

Constitution of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (1887)

A New Missionary Alliance

At the close of the convention of Old Orchard Beach, Maine, in the summer of 1886, all our hearts were touched and overwhelmed by the presentation of the claims and needs of the great neglected mission fields of the world, and an informal movement was begun, with a view to the encouragement of some new missionary effort to reach some of the yet unoccupied fields.

It has seemed to some of God's children that it would be well at the next meeting to give this a fuller consideration and a more definite and practical form; and, with a view to this, it has been arranged to devote the last two days of the convention to the great work of Foreign Missions, and see if the time has come and way is clear for a simple, spiritual and undenominational movement to send the full gospel--which has proved such a blessing to us--to the neglected millions of heathen lands.

With this in view, the following papers, containing a rough draft of a proposed basis of organization and action, have been submitted for prayerful consideration in advance of the meeting, that the best suggestions and methods may be reached as the result of mature and careful consideration on the part of all concerned.

Draft of the Constitution

1. *Name.*--The association shall be called "The Evangelical Missionary Alliance."
2. *Aim and Object.*--The object of the Alliance shall be to carry the Gospel "to all nations," with special reference to the needs of the destitute and unoccupied fields of the heathen world.
3. *Scope.*--Its scope shall be universal, and its character and spirit catholic and unsectarian; and it will seek to unite Christians of all evangelical denominations in its work.
4. *Missionaries.*--The workers the Alliance contemplates sending forth shall include consecrated persons of both sexes--lay as well as clerical--without regard to their denominational preferences; the qualification specially kept in view shall be entire consecration and practical adaptation to the various forms of missionary work.

5. *Self-support.*--The Alliance proposes to encourage and foster the principle of self-support, in whole or in part, wherever practicable, in the foreign field.

6. *Dependence.*--The Alliance will require in all its labourers a spirit of absolute reliance upon God alone for support, guaranteeing no fixed remuneration to any missionary after reaching his or her field, but simply acting as a channel through which such aid may be sent, from time to time, as the resources at command may render available.

7. *Methods of Work.*--In the prosecution of its foreign work, and the formation of native churches, the Alliance will leave each missionary and native community free to adopt such form of church government as may be preferred, only requiring in every case that the doctrinal basis and practice shall be in strict accordance with the Word of God, and in harmony with evangelical truth.

8. *Resources and Funds.*--In looking for means to prosecute its work, the Alliance will depend entirely upon the promises and faithfulness of God, through voluntary gifts of His people, as He may dispose them to contribute. In addition to publishing reports of the work of the Alliance from time to time, well matured methods for presenting the claims of the work to the Christian public throughout the land, probably by distributing its organization through local auxiliaries and little bands of seven, will later on be inaugurated.

9. *Membership.*--All evangelical Christians who shall regularly contribute to its resources will thereby become members of the Alliance.

10. *Board of Management.*--The administration of its affairs will be under the management of a Board elected at each annual meeting, to consist of a President, Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Recording Secretary and Directors.

The Board shall appoint and direct the missionaries employed, but any local auxiliary may, with the approval of the Board, select a special field or laborer to sustain in whole or in part, as may be mutually arranged with the General Board. Moneys designated for special fields or persons shall be so applied whenever practicable consistently with the interests of the work.

Statement of the Reason for Proposing Such an Organization

1. Our Lord's last commands, recorded in all the four Gospels, must ever render the work of foreign missions the supreme and paramount ministry and obligation of the Christian Church in a far higher measure and degree than has ever yet been realized.

2. The present condition of the world, and the marvelous working of God's providence in opening almost every heathen country to the Gospel within the present century, furnish the most authoritative, significant and encouraging call to this work.

