

# **A5**

## **UNIFORM CONSTITUTION FOR ACCREDITED CHURCHES OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE**

**E**ach accredited church of The Christian and Missionary Alliance shall adopt and be governed by the following Constitution.

### **PREAMBLE**

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

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

This Constitution has three objectives:

1. Set out in general an outline for organization and administration for this church.
2. Define the relationship of this church to the district of which it is an integral part.
3. Relate this church to the denominational framework through which the worldwide work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance is carried out.

The Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches has been framed and adopted by the General Council, the denomination's highest governing body. The accredited churches of The Christian and Missionary Alliance have participated in this process through their authorized delegates. This church can, in accordance with this Constitution and in a manner that is consistent with the Bylaws of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, formulate its bylaws so as to carry out its ministry appropriately and efficiently.<sup>1</sup>

This church is an integral part of the district, national, and worldwide fellowship of

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<sup>1</sup> Model Bylaws, which include three different governmental models, have been developed by Church Ministries and are available through each church's individual district (see Section E15).

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

## **ARTICLE I NAME**

The official name under which this church is incorporated or organized is \_\_\_\_\_ (shall include the words "The Christian and Missionary Alliance").

## **ARTICLE II RELATIONSHIP**

This church is connected with and subordinate to its parent religious organization, The Christian and Missionary Alliance, a Colorado nonprofit corporation. In consideration of the mutual benefits generated and derived from this relationship and understanding that The Christian and Missionary Alliance is relying hereon in agreeing to initiate or continue such relationship, this church agrees to be subject to and abide by the terms and conditions of Article XVI hereof relating to the reversion of property of accredited churches.

## **ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1. Qualifications.**

1. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ and evidence of regeneration.
2. Belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as originally given; in the vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; in the eternal salvation of all who believe in Him and the eternal punishment of all who reject Him.
3. Acceptance of the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.
4. Full sympathy with the mission and core values of The Christian and Missionary Alliance and cooperation by systematic support of its work.
5. Such other qualifications for membership as may be stated in the bylaws.

**Section 2. Removal.** Persons may be removed from membership under one or more of the following circumstances:

1. Submission of a written letter of resignation to the elders of the church.
2. Failure to meet the qualifications of membership as stated above.
3. Disciplinary action taken under the Uniform Policy for Discipline, Restoration and Appeal of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

An appeal of decisions made to remove a person from membership for reasons of qualification or a disciplinary action may be submitted to the district superintendent within 30 days of the action.

#### **ARTICLE IV ORDINANCES**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are recognized as the two ordinances of the church.

Believers' baptism by immersion is taught and practiced as the scriptural mode. The pastor or other elders shall oversee baptism. They shall provide the instruction about baptism and shall administer the baptisms themselves or choose other spiritually respected people to do these ministries.

The Lord's Supper is administered regularly. The pastor or other elders shall oversee Communion. They shall provide the instruction about Communion and shall administer the Communion themselves or choose other spiritually respected people to do these ministries.

#### **ARTICLE V GOVERNMENT**

There shall be an annual meeting of the members of this church to be held at a time specified in the bylaws at which time the members shall receive reports of ministries, including audited reports of the treasurers, and shall elect church officers, elders, and members of the governance authority. Additional ministry positions shall be filled as specified in the local church bylaws. The governance authority, as specified in the local church bylaws, shall conduct the affairs of the church between annual meetings and shall be amenable to the membership and the district superintendent as constitutionally defined. Other meetings of the members may be called by proper notice to the membership as specified in the bylaws. On general church matters in which no legal questions are involved, it is understood that all members in good and regular standing who have reached the age of 16 years are entitled to vote, but in matters involving titles of property or legal procedure, the laws of the state determine the age at which members are eligible to vote.

## ARTICLE VI GOVERNANCE AUTHORITY

**Section 1. General.** Each local church shall structure its governance authority in accordance with the governing documents of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, the responsibilities of elders as defined in Article X, Section 1, the bylaws of the district, and the laws of the state in which the church is located. The members of the governance authority shall satisfy the scriptural standards for church leadership and shall be members of this church.

