



2016 District Conference Report from the President March 2016

Keep watch over yourselves and the flock that has been entrusted to your care. Acts 20:28

The fact that you are attending a district conference tells me that you are in some form of church leadership—lay or licensed. Paul’s instruction in Acts 20 was to lay leaders (local church elders) and is applicable to all of us.

Paul begins with words which are too often overlooked: *Keep watch over yourselves*. Personal soul care is essential for any church leader. The Guiding Shepherd wants to lead us to places of soul renewal (Ps. 23:1–2), and as president, I want to encourage us all to follow Him to those places.

I had a formula in my head when I first entered ministry: *If I take care of God’s Church, God’s Church will take care of me*. I don’t know where the idea came from, but it was a bad idea. The care and feeding of our own souls cannot be delegated. We are responsible for our own true condition. Others can certainly help us—indeed, we must do “soul care” within the context of community—but the responsibility remains ours.

Weary ministers lead weary ministries. Emotionally unhealthy leaders are more prone to major crises or moral blowouts. Meanwhile, fresh leaders lead ministries that can’t help but reflect their vitality. Healthy leaders give the enemy less opportunity for a foothold (Eph. 4:25–27).

Yes, you may go through some seasons when your soul hasn’t been able to keep pace with your schedule. However, if those seasons become the norm rather than the exception, something must change—and you, leader, are the one to change it.

I speak to myself as well. The Alliance will not be served well by a burned out president and leadership team. The demands on my schedule are heavier than they’ve ever been. For this reason, I’ve had to take extra precautions for soul care. Some of these include simplifying my lifestyle so that fewer “drains” are open that steal my energies and passions. Maintaining routines of spiritual disciplines like Scripture meditation, Sabbath, intentional forgiveness, personal and group prayer, and physical exercise (thank You, Jesus, I’m running a bit again!) are non-negotiables for me.

If any church leader among us needs to hear this, please receive it: *Permission granted to care for your soul*. Prioritize your own spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical health.

Together, let’s stop making excuses. Let’s instead make very personal Paul’s instruction to all those responsible for the Church of Jesus: *Keep watch over yourselves*.

Keeping watch over ourselves also includes keeping a close eye on our own theology. Paul told another church leader, Timothy, *Watch your life and doctrine closely* (1 Tim. 4:16).

I feel it. Do you? I feel the constant pull of culture—like a river current—seeking to draw me away from the authority of Scripture. I have to check my thinking and guard my heart from getting drawn into popular trends that are contrary to the clear teaching of God’s Word.

Wondering about specifics? I’ll name just a few: our attitude toward immigrants, our views about the definition of marriage, and our stance regarding human sexuality. As Jesus followers, we have neither the right nor the rationale for straying from the clear teaching of Scripture. We are under the authority of the Lord who expressed His will to us through His Word. The Bible remains our holy text instructing our Christian faith and practice. Let’s continually check our worldview against His—and bring ours in line with His.

Next, Paul instructs, *Keep watch . . . over the flock that has been entrusted to your care.*

Think of it! For this moment in human history, the Church of Jesus Christ—at least the portion of it known as The Christian and Missionary Alliance—has been *entrusted* into *our care*. What a holy responsibility! What a privilege.

And, as I travel the nation, I see frequent evidences that the expression of the church known as the C&MA is alive and vibrant in many communities. I celebrate with you the clear call of God upon your church to love those in your community and proclaim God’s timeless Word to them. I see you providing creative and meaningful ministries that become community impacting. You offer recovery to the addict and a refuge to the storm-tossed. Your church, for many, has become the family they never had but long hoped for. You are worshiping, praying, preaching, leading, and engaging in your community with passion. I’m so honored to be teamed with you.

Meanwhile, I live with a countdown clock in the back of my head. Having faced my deathbed once, I know my mortality more than some. I don’t know how many days or decades the clock has on it, but I know it is finite and the number gets smaller every second. This is not a morbid thought for me—I look forward to the day when my race will have been run! But it is a motivating thought.

