition, unconditionally and irrevocably. The more definite and thorough this act of surrender, then the more complete and permanent will be the result.³

Dr. Simpson taught that our yielding to Him will only ever “be an imperfect consecration, and will need His merits to make it acceptable. But He will accept a sincere and single desire, and will add His own perfect consecration to our imperfect act, thus making it acceptable to the Father through His grace.”⁴ Still, it is this yieldedness to the Holy Spirit that allows the life of Christ to operate in us for daily holy living.

A. W. Tozer expressed this idea with an image:

He [the Holy Spirit] wants to be Lord of your life, and He wants to possess you so that you are no longer in command of the little vessel in which you sail. You may be a passenger on board, or one of the crew, but you definitely are not in charge. Someone else is in command of the vessel.⁵

Both of these quotations suggest that the issue in sanctification is who controls the believer’s life, and both Simpson and Tozer call for the kind of radical dedication of oneself to the Lord described by Romans 12:1: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship.” This verse calls for a decisive act. The same is true in Romans 6:13, “Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life.”

When Paul writes in Romans 6:2, “We died to sin,” he is expressing in unambiguous language the truth that the person who is in Christ has made a definitive breach with the realm in which sin reigns. Furthermore, Paul underscores this once-for-all break with sin by telling us that if we are in Christ, our “old self” has been crucified with him (Romans 6:6). The verb “crucified” is in the aorist tense, indicating a once-for-all, definitive act. Indeed, the main thrust of the entire chapter is to declare that the believer has been transferred through union with Christ to a new and powerful master, who reigns victoriously over sin.

The justified believer not only has died to sin, he also has been decisively and definitely “raised with Christ.” Using the aorist tense, Paul asserts that “God . . . made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions and . . . raised us up with Christ” (Ephesians 2:4-6). Sanctification means not only a decisive break with the enslaving power of sin but also a union with Christ in His resurrection.

However, the believer must appropriate this blessing by reckoning himself to be “dead to sin and alive to God” (Romans 6:11). The word “reckon” is an accounting word. It means that the money is in the bank and we are free to use it. The believer must recognize the freedom that has been achieved for him by Christ and appropriate it.

Believers then must rest in the wisdom, grace, and strength of God's Spirit. We cannot be the holy, devout people we ought to be in our own strength. We cannot, in ourselves, overcome the pull and power of sin. Sanctified living results from confessing our inability, reckoning ourselves as dead indeed unto sin, and by resting in the ability of the Holy Spirit to make Christ's resurrection life and power effectual in our character and conduct. Romans 8:4 indicates that in order to "live according to the Spirit" (NIV) we must submit ourselves to Him and depend completely upon Him.

While the Scriptures do not say that a decisive surrender to the Lord and a conscious appropriation of the victory over sin that is ours in Christ *must* occur subsequent to conversion, this in fact is almost always the case. Today most people initially trust in Christ with very little theological understanding. Moreover, initial salvation frequently is offered by appeals to personal needs. Consequently almost no one is prepared at conversion to yield himself to the Spirit in surrender and faith.

Furthermore, by natural disposition, we want to be our own bosses, to live our lives as we choose. Our pride makes us want to believe we can live as we should through our own strength and wisdom. But we cannot.

Therefore, Christians must decisively yield their lives, make a radical commitment of their persons to the Spirit. Romans 6:13 calls for such a commitment by saying, "Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness."

The Holy Spirit fills those who make such a commitment. To be filled with the Spirit is to allow the indwelling Spirit of God to assume control over all areas of our lives; and, as the Spirit fills us, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:16-17).

The verb "to fill" with reference to the Holy Spirit, occurs only in the writings of Luke and Paul. In this literature, observes Michael Green, two uses of the verb emerge.

The first use denotes a temporary, often sudden, inspiration or enablement of the Holy Spirit to complete a special task. This usage derives from the Old Testament understanding of the role of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon special persons, such as kings, judges, and most particularly, prophets, to enable them to fulfill God's appointed task. But the predominant use referred to an empowerment for divine proclamation by the prophets. And it is precisely this understanding that dominates in the writings of Acts where the six occurrences of the verb "to fill" are associated with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 9:17; 13:9; 13:52). Luke applies the verb to the work of the Holy Spirit as an empowerment for gospel proclamation. In each of Luke's accounts, the filling of the Holy Spirit results in powerful proclamation.