The lead pastor shall be chairman or, at his request, the governance authority shall elect an elder as chairman. An elder also shall be elected as vice chairman. Meetings shall be held for prayer and business, and abbreviated minutes shall be reported to the church as the church may decide. Special meetings may be called by the chairman or by written request of one-half of the governance authority membership. All officers, committees, and organizations except the Nominating Committee are amenable to the collective oversight of the elders.

**Section 2. Removal.** In consultation with the district superintendent and the lead pastor, any officer or auxiliary official, except licensed pastoral staff, of this church, whether elected at the church annual meeting or appointed by the governance authority, or any individual member of the governance authority, may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the governance authority and the approval of the district superintendent if, in the judgment of the governance authority, the best interests of this church will be served thereby.

## ARTICLE VII OFFICERS

The officers shall be members of this church and shall satisfy the scriptural standards for church leadership. They shall consist of the following who, with the exception of the lead pastor, shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church: lead pastor, secretary, treasurer, assistant treasurer, and such other officers as may be designated in the church bylaws or in the state law.

## ARTICLE VIII PASTORAL STAFF

The governance authority shall not give consideration to any candidate for the pastoral staff without the approval of the district superintendent. Pastoral staff members shall be called by the governance authority and appointed by the district superintendent. The district superintendent shall suggest to the governance authority the names of such workers as in his judgment have proper qualifications for pastoral staff. Upon appointment by the district superintendent, a pastoral staff member and

spouse become members of this church. Pastoral staff include all those whose position calls for licensing as an "official worker," as defined in the General Regulations in the *Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance*.

Any member of the pastoral staff may resign from this church by giving due notice of this intention to the district superintendent and the governance authority. The governance authority may, in conjunction with the district superintendent, ask for the resignation of any member of the pastoral staff. Before such action is taken, the governance authority and that member shall follow the guidelines as prescribed by the district superintendent. The district superintendent, with the approval of the District Executive Committee, shall have the authority to remove or transfer a member of the pastoral staff when the governance authority is in disagreement or whenever circumstances make such removal or transfer advisable.

## ARTICLE IX DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS

**Section 1. Lead Pastor.** The lead pastor shall have oversight of this church. He shall be chairman of the governance authority except as he may choose to proceed according to the provisions in Article VI. He shall preside at all regular or special meetings of the church membership. He is a member ex officio of all church committees and organizations. When the membership has no pastor, the chairman or vice chairman of the governance authority shall have oversight of the church in conjunction with the district superintendent. The lead pastor shall be the president of this church where such office is required by law.

**Section 2. Secretary.** The secretary shall keep the minutes of membership meetings and conduct the correspondence of this church as directed by the governance authority. The secretary shall attend and keep minutes of other meetings as specified in the local church bylaws.

**Section 3. Treasurer.** The treasurer shall receive all monies of this church and shall be responsible for the payment of all bills on the order of the governance authority as specified by the local church bylaws, keeping proper book records of all transactions, and filing canceled vouchers and receipts for payments made. The governance authority shall determine where funds of this church shall be kept. No offerings shall be solicited from the membership except upon approval of the governance authority.

**Section 4. Missionary Treasurer.** When required by local church bylaws, the missionary treasurer shall account for all missionary monies and oversee the forwarding of the same to the treasurer of The Christian and Missionary Alliance on or before the tenth of the following month.

**Section 5. Assistant Treasurer.** The assistant treasurer shall, with another person or

persons appointed by the governance authority, be responsible to count all monies and keep a separate record of all receipts. The assistant treasurer may be empowered to issue receipts to the donors.

