

Position Statements of the Christian and Missionary Alliance



Adopted and affirmed by Oasis Community Church

Governance Authority On April 11, 2023

**The following statement of the Biblical Character and Standards is
adopted by Oasis Community Church**

Oasis Community Church - Statement of Biblical Character and Standards.

Key Characteristics of the C&MA's Faith Community and Mission.

Oasis Community Church of The Christian and Missionary Alliance (hereafter referred to as "OCC") is a community of faith that exists to exercise and express its biblical beliefs within the broader community of The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). These beliefs are grounded in a shared understanding of Holy Scripture including those beliefs and standards specifically addressed in the Manual of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (Manual).

The C&MA's Biblical Beliefs. OCC is a community of faith based on its and the C&MA's biblical beliefs, which include the following.

1. *Statement of Faith.* The C&MA has adopted the statement of faith set forth in the Manual.
2. *Christian Mission and Values.* OCC directs all of its activities in accordance with the following C&MA mission:
 - We desire to know Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King and to complete His Great Commission. The Alliance will fulfill His Commission through
 - Evangelizing and discipling persons throughout the United States,
 - Incorporating them into Christ-centered, community-focused congregations, and
 - Mobilizing them for active involvement in a global effort designed to plant Great Commission churches among unengaged, unreached and responsive peoples worldwide.

In carrying out this mission, the activities of OCC are conducted in accordance with the following biblical values:

- *Lost people matter to God. He wants them found. Luke 19:10*
- *Prayer is the primary work of the people of God. Philippians 4:6-7*
- *Everything we have belongs to God. We are His stewards. 1 Chronicles 29:14*
- *Knowing and obeying God's Word is fundamental to all true success. Joshua 1:8*
- *Completing the Great Commission will require the mobilization of every fully devoted disciple. Matthew 28:19*
- *Without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we can accomplish nothing. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5*
- *Achieving God's purposes means taking faith-filled risks. This always involves change. Hebrews 11:6*

Representatives and Other Participants

The OCC faith community is represented by all of OCC's officers, directors, employees, licensed workers and volunteer leaders, each of whom serves OCC's mission and is an integral part of the

community (each such person is described for purposes of this Statement only as a representative of OCC). The other community participants, including OCC's members and volunteers, contribute to OCC's faith community, but they do not represent OCC unless they are also employees or leaders or have been designated as such by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority.

Christian Exercise and Expression.

1. *As a Community.* The C&MA believes that the local church is the visible organized expression of the Body of Christ and that the local church finds broader meaning and outreach in fulfilling its biblical responsibilities within the life and witness of the denomination. In addition, those who participate in the life of the C&MA, including OCC's representatives, are following the biblical command to live out their faith in community and association with other believers. Accordingly, OCC is itself an exercise and expression of its biblical beliefs and standards.
2. *Through its Mission Based Activities.* The C&MA believes that all of the activities of OCC, including the responsibilities of every member and employee of OCC, should be rendered in service to God as a form of worship. Therefore, OCC as a community of faith exercises and expresses its biblical beliefs in every activity, action, and responsibility.

Christian Community Standards for Ministry Activities.

General Standards.

OCC shall engage in activities and use its facilities solely to exercise and express the biblical beliefs of OCC and the C&MA and to further the mission of both. In furtherance of this mission, OCC may provide services or goods to, and may allow use of its facilities by, other groups and persons who are not members or employees of OCC. But no activity of OCC, nor any use of OCC's facilities by another group or person, may be conducted or permitted if OCC determines that such activity or use expresses a message of support by OCC for any view contrary to the biblical beliefs of OCC and the C&MA.

Specific Concerns.

For many years the C&MA as a faith community has had concerns with the cultural and legal trends in North America. This resulted in specific statements being adopted by the C&MA over the years to biblically address these cultural concerns. These cultural concerns include but are not limited to divorce, marriage, human sexuality, and sanctity of life. OCC affirms the biblical beliefs and standards expressed in each statement.

- **Marriage and Human Sexuality**

As such, OCC subscribes to the biblical belief that God creates human beings in His image as two distinct genders, male and female, and that the intended gender identity of an individual is determined by such individual's biological sex at birth. OCC applies this belief regarding gender identity in all policies and programs in OCC's faith community. In addition, OCC subscribes to the biblical belief that God has instituted marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. OCC recognizes only such

marriages for all policies and programs in OCC's faith community. Further, OCC subscribes to the biblical belief that sexual desire is rightfully fulfilled only within marriage and that unmarried singles who abstain from sex can be whole, mature persons, as pleasing to God as persons who are faithful in marriage.