3. The awful need of the human race in prospect of an eternal future without Christ, and the utter inadequacy of all that has yet been done to meet that need, adds tremendous force to the appeal and calls for a yet wider multiplication of agencies and efforts in this direction. Out of a population of 1,500,000,000, 120,000,000 are nominal Protestants, and perhaps 10,000,000 or 1 in 150, truly saved. One hundred thousand perish every day, and horrors and miseries untold fill up the story of their short and sinful life. Even in heathen lands, while perhaps 2,000,000 have been converted to Christ in the past century, the heathen populations have increased during this time by 200,000,000, or one hundred to one; and during the same period three whole generations of heathens, or a population of 3,000,000,000 have passed into eternity without Christ. Two millions saved, 3,000,000,000 lost in one hundred years--*one to fifteen hundred!*

4. The blessing and prosperity which God has bestowed upon the work of foreign missions is a peculiar seal of its importance and encouragement to extend it. It is but half a century since there was any considerable number of converts in any heathen fields, and yet in that time China has been covered with stations, India planted with three hundred stations, Japan evangelized, Madagascar overspread with light and gladness, the Hawaiian, Fiji and Malaysian islands changed from habitations of cruelty to scenes of blessing as well as beauty, and Central Africa opened up to Christ. The ratio of increase in the mission churches has always been three or four times as great as in the home churches, and some years even ten or twelve times. From time to time God has poured out His Spirit on these fields in a manner and measure unequalled since apostolic times. Even commerce, science and earthly governments have acknowledged their obligations to the missionary, and in every way the work has been recognized as the object of God's especial favour and blessing.

5. The special features proposed in this movement have also been peculiarly owned and emphasized by the great Head of the Church.

a) The work of laymen is one of God's chosen instrumentalities in this age. The urgency is so great that there is not always time for long technical preparation. The qualities especially needed are plain, practical energy and adaptation and entire consecration, and these are not found exclusively or always in the highest degree in professional ministers. We do not disparage the ministry, but God is calling His Church to use all her resources and agencies.

b) The ministry of woman is another prominent token of our time, both in the home and foreign field, and we believe He desires to emphasize and utilize it still more. The foreign mission needs 100,000 women today, and has place for everyone. At the Midway Conference, the other day, 1,000 were called for North Africa alone, and this would only give one woman to every 10,000 heathen women and children in the field.

c) The principle of economy of administration, self-support and dependence upon God has been proved to be practicable in many fields, and is fitted to produce a higher type of self-denial, practical wisdom and faith in God in the workers.

d) The undenominational principle is the most satisfactory and adjustable by far in heathen lands, and surely most in accordance with the highest principles of Christianity. The devoted churchman cannot wish to fasten on the simple minds of these people the old bigotries of our unfortunate divisions, and the tendency in all missionary lands is to union and primitive catholicity and simplicity.

e) The financial results of such societies have been found most satisfactory in Great Britain. There within the past few years a great number of undenominational missionary agencies have sprung up. But they have in no sense weakened the old societies, but only stimulated and strengthened them, while they have reached new constituencies and called forth new treasures for God's work. The result is that the average missionary contribution of English Christians are more than double those of their wealthier brethren in America. There are millions of dollars in this land awaiting the touch of God's consecrating fire, and the church has not even begun to learn the meaning of the necessity of consecrated giving.

6. Is it not fitting that the great multitude whom the Holy Ghost has called in these days into the closer union with Jesus, and a deeper revelation of His fullness, should unite in some work for the evangelization of others which would be a worthy expression of their gratitude and love, and in turn a bond of delightful union and a means of yet higher blessing to their own soul? Can we even keep our blessing if we do not share it, and has not God given us a secret which the world needs and which the world is not receiving? Freely ye have received, freely give.

7. And finally, those of us who love to look forward to the speedy coming of our dear Master and Lord cannot forget that this is His own appointed way of hastening that event. For "this Gospel of the Kingdom must first be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations *and* THEN SHALL THE END COME."

Has He not even given into our hands the very key of the Bridal Chamber, and shall we let it rust in our selfish indifference and neglect?

Shall we, then, beloved, instead of criticizing, instead of thinking what we or others are doing, instead of waiting to see what will become of it, at once yield our hands and hearts to help in this added endeavor to save the lost, to obey our Lord's most tender command, to unite our efforts with our brethren in other lands and to hasten His appearing?