

Constitution for Developing Churches

A Policy of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada

Preamble

Each Christian and Missionary Alliance church is an integral part of the national and worldwide fellowship, and it is united in governance, fellowship, and service in order to promote unity of faith in the fullness of Jesus Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King, thereby facilitating the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Member churches of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada that have not adopted the Constitution for Local Churches shall operate in accordance with this Constitution.

This constitution has two objectives:

- 1) to state the purpose of this local church and to define the nature of the relationships of this local church to The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada and the district of which it is an integral part; and
- 2) to stipulate the enabling instruments, legal procedures, and the empowering conditions under which this local church is to carry out its local and worldwide work.

The local church is the fundamental unit of Christian fellowship as exemplified in the Scripture. Faithfulness in multiplying churches around the world that are nourished in the Bible and full of the Holy Spirit is the Scriptural pattern for carrying out the redemptive purposes of God and the Great Commission of our Lord and Saviour. The statement of our founder, A.B. Simpson, is as relevant today as when he gave it in his address to General Council in 1912:

“We need to be perfectly adjusted in our loyalty to Christ and at the same time in our responsibility to the special trust which he has committed to our hands. God does not want us to be afraid of losing our consecration by being true to The Christian and Missionary Alliance, by knowing how to keep rank and by marching loyally under our own standard.

“Further, we must have the right adjustment of our home and foreign work, and the interdependence each upon the other, the home work as the constituency of the foreign, and the foreign as the outlet and complement of the other.

“Our foreign work is not only the fulfillment of the supreme duty of the Church of Christ, but the loftiest inspiration and uplift of our whole Christian life at home.

“God grant that this work may never lose its old simplicity, self-sacrifice and separation, not only from the secular but from the religious world in its spirit and practice. But at the same time, we must keep abreast of the progress of our age and be men and women of today in our message and ministry to our generation.”

Article 1 – Name

The name of this church shall be _____ of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada.

The church shall receive approval of the District Executive Committee of the district of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, of which it is a part prior to the legal registration or use of the name.

Article 2 – Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and persuading men and women to become His disciples and dependable members of His Church.

Certain principles condition the implementation of this purpose:

- 2.1. The church fosters spiritual maturation through participation of its members in worship and nurturing activities according to their maturity, gifts, and abilities in ministering to the needs of the body in her task of evangelization at home and abroad.
- 2.2. The church observes the ordinances of believer’s baptism and the Lord’s Supper and complies with the biblical qualifications for selection of church leadership. She considers the basic methods of communicating the Gospel to be through worship, preaching, teaching, witnessing, and example. She takes discipline and restoration of the offender seriously. She holds that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is essential for holiness of life and effective witness. She affirms the necessity for fervent prayer, faithful service, and sacrificial giving as modeled by Christ Himself. She regards social service and good citizenship as outgrowths of the Gospel.
- 2.3. The local church is the visible, organized expression of the Body of Christ. She conducts her affairs decently and in order. She organizes herself so that all members can contribute according to their gifts and abilities to the total working of the body. She operates on the assumption that the congregation finds broader meaning and outreach by fulfilling her biblical responsibilities within and beyond the life and witness of the denomination.
- 2.4. The church cultivates fellowship and not sectarianism. Her local and extended family seeks for common spiritual ground on which fellowship with other groups may be enriched and strengthened through an open and transparent relationship.

Article 3 – Statement of Faith

This church subscribes to the following statement of faith which is the statement of faith of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada as amended from time to time.

1. There is one God,¹ who is infinitely perfect,² existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.³
2. Jesus Christ is true God and true man.⁴ He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.⁵ He died upon the cross, the just for the unjust, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and all who believe in him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. He arose from the dead according to the Scriptures.⁶ He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest.⁷ He will come again to establish His Kingdom of righteousness and peace.⁸
3. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, sent to indwell,⁹ guide, teach and empower the believer, and to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.¹⁰
4. 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 people. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.¹¹

¹ Isaiah 44:6; 45:5-6

² Matthew 5:48; Deut. 32:4

³ Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19

⁴ Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 2:14-18; Colossians 2:9

⁵ Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35

⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; 1 John 2:2; Acts 13:39

⁷ Hebrews 4:14-15; 9:24-28

⁸ Matthew 25:31-34; Acts 1:11

⁹ John 14:16-17

¹⁰ John 16:7-11; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12

¹¹ 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

5. Humankind, originally created in the image and likeness of God,¹² fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All people are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹³ The destiny of the impenitent and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment, but that of the believer is everlasting joy and bliss.¹⁴
6. Salvation has been provided only through Jesus Christ. Those who repent and believe in Him are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit and are thereby regenerated (born again), justified, sanctified and granted the gift of eternal life as adopted children of God.¹⁵
7. It is the will of God that in union with Christ each believer should be sanctified thoroughly¹⁶ thereby being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to God, receiving power for holy living and sacrificial and effective service toward the completion of Christ's commission.¹⁷

