

E8

UNIFORM POLICY ON DISCIPLINE, RESTORATION, AND APPEAL

PREAMBLE

Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the church is responsible. The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) believes the Scriptures establish standards of conduct and belief by which members of a C&MA church and individuals serving Christ through licensed ministry within the C&MA must live. The goals of discipline are to honor God; to protect the purity of the Church; to guard other Christians from being tempted, misled, divided, or otherwise harmed; and to bring fallen Christians to repentance. Discipline is administered to achieve restoration, while also providing for the spiritual welfare of the local church. Discipline is to be corrective and redemptive. It is to be exercised with mercy, grace, and forgiveness. However, restoration to fellowship with Christ and His Church does not necessarily result in a reinstatement of credentials for licensed ministry with the C&MA or a return to a position of leadership in the local church.

The Uniform Policy on Discipline, Restoration, and Appeal (Policy) and the disciplinary proceedings are ecclesiastical in nature, founded on the most sacred teachings of the Christian faith. The Policy and proceedings seek to apply Scriptural teachings concerning conduct and belief to persons holding positions of authority and leadership within the C&MA and to regulate the relationships between persons in the Christian Church. In addition, they seek to regulate the behavior and belief of members of C&MA churches who, by their membership, have submitted to the authority and discipline of the church. Unless otherwise provided for in the Policy, in a case of disagreement or dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the Policy, the jurisdiction to decide such matters lies solely with the C&MA National Office (National Office). As stated before, the Policy and its proceedings, including any decisions related to its interpretation or application, are ecclesiastical in nature and as such, any appeal to or other action before a court or civil tribunal is not permitted.

The Policy is not intended to create a legally enforceable contract or promise. The Board of Directors of the C&MA reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to modify the Policy at any time and for any reason.

I. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR DISCIPLINE

- A. **Growth in Faith.** Discipline serves to encourage growth and development in faith. *Rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in faith . . .* (Titus 1:13).
- B. **Redemption and Restoration.** Discipline serves to spiritually redeem and restore those who have fallen into immoral or otherwise unChrist-like ways. *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently* (Galatians 6:1). *If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over . . .* (Matthew 18:15).
- C. **Bearing Another's Burden.** Discipline benefits the church because it teaches the church to be redemptive by carrying the burden of seeking to restore fallen believers. *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ* (Galatians 6:2).
- D. **Forgiveness, Comfort, Love.** Discipline involves compassion, even for those who have committed sinful acts and espoused beliefs contrary to Scripture. . . . *You ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow* (2 Corinthians 2:5-7).
- E. **Warning to the Divisive.** Discipline serves to deter and instruct against beliefs and conduct contrary to Scripture. *Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him* (Titus 3:10).
- F. **Judgment and Expulsion.** Discipline may lead to judgment, including expulsion from the church. . . . *Are you not to judge those inside (the church)? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you* (1 Corinthians 5:12, 13).

II. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- A. **Preliminary Policy Considerations.**¹ Discipline always begins as a personal matter. As each believer studies God's Word, seeks him in prayer, and draws upon his grace, he/she is enabled by the Holy Spirit to identify and change sinful habits and grow in godliness. *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline* (2 Timothy 1:7). However, believers are sometimes blind to sins or they become so tangled in them that they cannot get free. This is why the Bible says, *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently* (Galatians 6:1).

¹Adapted from Peacemaker® Ministries' *Relational Commitments* booklet. Used by permission.

In obedience to this command, the C&MA seeks to cultivate a redemptive atmosphere in which believers are committed to giving and receiving loving correction whenever sin seems too serious to overlook (Proverbs 19:11).

In Matthew 18:15-20 Jesus outlines the steps which should be taken to resolve conflict and exercise redemptive and restorative discipline in the church. The process begins with private conversation. However, if private conversation fails to lead a person to repentance, Jesus commands that we ask other believers to become involved in these conversations. *If he will not listen, Jesus said, take one or two others along* (Matthew 18:16). When personal conversations fail to resolve the matter, Jesus instructs us to “tell it to the church.” This signals a move to more specifically defined disciplinary procedures outlined in this document.

The C&MA strongly encourages the mediation of personal conflicts applying biblical peacemaking principles whenever possible and appropriate. It is generally appropriate when dealing with the basis for discipline set out in Section II (E) (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), and (10) below and may be appropriate in matters arising in other subsections, as well, but this must be decided on a case-by-case basis based on the facts present. Within the polity of the C&MA, we have purposed to fulfill Jesus’ instructions to exercise church discipline by providing an orderly procedure by which the appropriate ecclesiastical authority may be informed and respond. These disciplinary Policies and Procedures are implemented only after other appropriate steps have proven ineffective. They also recognize that some sins are of a public nature and cannot be addressed with personal conversation alone.

If an offense is not likely to cause imminent harm to others or to the testimony of Christ, and if the offense is not of such a nature that it would ordinarily disqualify a person from positions of leadership in the church, the proper ecclesiastical authority may choose to confront an individual entrapped by sin privately to establish the facts and encourage repentance of any sin discovered. If the individual acknowledges his/her sin and repents, the matter may end there, unless a confession to additional people and public or private restitution is needed. In such cases, and when individuals have confessed of their own accord, the proper ecclesiastical authorities may, after an informal investigation, determine the extent and nature of disciplinary actions which may be imposed without a formal disciplinary hearing.

If an individual is unwilling to acknowledge or repent of sin, or if an offense is likely to harm others or to lead them into sin, cause division or disruption within the church, or compromise the public testimony of Christ and the C&MA, the proper church authority shall initiate formal disciplinary procedures as determined by this Policy.