- *Sanctity of Life*

Likewise, OCC subscribes to the biblical belief that all life is sacred from conception to death and that individuals are known by God from before the foundation of the world and that human life begins at conception and that death is under the sovereignty of God and not man. OCC accordingly believes that no procedures should be performed for the primary objective of terminating a pregnancy and taking the life of an unborn child (such procedures are referred to herein as abortions) except in rarest of circumstances where other biblical, moral principles prevail, such as where it is medically impossible to save the life of both the mother and the child. Similarly, OCC believes that no medical procedure should be performed that takes the life of an individual prematurely (such procedures are referred to as euthanasia). OCC's beliefs further prohibit paying for or otherwise facilitating such procedures.

As dictated by these beliefs, OCC as an organization shall not fund abortions in any manner, including through a health care benefit plan that covers prescription drugs that induce abortions, except in the foregoing extraordinary circumstances unless in a particular situation (i) any such drug is prescribed and used solely for a non-abortive therapeutic treatment of a covered medical condition or for an abortion in the foregoing extraordinary circumstances and (ii) coverage is approved by the plan's governing body or OCC's appropriate ecclesiastical authority. In addition, OCC shall not participate through its health care benefit plan in a program that uses the plan as a means for providing drugs used to induce abortion, except in the foregoing extraordinary circumstances. Any requirement to facilitate abortions or euthanasia by participating in such a program, and any penalty for failing to participate in such a program, would directly and substantially burden and undermine OCC exercise and expression of its biblical beliefs.

Religious Activities

In conformance with these biblical beliefs and standards, OCC engages solely in activities that further its faith mission. All such activities can and should be vehicles for spiritual growth.

Therefore, OCC considers all of its activities to be a form of religious worship.

OCC distinguishes between exclusive religious activities and integrated religious activities.

Exclusive religious activities include devotional worship services such as chapel services conducted by OCC, and distinctly theological education or pastoral counseling.

Integrated religious activities include activities similar to those conducted by nonreligious organizations for the benefit of society. OCC conducts such activities in furtherance of and in accordance with its biblical beliefs.

With respect to restrictions that may be imposed on the use of funds or other benefits offered to OCC, OCC shall not agree to any restriction that would preclude OCC from conducting its integrated religious activities in furtherance of and in accordance with its religious beliefs. OCC may agree not to use offered funds or benefits for exclusive religious activities.

Implementation.

To the extent the Governing Board determines it to be necessary or advisable to further OCC's mission or to cultivate OCC's faith community, the board may establish additional standards based on Holy Scripture and the beliefs and standards addressed in the Manual for the activities and programs conducted within the faith community or for OCC's representatives or other community participants. The determination as to whether any particular activity or use of OCC's facilities is not permitted under this Policy requires both spiritual discernment and an understanding of C&MA beliefs and standards, which are applied to each particular circumstance. Such determination shall be made in conformance with this discernment and these beliefs and standards in the sole discretion of the spiritual leaders of OCC designated by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority. With respect to uses by other groups or persons, OCC may consider without limitation both the content of the proposed activities and whether the group or person is generally perceived by the public as advocating views contrary to the biblical beliefs of OCC and the C&MA.

Community Standards for representatives of OCC.

Roles and Expectations.

In response to God's calling on their lives, representatives of OCC exercise and express both their own and the C&MA's biblical beliefs and standards by working together to advance OCC's faith mission. Representatives of OCC are responsible for defining, cultivating, leading and/or representing OCC's faith community as an expression and exercise of their and the C&MA's biblical beliefs and standards. Accordingly, each representative of OCC shall be expected to (i) model these biblical beliefs and standards for others, (ii) perform all of their responsibilities as a service to God and (iii) comply with the following obligations:

- 1. Biblical Beliefs. Each representative of OCC shall affirm their agreement with the C&MA's statement of faith and other biblical beliefs and shall not subscribe to or promote any religious beliefs inconsistent with these beliefs.*
- 2. Christian Conduct Standards. Representatives of OCC shall at all times (both during working and nonworking hours) endeavor to conduct themselves in a manner that affirms biblical standards of conduct in accordance with theirs and the C&MA's biblical beliefs.*
- 3. Distinctly Christian Activities. Each representative of OCC shall be ready, willing and able to lead or contribute to distinctly Christian activities such as worship or prayer services.*

Noncompliance by Representatives.