This conforms to Luke's paradigm text with reference to the Holy Spirit, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). As the Spirit was the source of prophetic inspiration in the Old Testament, Luke sees the coming of

the Holy Spirit as the source for powerful witness. When the prophetic Word was proclaimed, the Spirit was present. When the Spirit was absent, the Word was silent. Luke, then, envisions the Holy Spirit as the source of enablement for powerful witness. Examples of this usage occur not only in the Acts texts but also in Luke 1:41 (the case of Elizabeth) and Luke 1:67 (the case of Zacharias). In both instances the consequence of the filling of the Holy Spirit is prophetic proclamation.

But the research of Robert P. Menzies has shown that neither Luke nor the primitive church attributes soteriological significance to the pneumatic gift in a manner analogous to Paul. Paul views the work of the Spirit as extending beyond the proclamation of the Word by attributing to the Spirit soteriological functions. Here the second and more pertinent usage of the verb “to fill” emerges, namely, to denote a dominating or defining characteristic of a person. For example, in Acts 13:10, Elymas is described as a man “full of all kinds of deceit and trickery.” “Full” here does not denote the quantitative idea of “how much;” such as, the cup is “full” or “half-full” of water. Rather “full” implies a qualitative meaning. In other words, “full” simply means that Elymas’ life is dominated by deceit and selfish cunning. The same usage occurs in Luke 5:12 where Jesus encounters a man “full of leprosy.” The adjective “full” connotes a qualitative meaning rather than a quantitative one. The qualitative rather than the quantitative meaning of “full” applies when a doctor informs a patient that she is full of cancer. He means that the life of the person and that person’s future will be controlled by the disease. So when Luke describes Stephen as “a man full of wisdom and the Holy Spirit” he means that Stephen is a person whose life is defined and controlled by wisdom and by the Holy Spirit.

This second meaning of the word appears to be a more logical choice for interpreting the “filling of the Holy Spirit;” namely, that it denotes a person who is dominated or controlled by the Spirit. Paul’s admonition in Ephesians 5:18, therefore, comes, first of all, in the form of a command. Paul admonishes every believer to be “controlled” by the Spirit. Secondly, the admonition takes the grammatical form of a present, passive, indicative, meaning that this act of being controlled by the indwelling Spirit is a continuous and/or repeated experience in the life of the believer. Thirdly, the context of the admonition is important. Because the days are evil, that is, under the influence of the spiritual forces of wickedness, believers should understand the purpose and will of the Lord, conduct their lives wisely, and be filled (controlled) with God’s Spirit. So exceptionally great is the summons to life-bearing witness that no believer should begin to fulfill this responsibility without the enablement of the Holy Spirit.

To grasp meaningfully the New Testament teaching on the “filling of the Holy Spirit,” consider the following theological synthesis:

- (1) The filling of the Holy Spirit means the “controlling” or “governing” of the believer by the Spirit. This conclusion is deduced from the meaning of the verb, the grammatical structures and logic of the Pauline admonitions.
- (2) The filling of the Holy Spirit is based upon and/or grounded in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This assertion is based upon the meaning of the verb, “to fill,” as control and as denoting a qualitative rather than a quantitative meaning. Such an understanding makes

logical sense of the Pauline admonitions, assuming that the Holy Spirit already indwells the believer but needs to assume lordship. To interpret the filling of the Holy Spirit by means of a quantitative approach overlooks the Holy Spirit as a person. The personhood of the holy Spirit is not divisible. To have the Holy Spirit indwelling in regeneration and yet at the same time not to have the Spirit seems theologically and logically contradictory.

- (3) The filling of the Holy Spirit is based upon a definite decision of the believer to give control of his life to the Spirit. This assertion finds confirmation in the use of the imperative mood. While the Holy Spirit indwells the believer at conversion, uniting the believer with Christ, this does not mean that the Holy Spirit is in control of all the areas of the believer's life. Such control requires a constant yielding and surrendering of our thoughts, attitudes, and actions to the Holy Spirit.
- (4) The filling of the Holy Spirit is directly and specifically related to empowering the believer for effective witness both by word and by life.

Dr. Keith M. Bailey says,

All of us who are Christians are born of the Spirit and we have the Spirit. He is the Giver and the Sustainer of the spiritual life that we have. But there is a world of difference between having the Spirit in his regenerative power and being filled with the Spirit, knowing the endowment of His power. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire purifies the life and brings the glorious power of the risen, living Christ into our own personal experience.⁶

Some use the language of Pentecost to describe this entrance into the Spirit-filled life. Others prefer Pauline terms. These various formulations of truth and outlines containing "steps" may help guide an honest seeker. However, the critical issue is the reality of the person's surrender to the Lord. Our commitment to the Lord is not complete until we recognize His right to exercise continuous authority over all phases of our lives. By whatever means and with whatever terms may be used, the important thing is that believers be led to:

- (1) an understanding of the Christian's position in Christ,
- (2) a comprehension of the holiness and usefulness God promises and provides for His children,
- (3) an awareness of the futility and fruitlessness of living according to self-effort,
- (4) a spirit of humility and repentance,
- (5) a decisive yielding to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and
- (6) a conscious asking for the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The Progressive Aspect

While Romans 12:1-2 urges a definite presentation of ourselves to the Lord, these verses also describe the need for a continuous transformation of our lives. Submission to the Lordship of

Christ must impact the way we make choices, react to those around us and act toward the Lord day by day. Consequently, this surrender necessarily will be confirmed again and again. Ephesians 5:18 speaks of being filled (controlled) continuously with the Holy Spirit.