I’m continually challenged by the question: *What kind of Church will I pass on to the next generation?* I’m asking each of you, as church leaders, to ask the same question. This is our moment—our *only* moment—to lead and shape the Church. We *will* leave it different from how we inherited it. That fact can’t be avoided. The unknown is what the Church will look like when we pass it off to those whom God is raising up, even at this moment, to lead next.

In my times of private and communal prayer, my conclusion is that I long to leave a Church that is profoundly shaped by four themes: *love, proclaim, reach, and launch*. Perhaps some may have wondered if these were just four nice words for a Council program. The answer is that they are much more than that. Yes, I introduced them at Council, but I believe that they summarize the priorities under which I am to lead in these next years, as God allows.

I must pass off a loving church. This is essential. Biblical passages prioritize love (Matt. 22:34–40; Luke 6:27–36; John 15:9–17; Rom. 5:5–8, 13:8–10; Gal. 5:6, 13–14, 22; Eph. 3:14–19). Jesus wants His Church known by its love (John 13:35). And, the world—especially the Millennials—will forthrightly reject any expression of the Church that isn’t marked by love. (Please see my video blogs from [January](#) and [February](#) 2016 as well as the *Alliance Life November/December 2015 issue*.)

I must pass off a proclaiming church. This priority calls me to lead us to specific behaviors. **I’m convinced we must:**

- **Consistently find ways to communicate the gospel through our lives.** Matthew 25 must not be a text only lived by those who represent what we’ve called “the social gospel.” We—the C&MA—are becoming and must become living examples of good deeds among the neediest of our neighborhoods and nations and the nations that have come to our neighborhoods.
- **Consistently find ways to communicate the gospel through clearly spoken words.** A demonstration of faith must be explained with the good news that God so loved this world He sent Jesus—who came uniquely to our planet as the divine Son of God, carrying our sin on the cross and rising for our new life. Let’s give people plenty of opportunities to respond to the gospel.
- **Consistently come under the authority of the Word in our daily life and in all our public communication.** If we have not stood in His counsel and heard His Word (Jer. 23:16–22), we have nothing to say. Conversely, if we have held seriously His message to us, we have something essential that must be spoken.
- **Consistently hold high the calling and spiritual duty of preaching and teaching God’s Word.** I’m challenging every Alliance pastor to highly esteem the preaching privilege. I’m eagerly and earnestly bucking the Christian cultural trend to downplay the role of preaching. Biblically and historically, preaching has proven to be a powerful form of evangelism and discipleship. We’re missing wonderful opportunities to influence if we belittle the task. Like you, I stand before the assembly of God’s people (and people He is drawing to Himself) on a regular basis. I’m committed to saturate my thinking with the Word, seek to listen to the Spirit for His direction, pray seriously (alone and with others) for His empowerment, and come prepared to give my best for a task that is of great significance to Him. May we not preach like rookie quarterbacks, jittery in the pocket. Rather, may we stand with the authority we have—in all humility, drawing as little attention to ourselves as possible—and boldly thrust a spear into the heart of the enemy.

I’ll address our need to be a *reaching, launching* church in other venues. But for today, Christian and Missionary Alliance leader, let’s be very intentional to heed Paul’s instruction to *keep watch over ourselves and the flock that’s been entrusted to our care*, leaving behind us a Church that loves much and proclaims clearly.

I’m honored to serve with you,



John Stumbo
President, U.S. C&MA

P.S. Regarding the subject of preaching and teaching, I ask that you read and take to heart Francis Chan's article, "[How to Teach in America . . .](#)" in *Alliance Life*, January/February 2016.

Key Priorities for President Stumbo in 2016

(Note: This list is not comprehensive but gives insight into the kinds of efforts President Stumbo is giving his time to this year.)