## ARTICLE X COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

**Section 1. Elders.** The call of Christ the Chief Shepherd to men to serve as elders is both discerned and confirmed by the church membership. Elders shall therefore be male members of this church and shall be elected as specified in the church bylaws. The pastor and the other elders are the highest level of servant leadership in the church. As undershepherds, elders shall serve with the lead pastor to oversee both the temporal and spiritual affairs of the local church in order to accomplish Christ's mission. They shall constitute the Committee on Membership. They shall be the Committee on Discipline in accordance with the Uniform Policy on Discipline, Restoration, and Appeal of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. All officers, committees, and organizations except the Nominating Committee are amenable to the collective oversight of the elders through the governance authority.

**Section 2. Deacons.** The deacons shall be members of this church and shall be appointed or elected as specified in the local church bylaws. The deacons shall have charge of those ministries and charities of the church as specified in the bylaws, receive offerings for such purposes and dispense the same, and make monthly reports as directed. Where there are no deacons, the governance authority shall assume responsibility for their ministries until such are elected or appointed.

**Section 3. Deaconesses.** Deaconesses shall be members of this church and shall be appointed or elected as specified in the local church bylaws. The deaconesses shall have charge of those ministries as specified in the bylaws. Where there are no deaconesses, the governance authority shall assume responsibility for their ministries until such are elected or appointed.

**Section 4. Trustees.** The trustees shall be members of this church and may be appointed or elected as specified in the local church bylaws. Trustees shall have charge of those ministries and duties as specified in the bylaws, or the laws of the state in which the church is located. Where there are no trustees, the governance authority shall assume responsibility for those ministries and duties until such are elected or appointed.

**Section 5. Alliance Women.** Local church Alliance Women may be established. They shall be organized according to the Alliance Women policies as contained in the *CM Handbook*.

## ARTICLE XI

## MISSIONS MOBILIZATION

The church shall participate in the worldwide missions and church planting ministries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the support of the Great Commission Fund. The Governance Authority shall specify the means by which it purposes to mobilize members' involvement, including prayer, recruitment of men and women for vocational ministry both at home and abroad. A Missions Conference or congregation-wide event for missions mobilization shall be held each year.

## ARTICLE XII DISCIPLEMAKING MINISTRIES

A major ministry of this church shall be making disciples of Jesus Christ. The discipling process includes evangelism, building up believers, equipping workers, and multiplying leaders, among adults, youth, and children. The Governance Authority shall specify how discipling is to be pursued. The purpose of discipling ministries is to bring people to a saving knowledge of Christ, teach biblical principles emphasizing missions and the centrality of Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King, and equip people for evangelism and Christian service.

## ARTICLE XIII PROPERTY AND RECORDS

**Section 1. Property.** This church may acquire, own, dispose of, improve, encumber, and convey property, real and personal, for church purposes, in conformity with the laws of the state where the property is situated.

Real property may be purchased, sold, conveyed, exchanged, mortgaged, or encumbered only by order of the membership through the governance authority in consultation with the district superintendent. In states where trustees are required, the order of the membership shall proceed through them.

**Section 2. Records.** The official records of all officers of the church and all its departments are the property of the church. In the event of the death or resignation of the incumbent or upon the election of his successor, the current records of the office shall be passed on to the newly elected officer. All records other than current shall be kept in a secure repository selected by the governance authority.

**Section 3. Audit.** All financial records shall be examined annually or at more frequent intervals on order of the governance authority. At least three persons, none of whom is a financial officer or a church staff member, shall be appointed by the governance authority to conduct the examination. They shall follow procedures set forth in the current edition of the *Manual for Alliance Church Treasurers (and Pastors)*. The



governance authority shall authorize actions to conform with additional audit standards that may be required by the jurisdiction in which the church is located.

## **ARTICLE XIV NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

A Nominating Committee shall consist of the lead pastor, two members from the church membership, selected by, but not necessarily from the governance authority, and two elected from the church membership in a manner stipulated by the local church bylaws, at least one month prior to the annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE XV ELECTIONS**

In consideration of elections, the Nominating Committee shall present at least one name for each office to be filled. Other nominations may be made by the membership as stipulated in the church bylaws. The officers shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting. Where only one name is presented, the ballot may be waived by unanimous vote.

