

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MODEL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY POLICY OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

The *Christian Community Policy* has been prepared as a model policy to describe how a church or other entity's activities, relationships, and operational policies – including the use of facilities – reflect the C&MA's sincerely held religious beliefs. For an entity other than a local church, a version is available by contacting CORPSEC@cmalliance.org.

This *Christian Community Policy* is intended to replace the former *Regarding the Faith Community and Mission* policy. A church or entity that has already adopted the former policy may adopt the newer updated version through its governance authority (e.g. elder board, governing board, etc.).

The purpose of this model policy is to provide protection for C&MA churches, districts, and other C&MA entities in face of our country's quickly changing legal, cultural, and moral standards. Specifically, the policy is designed to express the doctrinal relationship between the church's beliefs and standards and those of the denomination as a whole. If challenged, this policy will enhance the denomination's ability to support the local church.

Use of church facilities.

Recent legal developments have held that many types of facilities must not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, same sex marriage, gender identity, and other protected classes. This policy articulates the C&MA's sincerely held long-standing beliefs and standards related to family, marriage, and gender roles, and provides guidelines to ensure that the use of church facilities is consistent with the expression of these beliefs. Connecting facility use guidelines to the C&MA's beliefs will help protect the local church from legal liability based upon claims of discrimination against legally protected classes.

Provision of health care plans.

Evangelical Christian churches face increasing pressure to provide health insurance that covers procedures that violate our belief in the sanctity of life. These procedures may include abortion, abortion-inducing drugs and euthanasia. By stating that the church (or other entity) will not, for religious reasons, provide a health care benefit plan that funds these procedures and drugs, the policy protects the church against government requirements to help facilitate acts that violate our biblical beliefs.

- This policy only relates to plans provided by a church (or other entity). The policy does not prohibit participation by church employees in other insurance plans.
- The C&MA health insurance plans are consistent with this policy since they do not provide these procedures or drugs.
- Other than the C&MA plan and some other denominational group plans, very few health insurance plans will be consistent with this policy.

If a church is willing to provide a health plan that covers abortions or abortion-inducing drugs, then the church should delete the second paragraph under the heading *Sanctity of Life*, in Section IV, C.

Modifications.

Any other modifications should be made only after consulting with the Church Ministries office and the C&MA Vice President/General Counsel.

In response to God's calling on their lives, our *representatives* work together to advance our Christian mission. Church *representatives* are responsible for defining, cultivating, leading, and/or representing our Christian community as an expression and exercise of our Christian beliefs. As such, each Church *representative* is an integral part of our community. Accordingly, we expect each representative to comply with the following obligations:

1. *Christian Beliefs*. All *representatives* shall affirm their agreement with the Christian beliefs as expressed in the C&MA Statement of Faith¹ and shall not subscribe to or promote any religious beliefs inconsistent with such beliefs. With respect to other Christian beliefs held by the C&MA, all *representatives* must affirm our belief that their calling to serve in our Christian community requires them to respect such beliefs and to abide by community standards exercising or expressing such beliefs.
2. *Christian Conduct Standards*. All *representatives* shall at all times (both during working and nonworking hours) (i) model our Christian beliefs for others, (ii) perform all of their responsibilities as a service to God, and (iii) endeavor to comply with Biblical standards of conduct exercising or expressing our Christian beliefs, including Christian community standards adopted by the Church from time to time.
3. *Distinctly Christian Activities*. Each *representative* shall be ready, willing, and able to lead or contribute to distinctly Christian activities such as devotional worship or prayer services.

B. Roles and Expectations for *Participants*.

Although non-members, attendees, guests, contractors/vendors, and other program participants do not necessarily represent the Church Christian community, they do contribute to our community, to the experiences of other participants, and to the accomplishment of the Church's mission. Accordingly, we expect participants to respect our beliefs and abide by the Christian community standards applicable to them.

Participants are expected, in the course of their participation in our community, to respect our beliefs, support our mission, and comply with applicable community standards. Depending on their role, they may or may not be required to affirm our Christian beliefs.

C. Standards for Community Activities and Facility Use.

¹ *Representatives* who are formal church members are not required by the Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches to affirm the full Statement of Faith. Formal church members are required to meet the qualifications expressed in Article III, Section 1.

In furtherance of its mission, the Church engages in activities and provides facilities for evangelism, discipleship, Bible studies, worship services, conferences, retreats, education, and other activities. We engage in such activities and use our facilities solely to exercise and express our Christian beliefs and to further our Christian mission or purposes. In furtherance of our purposes, we may provide services or goods to, and may allow use of our facilities by, other groups and persons who are not associated with the Church or the C&MA. But we may prohibit any activity, or any use of Church facilities by another group or person, if we determine that such activity or use either:

- i. expresses a view contrary to our Christian beliefs,
- ii. is inconsistent with any applicable Christian community standards adopted by the Church from time to time, or
- iii. materially undermines our ability to accomplish our mission or act in furtherance of our purposes.

III. Implementation.

A. Compliance with Community Standards.

1. Spiritual Discernment.

The determination as to whether any particular *representative, participant*, activity, or use of Church facilities complies with the applicable standards requires spiritual discernment applied to each particular circumstance and shall be made in the sole discretion of the Church leaders designated by the governing body. With respect to uses by other groups or persons, the Church may consider without limitation both the content of the proposed activities and whether the group or person is generally perceived as advocating views contrary to its Christian beliefs.