1. To pursue God, to be a seeker after His heart, listening well and responding to His direction.
2. To do my part for sustained physical, mental, spiritual, relational, and emotional health, enjoying the calling I've received and the people with whom I get to carry it out.
3. To communicate consistently and effectively with the C&MA family. These efforts include monthly video blogs, written communications including *Alliance Life* articles, Twitter postings, and speaking in as many churches and conferences as feels wise. (Note: I speak in over 150 conferences, churches, and other events each year.)
4. To lead well the National Office team in such a way that lives out our values and truly serves the C&MA family.
5. To manage well the Great Commission Fund, maximizing its impact and encouraging its support among churches and individual donors, while trusting that God will allow us to move through Level-Three giving (meeting the critical mass needs) so that we can dream again as a C&MA family (Level Four). (Note: If this language is not yet familiar to you, please listen to my Council 2015 message at <https://www.emalliance.org/video/watch/27708/>.)
6. To more fully engage, provide voice to, and better understand C&MA young leaders by hosting five regional young leader events.
7. To work with each area of ministry on numerous initiatives (Church Ministries, Development, International Ministries, and Operations/Finance).
8. To build relationships, stay in communication, and strategize together with the Board of Directors, district superintendents, college presidents, pastors, lay leaders, and National Office staff for greater Kingdom impact.
9. To meet with our national church leaders and international workers in various settings while participating in international events such as the Indonesian National Church Congress Council in Manado; the Canadian General Assembly in Calgary, Alberta; and Alliance World Fellowship Quadrennial in Bangkok.
10. To prepare for Council 2017 as we seek the Lord for another family-shaping experience where the Spirit of the Lord moves freely among us.

**The Christian and Missionary Alliance National Office
Report of Significant Executive and Board Actions
2015–2016**

Over the last year the C&MA National Office Executive Team and the Board of Directors have touched on many issues that impact our districts, churches, and other Alliance entities. Each of these actions and decisions reflect our mutual commitment to fulfill the Great Commission as a Christ-centered, Acts 1:8 family.

Ministry Mobilization Plans

In February 2015, the district superintendents met with the Board of Directors to discuss how to increase engagement with the Alliance mission and giving to the Great Commission Fund (GCF). The district leaders expressed a strong desire to develop and implement individual plans based on their unique contexts. An evaluative rubric was developed, and the superintendents have met in various settings for accountability and peer review. The Board invited the district and association leaders for a one-day assembly during the February 2017 Board meeting to discuss the ongoing progress of their plans.

International Worker Appointments

Since May 2015, 37 international-worker appointments were approved for service with the C&MA. The Board rejoiced with the new workers that God has called and for the faithful prayers and financial contributions of the Alliance family that allows them to be sent.

Diversity in Leadership

To provide greater opportunity for diversity in the National Office, in February 2016, an intentional practice was adopted to approach and interview at least one minority or female candidate with potential for filling open leadership positions. As of March 2015, 46 percent of our Alliance members are from the non-majority culture, and approximately 40 percent of our churches. Our goal is that the national leadership increasingly reflects the diversity of our membership.

Statement on Sanctity of Life

The Board adopted a rewritten Statement on the Sanctity of Life intended to replace the existing Statement on Abortion. The new statement brings a clearer biblical perspective on the increasingly complex beginning- and end-of-life issues faced by today's church. The new statement is therefore more comprehensive than the statement adopted by the Council in 1981. The new statement was approved by the 2015 General Council.

C&MA Health Plan Changes

The Alliance National Office revamped the C&MA health plan to stay ahead of the rapidly evolving pressures from increasing health care costs and the federal Affordable Care Act requirements. The new plan preserved a wide range of health care providers and services while shifting ownership over expense decisions to the plan recipients. The benefits group believes that the current health plan is positioned to remain competitive in the highly volatile health insurance marketplace.