## **ARTICLE XVI REVERSION OF PROPERTY**

Recognizing the purpose of the members of this congregation to support both the doctrines and the mission of The Christian and Missionary Alliance through the contribution of their tithes, offerings, and special gifts, and to ensure that the future use of such assets and real property as this church may from time to time acquire shall not be diverted from this purpose, this church adopts the following property reversion clause.

1. **Property Reversion Events.** Any of the following shall constitute a "property reversion event:" (a) the decision or action of this church to disaffiliate or otherwise separate itself from The Christian and Missionary Alliance without the prior written approval of such decision or action by the District Executive Committee (or its equivalent) of the district in which this church is located, (b) the failure for any reason of this church to be subject to or abide by any of the purposes, usages, doctrines, or teachings of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, (c) the failure for any reason of this church to qualify as an "accredited church" of The Christian and Missionary Alliance (as such term is defined in the Bylaws of The Christian and Missionary Alliance), or (d) the termination of this church's existence for any reason.
2. **Determination of a Property Reversion Event.** The determination of whether a property reversion event has occurred shall be considered and decided by the



District Executive Committee (or its equivalent) of the district of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in which this church is located in accordance with procedures established from time to time by the Board of Directors of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. The decision of such District Executive Committee (or its equivalent) shall be final and binding on The Christian and Missionary Alliance, the district of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in which this church is located, and this church, except an appeal from such decision may be taken, within 30 days of the declaration of a reversionary event, to a committee of three members of the Board of Directors of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Such appeal shall be limited to the issues of fraud, collusion, or arbitrariness on the part of the district in declaring a reversionary event. The decision of such committee shall be final as a matter of ecclesiastical law.

3. **Consequences of a Property Reversion Event.** Upon the occurrence of a property reversion event as determined in accordance with paragraph 2 above, legal title to all real and personal property (tangible and intangible), appurtenances, fixtures, and effects of whatever type then owned, held, or used by this church, without regard to how or from whom acquired, shall, upon the demand of the district of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in which this church is located, revert to and become the property of such district of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. During the period of time between the occurrence of the property reversion event and the complete and final transfer of legal title to the district of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in which this church is located, this church shall hold such property in trust for such district to be used exclusively to further the purposes, usages, doctrines, and teachings of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.
4. **Waiver of Certain Property Reversion Events.** In the event of a property reversion event attributable to differences in doctrine between this church and The Christian and Missionary Alliance, the property reversion process set forth above may be waived upon the approval of (a) at least two-thirds of the members in good standing of this church, (b) the District Executive Committee (or its equivalent) of the district of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in which this church is located, and (c) Church Ministries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.
5. **Exclusion of Certain Property.** Paragraph 3 above shall not apply to any real or personal property which (i) this church owned prior to its becoming an accredited church, and (ii) is expressly identified as property not subject to paragraph 3 above in a written agreement entered into in connection with such accreditation between this church and the district of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in which this church was located upon its accreditation. The exclusion of property pursuant to this paragraph 5, and the agreement described in the preceding sentence, shall (1) terminate ten (10) years after this church's accreditation, and (2)

not apply to any church that was in developing status prior to its accreditation.

## **ARTICLE XVII BYLAWS**

Church bylaws not in conflict with this Constitution, the provisions of the Bylaws of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, the bylaws of the district within which the church is located, or the laws of the state are required and will be adopted by a duly called meeting of the church. As a minimum, the church bylaws will include provisions for the composition and name of its governance authority that is in keeping with Article VI above. A copy of such bylaws shall be filed with the district superintendent.

## **ARTICLE XVIII AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended only by the General Council of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in accordance with the provisions of Section 10.2 of the Amended and Restated Constitution and Bylaws of The Christian and Missionary Alliance as applied to the Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches.

## **ARTICLE XIX CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAW**

In cases where any provision of this Constitution may not conform to state laws, the district concerned shall be authorized to make such adjustments as necessary in counsel with the vice president for Church Ministries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance so as to conform to such laws.