This is accomplished through being filled with the Holy Spirit which is both a distinct event and progressive experience in the life of the believer.¹⁸

8. Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil as taught in the Scriptures are privileges for the Church in this present age.¹⁹
9. The universal Church, of which Christ is the Head, consists of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through His blood, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and commissioned by Christ to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the Gospel to all nations.²⁰

The local church, the visible expression of the universal Church, is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together to worship God, to observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to pray, to be edified through the Word of God, to fellowship, and to testify in word and deed to the Good News of salvation both locally and globally. The local church enters into relationships with other like-minded churches for accountability, encouragement and mission.²¹

10. There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust; for the former, a resurrection unto life;²² for the latter, a resurrection unto judgment.²³
11. The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent and will be personal and visible.²⁴ As the believer's blessed hope, this vital truth is an incentive for holy living and sacrificial service toward the completion of Christ's commission.²⁵

Article 4—Relationship

This church is a constituent member of the district and national organizations of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada as such organizations are defined in the Manual. The policies and regulations of this church shall be consistent with, and the church shall operate in accordance with, the Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada as amended from time to time.

¹² Genesis 1:27

¹³ Romans 8:8; 1 John 2:2

¹⁴ Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

¹⁵ Titus 3:5-7; Acts 2:38; John 1:12; 1 Corinthians 6:11

¹⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:23

¹⁷ Acts 1:8

¹⁸ Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16-25

¹⁹ Matthew 8:16-17; James 5:13-16

²⁰ Ephesians 3:6-12; 1:22-23

²¹ Acts 2:41-47; Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8, 11:19-30; 15

²² 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

²³ 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

²⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:7; Titus 2:11-14; Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20

Article 5—Ordinances

Believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper are recognized as the two ordinances of the Church as commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is an act of obedience for all believers. While other modes of believer's baptism are recognized, baptism by immersion is taught and practiced as the Scriptural mode. The Lord's Supper is administered regularly and offered to all believers.

Article 6 – Membership

6.1. Qualifications

The pastor and the district superintendent or his appointee(s) shall constitute the Committee on Membership. The qualifications for membership include a credible testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; believer's baptism; a commitment to the principles of the Preamble; a commitment to the Purpose (Article 2), and statement of faith (Article 3) of this church; submission to the discipline procedures of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada; and such further qualifications as may be specified in the bylaws.

While affirming the above as normative, the Committee on Membership may discern on a case by case basis whether to extend membership to individuals who were baptized as infants and who now have a credible testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; a commitment to the principles of the Preamble; a commitment to the Purpose (Article 2), and statement of faith (Article 3) of this church; submission to the discipline procedures of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada; and such further qualifications as may be specified in the bylaws.

6.2. Discipline

Discipline is an exercise of that spiritual authority that the Lord Jesus has given to his Church. The purposes of discipline are to maintain the honour of the Redeemer, the purity of the Church, the spiritual benefit of the members, and the restoration of the offender. The discipline of a member shall be the responsibility of the district superintendent or his designates and shall be in accordance with the Discipline and Restoration Policy for Members of Local Churches adopted by The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada. It shall be a condition of membership that persons accept and comply with the Discipline and Restoration Policy for Members of Local Churches.

Article 7 – Government

The church shall be under the direction of the district superintendent, who will appoint an Advisory Committee to assist him and the senior pastor with oversight of the church.

There shall be an annual general membership meeting where the membership shall receive reports from the pastor and Advisory Committee, including financial reports. Any recommendations from the membership shall be subject to the approval of the district superintendent.

When the number of members exceeds fifteen (15) or a higher number as established by the District Executive Committee, the church may adopt the Local Church Constitution, which shall replace this constitution.

Article 8 – Advisory Committee

8.1. Composition and Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee shall serve with the senior pastor in the oversight of the church. All officers and organizations of the church are amenable to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall report to the district superintendent quarterly or as the district superintendent shall decide.

The senior pastor or a member of the Advisory Committee appointed by him shall be the chair. The senior pastor shall have primary responsibility for oversight of the Advisory Committee and the church and shall function within the job description approved by the district superintendent.

Persons shall not vote on any matter that may directly or indirectly result in financial benefit to them, whether such benefit be in the nature of salary or other payment.