General Council Election Changes

The 2015 General Council (Council) created the opportunity for offsite delegates to vote for our president and restructured the Council nominating committee. These changes have impacted our districts in three ways. First, for the 2017 Council only, the districts will name their nominating committee representative by May 28, 2016, months earlier than usual. Second, beginning in the fall of 2016, the district superintendents will nominate candidates for the six at large nominating committee members. Third, our local church leadership will have the opportunity to appoint offsite accredited delegates for presidential elections.

C&MA Manual and Church Ministries Handbook Changes

In response to our evolving social and legal context, the Board changed the time period for retired worker licenses in the Uniform Policy on Licensing and Ordination from perpetual to a five-year term. This allows for greater accountability and the potential for requiring background checks as a condition for renewal. The Policy for Qualifying as an Accredited Church also was amended to allow for the appeal of any church reclassification to the vice president of Church Ministries.

The Church Ministries Handbook qualifications for district superintendent candidates were changed to require at least seven consecutive years' experience in ordained ministry with The Christian and Missionary Alliance, immediately preceding his nomination.

Legal and Cultural Challenges

Our churches, camps, schools, and retirement communities continue to face challenges brought on by our country's quickly changing legal and cultural landscape. In response to the Supreme Court's Obergefell decision, the National Office issued the document "Staying on Mission" (<https://www.cmalliance.org/resources/publications/>) to provide a uniform gospel-centered response for all our Alliance entities. Our legal counsel and the Church Ministries team continue to monitor these developments closely and are readily available to answer questions and provide ongoing assistance to our districts.

**Church Ministries
Dan Wetzel, Vice President**

Growth

When new ministries begin to conduct public worship, districts report them as "developing churches." The number of new church starts reported in 2015 outpaced the number of congregations that closed, resulting in a one percent growth in the total number of U.S. Alliance congregations. There were 2,020 churches reported on December 31, 2015.

The 2015 annual reporting numbers are 28,064 conversions and 11,013 baptisms compared to 29,924 conversions and 12,163 baptisms from 2014. Both of these numbers are important indicators of disciplemaking effectiveness. All of the indicators point to another year of continued fruitfulness in The Alliance evangelism ministry.

Read “[Holy Hour](#)” to learn how Heart of Harrisburg (Pennsylvania) is reaching its community for Christ (www.cmalliance.org/news/2016/02/17/holy-hour/). About a half-dozen people, including the owner of a local bar, became believers at a Prayer and Pasta Night in January 2016.

Church Multiplication

Church Ministries encourages districts to participate in regional church-planting networks to develop cooperative church-planting initiatives and share resources. Rev. David A. Reynolds, national team leader for Church Multiplication, leads a team of four regional leaders chosen by the participating districts. This group also serves as a national advisory team.

Regional networks, which receive financial support from the Church Ministries’ budget, coordinate assessment events and share team members. They also encourage effective coaching and provide cooperative training for new church-planting couples and teams.

One of the key components of the regional strategy is the “greenhouse church.” Greenhouse churches are congregations willing to commit themselves to fashioning environments in which potential ministry leaders can be disciplined, mentored, and multiplied to plant new churches. In fact, it may be more accurate to refer to the goal as creating an environment that fosters multiplication of disciples and congregations.

Fresh Start efforts also continue. One example of this revitalization process’ success is Life Church in Aurora, Indiana. Attendance has gone from 40 in 2014 to more than 60 today. There were nine first-time decisions for Christ in 2015, and four people followed the Lord in believer’s baptism (read more at www.cmalliance.org/news/2016/03/02/is-your-church-dying-or-thriving/).

Fresh Start training events are scheduled throughout 2016 to prepare pastoral and lay leaders to restart failing congregations. Only one of the churches that engaged in Fresh Start processes has been unsuccessful in accomplishing the needed turnaround to re-invigorate the congregation’s ministries.