If any representative of OCC does not comply with the obligations set forth above, such representative shall have an obligation to disclose such noncompliance to OCC. OCC may determine whether such representative intends or is likely to continue in such noncompliance. If so, then OCC may dismiss such representative from his or her position on the basis that such representative's noncompliance is inconsistent with and undermines the expression and exercise of OCC faith community. Such action may be taken in accordance with any applicable procedures in the Uniform Policy on Discipline, Restoration and Appeal.

Volunteers and Contract Workers.

Volunteers and contract workers are not considered to be representatives of OCC's faith community unless they are serving in leadership positions. Nevertheless, when volunteers and certain contract workers as determined by OCC, serve with OCC, they shall be required to acknowledge that they understand and agree to support OCC's mission and values. OCC may give preference for such service to volunteers and contract workers who share its biblical beliefs.

(6/21/17)

The following position statements of the Christian and Missionary Alliance on Human Sexuality, Marriage-Divorce-Remarriage, Sanctity of Human Life, are adopted by Oasis Community Church

STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

Section H7 from the
Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 2015 Edition

The basis for this official statement of The Christian and Missionary Alliance is found in Article I of its Statement of Faith:

“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 men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.”

Christian understanding of human identity is grounded in the Word of God. The significance of human sexuality is particularly evident in the account of creation. Human beings, fashioned by God in His own image, are created male and female (Genesis 1:27). This complementary nature of human sexuality is affirmed again in the second chapter of Genesis. Woman is fashioned out of man (Genesis 2:18–24). Thus, from the beginning human sexual identity is reciprocal. That is, one’s own human nature is properly understood in complementary relationship to another who is alike in nature, but opposite sexually. Like the rest of God’s creation, the sexual differences between man and woman are pronounced “very good” (Genesis 1:31). We therefore affirm human sexuality to be a gift of God. By God’s grace, human sexuality both enriches and fulfills our personhood.

Sexuality is an essential attribute of human nature. It is an obviously significant influence in human life, but our Creator did not intend it to be the defining characteristic of humanness. As a result of humankind’s fall from innocence (Genesis 3), the complementary nature of human sexuality, like all other human relationships has been distorted. Adam and Eve’s disobedience did not only lead to death and separation from God, it also alienated human beings from one another. This alienation distorts sexual relationships between men and women. Holy Scripture indicates that human beings are created in the image of God. The essential characteristics of humanness are therefore found in those attributes endowed by God at creation and given by God’s grace as a result of knowing Christ. Paul, the apostle, urged followers of Christ to understand that “there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). The apostle’s words are intended to place human sexuality in a redemptive context. It is of secondary importance to an individual’s relationship to God. That relationship is equally accessible to both sexes through one’s faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. This understanding of human sexuality is reflected in the teaching of Jesus Himself. Our Lord Jesus addressed matters of human sexuality and marriage on several occasions. Jesus clearly taught that love rather than sex is the primary bond in all Christian relationships. Jesus said the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love one’s neighbor (Mark 12:28–30).

Sexual practices that have been divorced from loving, covenantal relationships between men and women pervert God’s intentions and result in sinful, exploitive, and promiscuous behavior that ruptures

relationships between men and women, and erodes the relationship between human beings and their Creator. Humanity's failure to ground sexual identity in God's creative intent and holy character violates Biblical standards of sexual purity.

In Matthew 15:19, Jesus teaches that immoral behavior starts first in the heart and mind. Self-indulgent thoughts of sexual fulfillment outside of God's creative intent constitute inward sins of lust. No sexual act can be proper if it is driven by desires that are contrary to the best interest of another human being or if it treats persons as impersonal objects intended only for personal gratification. Passion aroused by producing or viewing images of a sexual nature is morally unacceptable. We reject the idea that pedophilia, voyeurism, prostitution, or pornography is ever morally justified. We reject all attempts at constructing one's own sexual identity by medically altering the human body, cross dressing, or similarly practicing behaviors characteristic of the opposite sex as morally objectionable and sinful (Deuteronomy 22:5).