2. Noncompliance.

If any Church *representative* or *participant* does not comply with any applicable community standard, such individual shall have an obligation to disclose such noncompliance to the Church. If the Church determines, through such disclosure or otherwise, that a Church *representative* or *participant* is not complying with an applicable community standard, then the Church may, in its sole discretion, determine the impact of any initial noncompliance on the Church's exercise and expression of its Christian beliefs, and whether such individual or group intends or is likely to continue in such noncompliance. Such determinations also require spiritual discernment and shall be made as described above.

The Church may also dismiss such individual from his or her position on the basis that such individual's noncompliance either (i) reflects that the individual

does not affirm the Christian beliefs required for such position, or (ii) undermines the expression and exercise of the Church Christian community. Such action may be taken in accordance with any applicable procedures adopted by the Church, including The Christian and Missionary Alliance Uniform Policy on Discipline, Restoration, and Appeal.

3. Mission-Based Exceptions.

In some situations, the Church may best exercise and express its beliefs and advance its mission through a *representative, participant*, activity, or facility use not in compliance with one or more of the applicable community standards. If the governing body determines, in its sole discretion, that such a situation exists, then the governing body shall have the discretion to authorize an exception to this Policy. Any *representative or participant* granted an exception shall be asked to respect our Christian beliefs, our mission, and our community standards.

B. Delegated Authority.

To exercise or express our Christian beliefs more fully, the governing body may establish additional standards based on our Christian beliefs for the activities and facilities at the Church or for Church *representatives* or other community *participants*.

C. Scope.

The Church may amend this document at any time. This document is not intended to create any express or implied contract of employment or to alter the at-will employment relationship between the Church and its employees.

IV. Additional Standards for Our Community.

In response to current cultural trends, we have determined to articulate more specifically our Christian beliefs and associated community standards on the following subjects.

A. Human Sexuality and Marriage.

1. Our Christian Beliefs.

The Church expressly adopts as its Christian beliefs the Statement on Human Sexuality and the Statement on Marriage-Divorce-Remarriage, as currently stated in the *C&MA Manual*.

2. Standards for Community Activities.

Our beliefs regarding human sexuality and marriage shall apply in all policies and programs in the Church Christian community. Among other things, in our

policies and programs we will recognize only marriages consistent with our Christian beliefs. Any events in Church facilities pertaining to marriage (e.g., weddings, receptions, anniversary celebrations) must involve only marriages consistent with our Christian beliefs. We may designate certain activities, facilities, or rooms, including restrooms and locker rooms, for participation or use by a single sex, and only individuals having the designated sex as determined in accordance with our beliefs may participate in such activities or use such facilities or rooms. Also, no pornographic materials may be present in any of our facilities or activities.

3. Standards for Community Representatives.

We expect all Church *representatives* to live in accordance with our beliefs regarding human sexuality and marriage (which include refraining from sexual relations outside of marriage and avoiding pornography).² Among other things, we expect all *representatives* to avoid circumstances where there is temptation and opportunity to engage in sexual conduct contrary to our beliefs. *Representatives* may be asked to sign a statement affirming their agreement with our beliefs regarding human sexuality and marriage and compliance with these standards.

4. Standards for Community Participants.

We expect all *participants* not to affirm, promote, or engage in sexual relations contrary to our beliefs (and to avoid pornography) in connection with their use of Church facilities or participation in Church activities.

We expect all guest groups to respect our Christian beliefs while participating in our activities or using our facilities. We do not accept guest groups whose primary mission or objectives are to promote, encourage, or support views in conflict with our beliefs, even if that is not the intended purpose of their event. For example, we would not host a Christian group formed to affirm same sex relationships even if the group's event objectives were consistent with our beliefs.

B. Religious Activities.

We engage solely in activities that further our Christian mission or purposes. Because we believe that all such activities are conducted in service to God as means for spiritual growth, we consider these activities to be a form of worship.

We distinguish between exclusively religious activities and integrated religious activities. Exclusively religious activities refer to activities that primarily further only religious purposes, such as devotional worship or Christian education.

² Identifying oneself as having a same sex orientation does not disqualify an individual from serving as a *representative* provided such individual affirms the Christian beliefs and complies with the standards applicable to such individual's position.

Integrated religious activities refer to activities that substantially further both religious and nonreligious purposes. Such activities are often similar to activities conducted by nonreligious organizations and may include certain educational programs, athletic, cultural, humanitarian, and social service activities. We conduct such activities in response to God's calling and in furtherance of and in accordance with our Christian beliefs. In addition, we present our Christian viewpoints in such activities as applicable.

With respect to restrictions that may be imposed on the use of funds, facilities, or other benefits, we shall not agree to any restriction that would preclude us from conducting our integrated religious activities in furtherance of our Christian mission and in accordance with our Christian beliefs. To the extent consistent with this commitment, we may agree not to use designated funds, facilities, or benefits for exclusively religious activities.

C. Sanctity of Life.

The Church expressly adopts as its Christian beliefs the Statement on the Sanctity of Life as currently stated in the *C&MA Manual*.

As dictated by these beliefs, we will not, as an institution, fund abortions in any manner, including through a health care benefit plan that covers drugs used to induce abortions. Any requirement to facilitate abortions by offering such coverage, and any penalty for failing to offer such coverage, would directly and substantially burden and undermine our exercise and expression of our Christian beliefs.

D. Social Media, Political Activity, and Other Public Statements.

In any public forum, including social media, we expect *representatives* to respect our Christian beliefs and not to challenge, disparage, or undermine them. If a *representative* chooses to express his or her disagreement with a particular belief that he or she is not required to affirm, we expect such *representative* to do so in a manner that respects our belief and makes it clear he or she is not expressing the view of the Church.