Mission Mobilization

Superintendents volunteered to develop district strategic plans for increasing local church engagement with Alliance global ministries and support of the Great Commission Fund following a meeting with the Board of Directors in February 2015. All but one district completed a plan for review by the District Leadership Forum last November.

In keeping with the benchmark established by the Board of Directors, the strategic plans included initiatives aimed at increasing the average local church giving to the Great Commission Fund to an amount equal to 10 percent of the congregation’s general operating budget. The current national average is just above 7 percent of the aggregate church operating income. Total average giving to Alliance ministries stands at 8 percent. The 10-percent objective is not out of reach (www.cmalliance.org/video/watch/26879/).

It would be a mistake to assume that the sole objective of the district’s mobilization plans is a financial one. Nearly every district team recognizes the importance of increasing relational ties between sending churches and those who are sent. In addition, district leaders recognize the

necessary relationship between genuine discipleship and the believer's involvement in evangelism and global church planting. Dr. A. B. Simpson understood the connection between the Spirit-filled life and a person's commitment to stewardship and missions and so do district leaders. The district plans all include steps to increase discipling and emphasize the need for believers to walk in the Spirit's fullness.

Read about an Acts 1:8 church, Valley Alliance (Ansonia, Pennsylvania), in "[More Than Clothes](http://www.cmalliance.org/news/2016/03/16/more-than-clothes/)" (www.cmalliance.org/news/2016/03/16/more-than-clothes/). This small congregation gives more than 20 percent of its regular budget to help those outside of the congregation, both locally and globally.

Ordination/Consecration

Church Ministries (CM) has begun to reassess ordination/consecration process policies. District superintendents review requirements for ordination/consecration annually, but CM has not determined the policies' effectiveness for more than two decades. It is increasingly important for provisional official workers to have a thorough (if not fully articulated) understanding of Alliance doctrine before they are placed in positions of church leadership.

Of course, ordination/consecration procedures follow appointment to local church ministry. The goal of this process is to affirm the candidate's call, competency, and character—procedures intended to be developmental. Mentoring systems can be strengthened, and adapting the process to individual needs is important.

The new policies will be introduced at Council 2017 along with a program of orientation and training for members of a district's License, Ordination, and Consecration Council.

Alliance Youth

While short on staff, the Alliance Youth office has continued to function. Several well-qualified candidates have expressed interest in the vacant Alliance Youth specialist position, and interviews are in progress.

Church Ministries is cooperating with Crown College professor Dr. Ken Castor to host several NEXT training events in 2016, including one on the West Coast. NEXT is a one-day event, designed to encourage and equip both volunteer and vocational youth ministers. Melissa J. MacDonald, Children's Disciplemaking Ministries specialist, is sponsoring children's training during the event as well. Information about a NEXT event in your area can be located at www.allianceyouth.org.

Hundreds of Alliance young people from churches in both the United States and Canada gather every year for the International Bible Quizzing competition. They represent multiple quizzing teams in a dozen districts in the United States that have active quizzing programs, involving thousands of young people. Quizzing is an even more important component among youth ministries in the Canadian Alliance.

An international team representing Alliance churches in both the United States and Canada is giving renewed leadership to a revised quizzing program that stresses the importance of

discipleship as well as Scripture memory. In a time when biblical illiteracy is widely recognized, quizzing provides a means for young people to do as the psalmist declared: *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you* (Psalm 119:11).

LIFE 2016

Preparations continue for Momentum—LIFE 2016 in Kansas City, Missouri, July 5–9, 2016. Featured speakers include Francis Chan and Dr. John Stumbo, in addition to other prominent men and women who will lead seminars and workshops throughout the week.

Students also will participate in an urban service project in the city and assist with a new church-planting effort in the area. Approximately 3,400 young people have registered for LIFE 2016, and that number is growing steadily.

Rev. Gerald (Jerry) R. Mapstone, executive director for Life Impact Ministries (LIM), has played a primary role in preparing for the LIFE conference for more than two decades. He will complete his service following this year's event.