Holy Scripture bears witness to God's will regarding human sexuality. Sexual desire is rightfully fulfilled only within the lifelong union of a man and a woman in (holy) matrimony. Unmarried singles who abstain from sex can be whole, mature persons, as pleasing to God as persons who are faithful in marriage. Sexual celibacy is a worthy state for mature men and women (Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 7:1, 8).

Heterosexual marriage is rooted in the order of creation. It is not just a matter of tradition. Marriage is intended to be an enduring covenantal relationship which reflects Christ's own unconditional commitment to the Church (Ephesians 5:25–27). God established marriage as a union of one man and one woman within which it is good, right, and proper to engage in sexual relations. Matrimonial customs may differ from one culture to another but the fundamental divine intent for marriage may not be changed on the basis of mere preference, custom, or culture. The dictates of culture, tradition, or personal preference must be brought into submission to the Word of God. Marriage cannot be redefined at the caprice of public opinion and must not be allowed to shift with the changing tide of cultural mores or social practice.

All sexual relationships outside of marriage are condemned by Holy Scripture. They are therefore never appropriate. This includes all forms of intimate sexual stimulation that excite passion and sexual activity between unmarried individuals (Matthew 5:27–29; Galatians 5:19). Such behavior offends God and often causes physical and emotional pain as well as loss in this life. God's blessing rests on sexual intimacy only when it occurs within the boundaries of marriage. Thus, we do not believe that the church should welcome into its membership any person who willfully refuses to turn away from the sin of living in a sexual relationship outside of marriage (1 Corinthians 5:1–13).

In the New Testament, Jesus confirms the heterosexual creation of human beings: *God made them male and female* (Matthew 19:4). Throughout Scripture heterosexual families consisting of a father, mother, and their children (unless they are unable to bear children) are the norm of society. The New Testament reinforces the teaching of heterosexual love and sexual relations within marriage (Ephesians 5:22–33; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1–5).

Alongside this clear biblical teaching on God's design for heterosexual marriage are found specific instructions that prohibit homosexual conduct, for example: *Do not lie with a man as one lies with a*

woman; that is detestable (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13). Homosexual conduct is declared to be detestable because it is out of harmony with the purpose for which God created human beings.

The New Testament states: *They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion* (Romans 1:25–27). Worshipping the creation more than the Creator not only alienated human beings from God but also distorted their heterosexual identity as created by God. Homosexual conduct gives evidence of the universal human rejection of God’s supreme glory and, like all forms of sexual behavior that violate God’s original design, it is sin.

The New Testament further states: *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God* (1 Corinthians 6:9–10).

The same passage of Scripture strongly affirms the liberating power of the Christian gospel. Sinful men and women may be freed from all former sinful patterns of life, including sexual sin, whether heterosexual or homosexual: *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God* (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Like all other sins, the corruption of sexual sin can be fully forgiven through repentance and faith in Christ’s atoning work even though physical and psychological scars caused by sexual sin cannot always be erased in this life. We grieve with those who suffer hardships caused by sexual immorality, even if it is caused by their sinful acts. We strive to give aid in ways that do not deny personal responsibility for sexual behavior. We believe Christ set an example of loving ministry to those who suffer from the results of their own acts of sin in the example of the woman caught in adultery, “...Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:3–11).

ATTACHMENT B

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE— DIVORCE—REMARRIAGE

Section H2 from the
Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 2015 Edition

PREAMBLE

That the purpose of this statement be clear is imperative to its proper consideration. As an “instructional statement of The Christian and Missionary Alliance,” it is intended as an expositional guideline of common understanding to which the 1977 General Council (Calgary, Alberta, Canada) could subscribe as a basis on which to agree or disagree with grace and forbearance.

For some, the interpretation may be too broad and for others, too confining. But a common standard is needed in order to deal adequately with the issues of divorce and remarriage. The position set forth here neither promotes divorce nor weakens the scriptural stance represented in former legislation. The Commission on Divorce Study endeavored neither to take from nor to add to scriptural teaching on divorce.

INSTRUCTIONAL STATEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE*

1. Introduction.

- a. More and more marriages are failing; divorces and remarriages are becoming increasingly common. If couples who live together without the benefit of a registered marriage contract and then separate are counted, half the marriages that take place today in North America fail.
- b. Yet marriage is an essential, sacred institution, a cornerstone of society. It was established by God Himself when the Lord said, *...It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him* (Genesis 2:18), and marriage has enjoyed divine sanction and blessing across the centuries. Ephesians 5 reveals the sacredness of marriage when the union between Christ and the Church is used to illustrate the husband-wife relationship.
- c. Therefore, the Church today must do everything in its power to encourage and maintain the institution of marriage and on God-given grounds. Some today would set standards for conduct in this area other than by the authority of the Word of God. Among even those who seek to hold to biblical authority are divergent opinions, particularly with respect to the right of divorced persons to remarry. It seems imperative, therefore, that The Christian and Missionary Alliance set forth what we understand to be the scriptural teaching on these subjects.