8.2. Officers

The officers of the church shall be appointed by the district superintendent and shall include, but not be limited to, the chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer.

8.3. Duties

The officers shall carry out the following duties and such additional duties as directed from time to time by the district superintendent:

8.3.1. Chair

The chair shall preside at regular and special meetings of the Advisory Committee.

8.3.2. Vice Chair

The vice chair acts in the absence or at the request of the chair.

8.3.3. Secretary

The secretary shall keep the minutes of meetings of the Advisory Committee. The secretary shall ensure the safekeeping of the official records. The secretary shall conduct the official correspondence of the church as directed by the Advisory Committee.

8.3.4. Treasurer

The treasurer shall ensure that all funds of the church are received and disbursed as directed by the Advisory Committee, shall ensure that proper records are maintained and shall report as required.

8.4. Trustees

Where required, trustees shall be selected in conformity with the laws of the province or territory. They shall be under the direction of the Advisory Committee.

Article 9 – Pastor and Official Workers

9.1. Senior Pastor

The senior pastor (who may be given another title) shall be appointed by the district superintendent. Upon his appointment by the district superintendent, the senior pastor and spouse become members of the church. He shall have general oversight of the church and is a member ex officio of all committees.

The senior pastor may resign from the church by giving due notice of his intention to the district superintendent. The district superintendent may, after consultation with the Advisory Committee and with the approval of the District Executive Committee, terminate the appointment of the senior pastor.

9.2. Pastors (other than senior) and Official Workers

The senior pastor shall consider for ministry staff only those candidates who in his judgment have proper qualifications for pastors or official workers in the church and are approved by the district superintendent. All official workers shall be nominated by the senior pastor and appointed by the district superintendent. Upon appointment, the official worker and spouse become members of the church.

The official worker may resign from the church by giving due notice of intention to the senior pastor and the district superintendent. The senior pastor may, after consultation with the district superintendent, terminate the employment of workers covered in this section in accordance with the policies of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada. The district superintendent may, after consultation with the senior pastor and with the approval of the District Executive Committee, terminate the appointment of the official worker.

Article 10 – Organizations

The Advisory Committee may establish organizations, committees, and teams strategic to fulfilling the purpose of this church. They shall be under the authority of the Advisory Committee and shall fulfill the duties determined by the Advisory Committee.

Article 11 – Missions

The biblical basis of missions and the current efforts to transform the world for Christ shall be emphasized and promoted throughout the year in conjunction with the district and national programs of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada. The church shall enlist prayer support, recruit workers, and raise financial support for the global work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Article 12 – Property and Records

12.1. Property

This church will be operated without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other assets of the organization will be used solely to promote its objectives.

Real property may be acquired, disposed of, improved, or encumbered by order of the District Executive Committee.

Except as otherwise provided herein, all real property shall be registered in the name of the district in which the property is situated and the district shall be deemed to be the legal and beneficial owner of all real property, appurtenances and effects. The district shall be entitled and authorized to mortgage, hypothecate, pledge or otherwise create a security interest in, or charge on, all or any part of such property to secure payment of debt or performance of any other obligation of either the church or the district.

Should the church cease to exist or cease to be subject to the Manual which includes the statement of faith of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, all of its real property, appurtenances, and effects associated with the member church prior to its withdrawal shall inure to the benefit of and remain the property of the district corporation of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada within which this church is located or with which it is affiliated by law.

Should the church cease to be subject to the Manual which includes the statement of faith of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, but continue to abide by a similar statement of faith and promote similar purposes, the District Executive Committee of the district within which this church is located or with which it is affiliated by law may allow the church to acquire ownership of some or all of the real property, appurtenances, and effects associated with the member church prior to its withdrawal.

12.2. Records

The official records of all officers of this church and all its departments are the property of the church. All financial records shall be prepared and maintained according to Accounting Standards for Not-For-Profit Organizations, and shall be subject to an audit, review, or other independent evaluation annually as prescribed by the district superintendent.

In the event of the death or resignation of an incumbent officer or upon the election or appointment of a successor, the current records of the office shall be returned to the secretary of the Advisory Committee. All records, other than the current ones, shall be kept in a secure repository designated by the Advisory Committee.

Article 13 – Bylaws

Church bylaws may not be in conflict with this Constitution. Bylaws and subsequent revisions become valid upon approval of the District Executive Committee. A copy of the bylaws must be filed with the district.

Article 14 – Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the Board of Directors of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada.

Adopted - Board of Directors, April 2012

Amended – General Assembly 2018