Mr. Scott R. Wakeley will assume full-time leadership of LIM in October. He is currently on staff at Allegheny Center C&MA Church (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) and fulfilling part-time responsibilities for LIFE 2016. Scott has served on the LIFE planning committee for several years and is currently functioning as its chairman.

Conclusion

Although recent reports have indicated that membership in the Christian church in the United States is declining, that statistic, though true of all denominations collectively, is misleading. Many evangelical denominations are growing, and the percentage of professing Christians who identify themselves as evangelical believers is increasing. The Christian and Missionary Alliance is one of those evangelical denominations that continues to experience God's blessing.

For example, read "[A Church Plant's Special Mission](http://www.cmalliance.org/news/2016/01/26/a-church-plants-special-mission/)" and celebrate how God opened doors for church planters Matthew and Stephanie Erikson to reach families with special-needs kids on Whidbey Island, Washington (www.cmalliance.org/news/2016/01/26/a-church-plants-special-mission/).

The Alliance in the United States is not without challenges. Significant numbers of congregations struggle to engage their communities. Some are experiencing decline.

Nonetheless, the Lord continues to bless the ministry of The Alliance. Men and women are coming to faith, churches are being established, and lives are being transformed by the grace of God and the power of the gospel.

Development
Dennis Whalen, Vice President

Alliance Stories

The Communications team has done an excellent job telling C&MA stories through multiple media channels; the team has shared more than 250 of them in 2015. The following are the top stories of that year based on media source:

- **Alliance Life:** [“No More Faking It,”](#) by Rev. Ron Walborn (March/April 2015 issue), which admonishes readers to live a life of genuine transformation by “getting off the performance treadmill and focusing on Jesus.”
- **Alliance Web site:** The Christian and Missionary Alliance’s response to the SCOTUS ruling on marriage equality (www.cmalliance.org/news/2015/06/26/the-alliance-responds-to-scotus-ruling/)
- **Alliance Video:** The Alliance Council 2015 series and President John Stumbo’s video blogs. Watch these series and other compelling segments at www.cmalliance.org/video/.

Check out the updates page on the Alliance Web site to keep current with the most recent news and stories (www.cmalliance.org/news/).

Alliance Life

In 2015, *Alliance Life* was redesigned and has been well received by its readers. The magazine’s circulation has increased by 7 percent over the last 14 months. The U.S. Alliance family can receive *Alliance Life* at no cost. Subscribe at <https://cmalliance.wufoo.com/forms/w1qn7wq409movxz/>

In 2014, *Alliance Life* earned five awards from the Associated Church Press (ACP) and Evangelical Press Association (EPA). Awards for 2015 will be announced in April.

Alliance Social Media

In February 2015, The Christian and Missionary Alliance launched an Instagram page featuring photos from the C&MA family. Since inception, the page has grown to more than 880 followers. Follow us [@cmalliance](#).

Both the C&MA Facebook and Twitter pages have seen an increase in followers and audience engagement in 2015. With nearly 50,000 (and growing) followers combined, the Facebook and Twitter presence broadens the scope of the C&MA message. Our social media pages can connect individuals with churches and international/official workers—and also share stories of what God is doing around the world through the C&MA family. Connect today on Facebook (www.facebook.com/greatcommission) and Twitter ([@cmalliance](#)).

Alliance Church Giving

Giving to the Great Commission Fund (GCF) from C&MA churches has been relatively flat over the first seven months of this fiscal year compared to the same time last year. The Church Liaison team within Development works with 280 of these congregations and has seen an

increase of 3.2 percent in GCF giving among the churches they connect with.

Online Giving

Giving through the C&MA Web site has increased by 13 percent during the first seven months of this fiscal year. The marketing team made strategic efforts to promote the online giving page during the Year-End Offering campaign and made accessibility to the giving page easier.