As we walk according to the Spirit, He will expose areas of our lives that need to be cleansed. He will lead us to make changes in our priorities and relationships. He will purify our motives and will deal with our tendencies to rebellious pride. He will seek to exercise authority over our possessions and ambitions. He will reveal hurts that can be healed, problems that can be solved, and habits that can be broken.

He will lead us to new ministries and greater sacrifices. He will make us active participants in the life and ministry of the church and will gift us for our contributions to the body. He will call us to closer communion with the Lord.

The Spirit will encourage us to depend continuously upon Christ. Paul wrote, “The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God” (Galatians 2:20). The admonition of Romans 8:5 to “live in accordance with the Spirit” (“walk in the Spirit” KJV) suggests not only a continuous obedience to the Lord but a deliberate dependence upon His enabling.

Second Corinthians 3:18 speaks of believers being transformed into Christ’s likeness with ever-increasing glory. First Peter 2:2 urges us to desire pure spiritual milk so that by it we may grow up in salvation; and Second Peter 1:5-8 sets out a pattern of development in which goodness is added to faith, knowledge to goodness, self-control to knowledge, perseverance to self-control, godliness to perseverance, brotherly kindness to godliness, and love to brotherly kindness. We are called by Scripture to ever-increasing intimacy with Jesus.

Because spiritual growth is produced in the believer by the Holy Spirit, the believer needs to cooperate with Him through such spiritual disciplines as Bible study, prayer, meditation, Christian fellowship, and worship. A growing child sometimes is frustrated by his inabilities and failures. But the fact that he cannot run as fast as someone else or that he falls and skins his knee does not mean that he does not have life in him or that he is sick. He just needs to keep on eating good food, keep getting proper rest and exercise, and keep growing.

The same is true of our spiritual lives. The path toward spiritual maturity does not totally exclude failure, sin, disappointments, and trouble. But the life of Christ continues to function within us. We learn through our failures and sins to rest more fully in our spiritual resources in Christ and to say “no” to selfish, sinful temptations and to say “yes” to the Spirit who empowers us to walk in righteousness, holiness, and love.

Summary

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. Christ is the life-transforming power of sanctification. In the words of Dr. Simpson, He [Christ] actually comes

into our being and becomes the source and strength of our very life, reliving His own life in us.⁷ He further said,

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.⁸

While the doctrine of sanctification is by definition concerned with the life of Christ being formed in us, the same Spirit who gives victory over sin also empowers for service. The seeking Christian should anticipate that the Spirit-filled life will produce both fruit and gifts. They are intended to flourish together.

* * * * *

¹A. B. Simpson, *Walking in the Spirit*. New York: The Alliance Press (n.d.), 110.

²Dr. Keith M. Bailey has said,

It is the Holy Spirit who is the agent of experiential sanctification. Since holiness is the will of God for all believers, the Holy Spirit places a hunger for holy living in each heart. He makes plain the provision of Christ for their sanctification.

The crisis of sanctification occurs when believers become aware of their need for Christ's provision and appropriate it by faith in His work. Normally, this takes place some time after conversion. Unfaithfulness, carnality, and powerlessness are some of the signs which indicate that one's personality has not yet been brought under the full authority of the Holy Spirit. When the believer deals with the conditions of his heart and trusts fully in Christ's work to make him holy, he may experience the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit within. (*Bringing Back the King*, Nyack, NY: Alliance Centers for Theological Study, 1985, 68-69.)

³*Walking in the Spirit*. Harrisburg, PA, Christian Publications, Inc. (n.d.), 53-54.

⁴Ibid.

⁵*Ten Messages on the Holy Spirit*, 68.

⁶See Christian Publications, Inc. booklet, "The Indwelling of Christ."

⁷*The Epistles to the Philippians and to Colossians*, Harrisburg, PA, Christian Publications, Inc. (n.d.), 89.

⁸*The Epistles to the Galatians and the Ephesians*, Harrisburg, PA, Christian Publications, Inc. (n.d.), 25.