- d. This statement is designed not to answer all questions and cover all situations but to provide guidelines from which can be drawn scriptural applications to varying situations. This has been written with the social conditions of North America in view. Consequently, some adaption may be necessary in countries overseas because of special social situations.

2. Marriage.

- a. God instituted marriage as an honorable estate (Hebrews 13:4) for the blessing of companionship (Genesis 2:18) and as a continuation of the divine work of creation in the history of the human race (Genesis 4:1). Marriage is not a requirement for perfection of personhood nor is it a necessity for fulfillment in God's highest purpose. Marriage may, in fact, hamper a person's unconditional readiness for the call of God, and there are those who have the gift of refraining from marriage (Matthew 19:12, 1 Corinthians 7:7).
- b. God intended marriage to be a monogamous, lifelong union as clearly implied in Genesis 2:24, *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* Jesus recalled this original order of creation to overthrow the lax interpretation and practice of the Mosaic law (Mark 10:6ff). Although polygamy was sometimes practiced in Old Testament times, the Bible makes clear that God intended marriage to exist between one man and one woman for as long as both of them remain alive. In Romans 7:2 the apostle Paul wrote, *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband* (also 1 Corinthians 7:39).
- c. The strict and lofty terms with which the marriage bond is described in the New Testament has its primary focus on human fellowship and the family. For the Christian the basis of all marital love is the love of Christ for the Church (Ephesians 5:31ff). Marriage is constituted first in mutual covenant. Marriage is a solemn, binding agreement entered into before God and man (Malachi 2:14). Ezekiel 16:8 uses marriage to illustrate the relationship between God and Israel and speaks of this relationship as a covenant entered into on the basis of swearing or an oath or a pledge. Jesus, in John 2, sanctioned by His presence a marriage being recognized and solemnized by a public celebration. Therefore, men and women should enter marriage with a legal contract and pledged vows, preferably under the administration of a Christian minister, not just by deciding to start to live together.
- d. Marriage is a physical union. This is clearly set forth by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:16ff. Marriage is designed to be a unity of flesh and spirit and represents the wholeness of that unity (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5). In 2 Corinthians 12:19–21 the apostle Paul warns the Corinthian church that impenitence of those who committed sexual immorality would necessitate his intervention.
- e. In no case ought any person to enter into any so-called "marriage" with a person of the same sex. Homosexual unions are specifically forbidden in Scripture and are described

as manifestations of the basest forms of sinful conduct which degrade human dignity and desecrate God's creational design (Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:26–27, 32, 1 Corinthians 6:9).

- f. A Christian should not marry a person who does not know Christ as personal Savior. 2 Corinthians 6:14 is explicit, *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers....* The final few words of 1 Corinthians 7:39 suggest the same standard; widows who remarry are told to do so *only in the Lord*. Love for Christ is never to have second place (Matthew 6:33).

3. Divorce.

- a. Divorce is a departure from the purposes of God. While in the Old Testament divorce was allowed and was apparently easily secured. This, like polygamy, was contrary to God's highest intentions. Jesus explained that provisions for divorce in the Old Testament were an accommodation to "the hardness" of people's hearts and a necessary evil (Matthew 19:8). The prophet Malachi declared, *For I hate divorce, says the Lord the God of Israel...* (Malachi 2:16, RSV). Jesus said, *What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder* (Matthew 19:6, also Mark 10:6–9). The Church, therefore, should seek always to discourage divorce as a solution to marital problems. The Bible teaches that even when a Christian is married to a nonbeliever, the Christian should continue to live with his/her mate if at all possible (1 Corinthians 7:12–13).
- b. While divorce is always contrary to God's intentions, there are certain circumstances when it is permitted. Jesus said in Matthew 5:32 and again in Matthew 19:9 that a person is not to divorce his/her mate except for the cause of fornication. The Greek word used for "fornication" refers to habitual sexual immorality for which the synonym "whoredom" may be used, implying all kinds of immorality, including adultery which desecrates the marriage relationship—a view generally accepted by Greek scholars.
- c. The absence of this allowance in Mark 10:6–12 and Luke 16:18 does not set aside the practical conditions for carrying out the Mosaic practice of divorce in the new age Christ establishes. But He makes a sharper interpretation which handles the problem of divorce as a lesser evil to the continuation of an impossible situation. Divorce is expressly denied for the immediate purpose of marrying someone else (Mark 10:11–12). It is incumbent, therefore, that a believer entertain divorce only as a last resort and because of violations through fornication—never as a reason to marry someone else. When one partner of a divorce has become involved in adultery, the offended mate is permitted, though not required, to get a divorce. If an unsaved husband/wife refuses to continue to live with his/her mate and departs, the believer may agree to this separation. *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases...* (1 Corinthians 7:15). Such separations may result in divorce, and in that event the Christian is guilty of no wrong.