Alliance Council 2017

Alliance Council 2017 will be held in the Battelle Grand of the Greater Columbus (Ohio) Convention Center, May 30–June 4, 2017. Council registration will open in early fall 2016 with a complete listing of all speakers, seminars, and other special events. Council arrangements are coming together with the assistance of three C&MA districts and local Ohio churches to offer the Alliance family a worshipful, encouraging, and uplifting Council week. There are more than 1,000 C&MA churches within a day's drive of Columbus that will provide many churches the opportunity to participate in this event. We invite you all!



John Stumbo Video Blog

Deadlines, agendas, budgets, sermon prep—the list goes on for everyone in ministry. President Stumbo provides a monthly moment to stop, breathe, think, pray, and listen for what the Spirit of God is saying to His Bride. Join thousands within the family on the 12th of each month to watch President Stumbo's video blog (www.cmalliance.org/video/series/john-stumbo-video-blog/).

International Ministries Tim Crouch, Vice President

International Ministries (IM) is increasingly focused on sustained gospel access *for* and *from* all peoples.

There is no hope *for* peoples of the world lacking access to the good news apart from a gospel witness that comes from outside their cultures. However, God's intent is that once access is obtained within these people groups, networks of churches will develop such depth and critical mass that *from* them gospel access will flow to every segment of their societies—as well as to other peoples.

With this vision guiding IM, 33 new international workers were deployed during 2015 to strengthen field teams and Envision sites among 15 of the 70 people groups Alliance ministries has prioritized. Additionally, 15 new workers of IM's marketplace ministries followed vocational opportunities into unique niches of many cultures, most of them among the 70 priority people groups.

IM is striving to increase overall global staff by 2 percent in 2016 and in the years following. A total of 30 new workers were appointed in October 2015 and February 2016 for deployment in 2016. At the time of this writing, two more are expected to be appointed. As this 2016 class prepares for deployment, interviews have begun for 33 strategic new ministry roles for couples

or singles to fill in 2017. God continues to provide candidates to boost our teams to needed critical mass.

The past year has included remarkable movement toward Christ among moderate and nominal Muslims who are disaffected by extremist elements in their faith. Villagers in the Balkans region were dismayed by the radicalization of young men in their country and a religious leader's demands that they send their sons for religious training. Desiring to protect their children, the villagers asked local church members and an IM team member about Christianity; today, this village has a number of new believers and a growing, healthy church. A nearby village also has expressed great interest in the Jesus way.

In parts of Africa, peoples long resistant to the gospel are now experiencing a great movement of God. The previously gospel-resistant Kenedougou region in Burkina Faso and Mali is experiencing an explosion of church growth that exemplifies our vision of *for* and *from* gospel access. Learn more about this exciting story at www.cmalliance.org/alife/a-season-of-harvest/.

Newer, fragile initiatives also are moving forward as God's people are confronted with the choice of love or fear in response to peoples on the move, who are crossing borders, oceans, and cultures. IM is advancing a comprehensive plan for strengthening and balancing our team and leadership's key competencies—so needful amid the many challenges and ripe opportunities of the day.

What a joy it is that we follow One who goes before us, who is Himself on the move in our world today. He has not called us to go do something for Him but rather to join Him in what He is doing. Alliance family, let's boldly follow!

Operations/Finance
Kenneth E. Baldes, Vice President

Resourcing the Vision

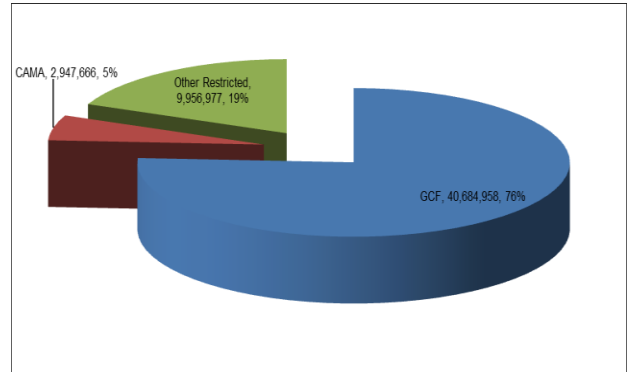
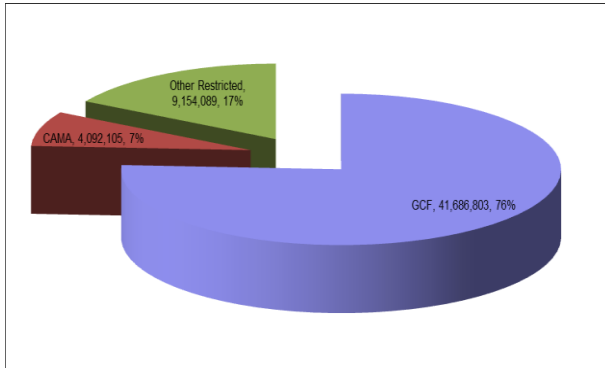
Resourcing the Alliance vision remains one of our greatest challenges. Since church revenues account for 80 percent of our total Great Commission Fund (GCF) income, the pace at which we advance the gospel in the United States and around the world is dependent on the financial generosity of God's people.

Enclosed is the District Alliance Ministries Giving report for 2015 (with a comparison to 2014) that reflects giving trends by district. (Page 15)

We estimate the need for a 3-percent annual increase to keep pace with inflation and rising costs. As an example, we can reach our goal if an additional 3,333 families (from our 2,020 churches) give \$25/month to the GCF.

Below is a comparison of total Alliance Ministries revenues in calendar 2015 compared to 2014.

Alliance Ministries (in millions)



	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>Change</u>
GCF	\$41.7	\$40.7	\$ 1.0
Other Restricted	\$ 9.1	\$ 9.9	\$(0.8)
CAMA Services	\$ 4.1	\$ 3.0	\$ 1.1
Total	\$54.9	\$53.6	\$ 1.3

Alliance Purchasing Program

We launched the Alliance Purchasing Program at Council 2015 to provide districts and churches with negotiated pricing for products and services from Dell, T-Mobile, Microsoft, Xerox, and Staples. We have since introduced a payroll service through Stewardship Payroll Services. **And in April we are excited to introduce a church app with tremendous opportunity to engage church members spiritually, relationally, and financially.**

The church app—offered by Tithe.ly—provides the following benefits:

- Churches using Tithe.ly have experienced up to a 10-percent increase in giving.
- All C&MA churches can now provide an electronic giving solution. (Millennials and a growing number of people who don't use checks especially value this service.)
- Allows each church to customize its own content (within the app framework), including things like “who we are,” sermons, podcasts, church/campus locations and times of services, contact information (phone, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Web site), and an event calendar
- Includes an integrated Tithe.ly giving option (including text giving) in all apps with a recurring gift feature; the giving tool also can be used as the giving option on a church's Web site

- Significant savings in credit-card transaction fees for the Alliance family

The C&MA will pay the Tithe.ly one-time start-up fee of \$99 for any church that signs up by July 15, 2016.

Learn more about the church app or any of the products offered through the Alliance Purchasing Program (www.cmalliance.org/mycma/purchasing-program).

Alliance Health Plan

2015 was one of the worst financially performing years of the Alliance Health Plan with a loss of \$4.6 million. As a result, net assets decreased from \$2.2 million in December 2014 to (\$2.4 million) by December 2015. We are grateful to the Lord that we were able to pay all claims to plan participants.

While this has been a difficult season for many in the Alliance family, we continue to pray that many participants will experience Christ as Healer (www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/healer). We also are hopeful that the new plan implemented in 2016 will support the Alliance family's needs as well as lead to financial stability and sustainability once again.