4. Remarriage.

- a. The remarriage of persons who have been divorced is permitted by Scripture under certain circumstances. If, after being divorced, one of the original marriage partners dies, the remaining partner is free to remarry. Romans 7:2 and 1 Corinthians 7:39 make clear that death dissolves the marriage relationship.
- b. When an adulterous relationship has brought about a divorce, the party that is innocent of adultery has a right to remarry. The words of Jesus, ... *Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication*, implies the right of remarriage. When He adds, ... *And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced (the guilty party) committeth adultery* (Matthew 5:32), the right to marry anyone guilty of adultery is denied and also to marry anyone who obtained divorce for the express purpose of remarriage (Mark 10:11–12).
- c. The consistency between the Old Testament and the New Testament is recognized as Jesus interpreted it. The passage in Deuteronomy from which Jesus quoted in Matthew 5:31 and Mark 10:2–12 indicates that the “putting away” of a wife dissolves the marriage and allows remarriage. Jesus did not change the nature of divorce as dissolving marriage and permitting remarriage; He simply rejected all rationalization and excuse for divorce and made clear that only the innocent party whose former marriage was revoked by divorce could remarry without guilt.
- d. According to the teaching of 1 Corinthians 7, which permits divorce when an unbelieving husband/wife of a believer “departs” (Section 3c), remarriage on grounds of desertion alone is not permitted according to verse 11, *But, and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*” In other words, if the unbelieving, deserting party is not deceased and does not remarry, neither should the one who has been deserted remarry.
- e. When two unbelievers have been divorced and one is subsequently converted and neither has remarried, the Christian should attempt to restore the marriage. If the non-Christian refuses, this makes the marriage the same as the kind described in 1 Corinthians 7:15.
- f. If a person is divorced on other than the above scriptural grounds and his/her former partner remarries, that partner by remarrying has, according to scriptural standards (Matthew 5:32, 19:9), committed adultery and has dissolved the original relationship.
- g. Remarriage is never commanded; it is in some cases only permitted. Divorced persons who have scriptural grounds for remarriage should enter into such remarriage only with the greatest caution. Seldom is there a marriage failure for any cause in which one of the partners is “completely innocent.” The applicant for remarriage should demonstrate an attitude of repentance for any part he/she may have had in the original failure. He/she should receive counseling from the church so as to avoid repeating destructive attitudes and actions.

- h. Persons who remarry after being divorced on other than scriptural grounds are guilty before God of adultery. Jesus said in Matthew 5:32, *...Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.* Such marriages should not be performed by a Christian clergyman.
- i. Persons who have been divorced on other than scriptural grounds who subsequently become Christians are not absolved from the necessity to remain unmarried by having become Christians. While it is true that we are made new creatures in Christ, we continue to bear legal and moral responsibilities that existed before conversion. A person, for example, that contracted a debt as a non-Christian is not absolved of an obligation to pay that debt by becoming a believer. A man who brought children into this world as a non-Christian must still provide for those children after his conversion. A man who contracted a marriage while a non-Christian must honor the terms of that marriage contract even after he is in Christ.
- j. Persons who were divorced and remarried without scriptural grounds prior to conversion should not feel obligated after conversion to withdraw from the subsequent marriage. The remarriage that was entered into wrongly constituted an act of adultery that broke the former marriage.

With his/her former marriage having been dissolved, the remarried person is responsible to be faithful to his/her new contract. Having broken the former marriage, he/she is “living in adultery only” if he/she is unfaithful to his/her present marriage contract.

- k. Persons who are divorced or divorced and remarried on scriptural grounds are entitled to the full privileges of fellowship and membership in the church. A believer who was divorced or divorced and remarried on other than scriptural grounds while still a nonbeliever should likewise be received into full Christian fellowship. The grace of God in Christ forgives all sin; the person in Christ is a new creation.
- l. Discretion, however, must be exercised in the choice of divorced and remarried persons for places of leadership in the church. While all believers are equal members of the body of Christ, not all members are qualified equally for every office in the church. The offices of elder (spiritual leader) and deacon (business leader) in the church are to be filled by those of high moral and spiritual qualifications, whose pattern of exemplary Christian living is so established that it may be followed.
- m. A believer who knowingly secures a divorce on other than scriptural grounds, or a believer who knowingly marries someone who was divorced on other than scriptural grounds, or a believer whose divorce was granted on other than scriptural grounds and who remarries should be disciplined by the church and be granted the full privileges of Christian fellowship only after a demonstration of genuine repentance for deliberate departure from scriptural standards.

**Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations throughout this section are from the King James Version of the Bible.*

STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

Historical Context

At the 1981 General Council in Anaheim, California, the members of The Christian and Missionary Alliance adopted a Statement on Abortion. That Statement, representing the consensus of the denomination, affirmed the historic Christian conviction that life begins at conception. It expressed opposition to abortion-on-demand as a violation of human dignity and the moral law of God. An exception was made only when the life of the mother was threatened. The Statement on Abortion grounded opposition to abortion-on-demand upon the Bible¹.

The Word of God teaches that each individual is known by God from before the foundation of the world (Jeremiah 1:4–5, Psalm 139:13–17). Our Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent God has pronounced His blessing upon the life of a child, according to Psalm 127:3–5. Since all life exists for God’s purposes and all human lives are equally sacred, it is our belief that the life of the unborn child is blessed of God and must be preserved and nurtured. The Christian and Missionary Alliance, therefore, is opposed to induced abortion.

Since that time, debate in the United States about the value of human life has been unabated. The divide between those who hold human life to be sacred and those who value human life on the grounds of function or material and physical attributes has deepened. Consequently, additional threats to the dignity and inviolability of human life have arisen. Arguments about the intrinsic value of human life now encompass euthanasia and questions concerning both self-inflicted and assisted suicide. Certain Utilitarian philosophers have openly justified killing newborn children who are unwanted or disadvantaged. In the face of increasing secular materialism, militant atheism, and the moral relativism that accompanies these false views of human existence, it is now necessary for Christians who are committed to the authority of God’s Word and the truth of the gospel to reaffirm the sacredness and value of human life. This affirmation is based upon the clear testimony of Holy Scripture. Furthermore, it is consistent with two millennia of Christian witness².

Biblical Foundations

God’s Word reveals that He is Creator of all. The material universe did not come into being by itself. God spoke it into existence. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1). Therefore, all that exists has its origin in God’s creative act. He brought into being both plant and animal life. Lastly, God created human beings in His own image, thus

¹ All references to the Word of God, Scriptures or the Bible in this document are as defined in the Statement of Faith of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, section 1.4.

² See, e.g., Tertullian, *De Anima, Apologia*; John Chrysostom, *Homily 24*; Augustine, *De Nube et Concupiscentia, Sermon 126*; Barnabas, *Letter*.

differentiating humankind from the rest of the animal kingdom. *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them* (Genesis 1:27). To humans alone God has given will, rationality, emotions, soul, and spirit by which men and women are able to maintain a personal relationship with their Creator. All human beings, regardless of race, gender, age, mental capacity or physical condition, born or unborn, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, young or old, reflect God's image.

When God infused spiritual life into Adam, He imparted something infinitely greater than material existence. Holy Scripture affirms a dimension to human life that transcends chemical processes, and neurological functions. Nothing else in all of the material creation shares this spiritual dimension. Men and women were created with imperishable souls to fellowship with God throughout eternity. The value of human life is infinitely greater than the relative worth currently ascribed to it by a secular society. Human life has intrinsic value because of its worth to God. Contrary to widespread contemporary belief and materialistic views, men and women do not own themselves. Illusions of personal sovereignty, human autonomy, and unfettered choice outside the parameters of God's law are false. They inevitably lead to bondage, purposelessness, and separation from the Creator.

The value of human life should have even greater significance for those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ. With reference to those in the Old Testament who entered into covenant relationship with Him, God said, *Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession; for all the earth belongs to me. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation . . .* (Exodus 19:5). That same promise is echoed in the New Covenant. Those who likewise have entered into a covenant relationship with God through faith in Christ are God's particular possession: *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light* (1 Peter 2:9). *Do you not know, Scripture says, that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price* (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Human life is sacred because ultimately it belongs to God. Human beings were created to reflect His glory. It is His by right of creation and, for those who have professed faith in Christ's sacrificial death and Resurrection, by virtue of redemption. No greater value than this can be assigned to human existence. The incarnation of God's own Son fully affirms the sacredness of human life. Jesus took upon Himself the form of a servant. He was born in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:7). He willingly forfeited His life to redeem men and women from the consequences of sin and death. Thus, God has confirmed the sacredness of human life in both the birth and death of His Son.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance affirms the sanctity of human life upon these biblical foundations. Conclusions regarding abortion-on-demand, euthanasia, and suicide, whether self-inflicted or assisted, are made only after considering these revealed truths.

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Beginning-of-Life Issues

The Christian and Missionary Alliance affirms the unique and sacred personhood of every human, including the unborn, on the evidence of Scripture. God told Jeremiah, *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart . . .* (Jeremiah 1:5). King David wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: *My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth; Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be* (Psalm 139:15–16). Upon such biblical grounds, we hold the intentional destruction of a human embryo for purposes of contraception, or for stem-cell research, whether by surgical abortion or use of drugs or devices intended to terminate unborn life or prevent its implantation and growth following conception, to be immoral. Abortion-on-demand must be opposed as a violation of human dignity and a moral evil precisely because it forcibly terminates the life of a human being fashioned in God’s image. Abortion may be an option only in the rarest instances, when it is impossible to save the life of both the mother and the unborn child.

End-of-Life Issues

Since human life is a sacred gift from God, the termination of life by euthanasia, suicide, or assisted suicide is morally and biblically unacceptable.

Euthanasia (“mercy killing”) is a deliberate act of killing somebody diagnosed with an incurable illness or injury. The decision to remove life support from a terminally ill patient is not generally understood as such an act. Euthanasia and removing life support are inherently different. The first is the deliberate act of ending life; the second is not artificially extending life. Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome may be legitimate. Through advancements in medical technology, doctors are now able to extend the life of patients by artificial means. The fact that such contrived means are available does not create a moral imperative to extend life indefinitely. Family members are often required to make decisions whether to prolong the life of a loved one. These decisions are difficult ones to make. They require careful reflection upon Scripture as well as consultation with pastors, medical personnel, and on occasion, legal experts.

God asserts His sovereignty over all human life in Deuteronomy 32:39: *See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life . . .* It is He who determines the length of our lives (Psalm 139:16). For everyone who trusts in the sacrificial death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, willingness to submit to God’s timing for death is accompanied by a joyful recognition that physical death is not the end of life. It is a transition from living on earth to living in glory. Being absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6– 8).

Jesus’ command to love others and to care for those who are suffering does not allow followers of Christ to be unconcerned or cavalier about those who are experiencing suffering and misery. Compassion for those who suffer infirmity or illness compels believers to strive for the alleviation of

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their pain, as does the gospel itself. James instructs believers both to anoint and pray for those who are ill and to care for their physical need (James 5:14–15). However, in doing so, Christians are to acknowledge the spiritual dimension of human life, recognizing that God can and may use suffering for an ultimate spiritual benefit, and through that, for His own glory. As the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal* (2 Corinthians 4:16–18).

Application

By affirming the value and sacredness of human life, we, the members of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, assert that people do matter to God. Every human being, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, physical abilities, mental competence, or any other condition of life, has been created in His image, reflects His glory, and is loved by Him. Because human life is sacred, we strive to be intentional agents of God’s love and compassion for those who find themselves in difficult, unwanted circumstances as well as those who suffer pain as a result of illness, injury, injustice, or oppression. We shall strive to alleviate these conditions wherever possible, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to share God’s invitation to find meaning and purpose in life through a personal relationship with Him by faith in Jesus Christ. We renew our commitment to proclaim the gospel to those who have not yet responded to Christ’s work and to discover the full meaning of the sanctity of life as we fellowship with all the redeemed in the praise and worship of God forever.