- B. **Persons Subject to Discipline.** This Policy applies to all workers licensed within the C&MA as defined by the Constitution and Bylaws, policies, and regulations of the C&MA; non-licensed international workers; certified non-clergy professionals; officers, employees, and elected personnel of the national C&MA entity, district entity, and church entity; and all members of C&MA churches.
- C. **Submission of a Charge.** The disciplinary process is initiated when a formal charge of sinful conduct is submitted to the appropriate ecclesiastical authority either in person or by certified mail. When the charge is submitted verbally, the nature of the offense shall be recorded in writing and signed by the person(s) making the accusation. Charges which are submitted anonymously shall not be entertained.

A charge may be submitted by the ecclesiastical authority (as defined below) of any entity within the C&MA, such as the denomination, an international ministry location, a U.S. district, a U.S. church, and an overseas national church through its national president. A charge may also be submitted by any two licensed workers within the C&MA or any two individual members of a U.S. C&MA church as long as the licensed workers or individuals are not members of the same immediate family. (Two persons are in the same immediate family if their relationship is one of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, or grandparent and grandchild.) In the case of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and/or sexual assault, or child/vulnerable adult abuse, any one person, whether or not part of the C&MA, may submit the charge. Any person(s) making false statements in submitting a charge or providing false information in a disciplinary proceeding may be subject to discipline or other actions at the discretion of the appropriate ecclesiastical authority.

- D. **Ecclesiastical Authority.** Disciplinary proceedings will be initiated and administered by one of the following ecclesiastical authorities:
1. If the charge relates to a U.S. based licensed worker or certified non-clergy professional, the ecclesiastical authority will be the person who licensed/certified the individual. This is normally the superintendent of the district in which the individual serves. The elders of the local church may not conduct disciplinary procedures against a licensed worker. Such discipline, when needed will be conducted under the supervision of the district superintendent.
 2. If the charge relates to an international worker:
 - a. Presently serving at an international ministry location, the ecclesiastical authority will be determined by the vice president for

Alliance Missions, or his designee, in consultation with the specialized structure's leadership.

- b. In the United States whether on home assignment, leave of absence, or retired, the ecclesiastical authority will be the National Office.
3. If the charge relates to an employee of the U.S. National Office or any district office, the ecclesiastical authority will be the "president" of the entity. The district superintendent is the legal "president" of the district. The ministry location leader is the legal "president" of the international ministry location.
 4. If the charge relates to a member or unlicensed employee of a local C&MA church (excluding licensed worker or certified non-clergy personnel), the ecclesiastical authority will be the Board of Elders who shall act in consultation with the superintendent of the district in which the church is located. Note: The chairman of the Board of Elders is usually the lead pastor unless he has chosen a lay elder to assume the position.
- E. **Basis of Discipline.** Matters that give rise to discipline include but are not limited to:
1. Holding to and/or promulgating doctrines contrary to the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith as outlined in the C&MA Statement of Faith.
 2. Defiance or failure to submit to constituted authority as defined by the Board of Directors of the C&MA.
 3. Moral failure involving sexual misconduct including abuse of a child or vulnerable adult.
 4. Moral and ethical failure other than sexual misconduct, including spiritual abuse.
 5. Theft, misappropriation of funds or property, and other financial transgressions.
 6. Dishonesty, fraud, perjury, and other misrepresentations.
 7. Spreading false rumors about another.
 8. Causing dissension or division within the church.
 9. Violence or abuse directed toward others, especially a child or vulnerable adult.

10. Sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and/or sexual assault² toward an adult.
11. Interference in the current ministry of a church by a former pastor or former member provided the former member is an active member of another Alliance church.
12. Judgment of guilty by a civil or criminal court of law, excluding minor traffic violations.

III. GENERAL PROCEDURES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- A. **Investigators and Committee Members.** Investigators and members of the Discipline Committee will be persons respected for their integrity, spiritual stature, capability of communicating loving concern, and lack of bias in the case at hand (Galatians 6:1-2). A member of the Sensitive Issues Consultative Group or another qualified professional may be requested to consult with any committee in the disciplinary process at the discretion of the proper ecclesiastical authority.

In keeping with the Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches (Article X, Section 1), elders shall be chosen to serve as the Discipline Committee for all matters relating to the members of the church. At their discretion, the Board of Elders may appoint other spiritually qualified members of the church to act as Investigators on their behalf. In developing churches without an elected Board of Elders, the pastor and one other member appointed by the district superintendent may serve as Investigators. When required to assure objectivity in an investigation or to properly constitute either a Committee on Investigation or a Discipline Committee when it is impossible to select properly qualified persons from within a local church, the district superintendent may appoint suitable pastors and/or elders from other district congregations to conduct all proceedings.

In the case of a charge against an international worker presently serving at an international ministry location, the Field Leadership Team (FLT) shall constitute the Discipline Committee. In the absence of a FLT, the Discipline Committee shall be appointed by either the regional director or the leadership of the appropriate specialized structure.

- B. **Tone of Discipline Procedures.** Disciplinary proceedings will be conducted with compassion for all affected and "in the spirit of meekness." While it is

² Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcomed advances, requests for sexual favors, use of position to elicit sexual activities, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Abuse is any sexual activity without consent or inflicted upon someone incapable of giving consent. It may involve coercion, manipulation, and/or forced sexual contact.

Sexual Assault is forced sexual activity, usually immediate, of short duration, or infrequent.

necessary to ask difficult questions, investigators and Committee members must set aside personal feelings about the individuals involved, focus on the evidence gathered and presented, seek guidance in the Scriptures and through prayer, and speak the truth in love.

- C. **Confidentiality and Disclosure.** Disciplinary proceedings will be conducted with confidentiality in all aspects of the proceedings; however, there is no guarantee of confidentiality within disciplinary proceedings for any participant. It may be necessary to disclose the facts and circumstances of the charge, including the identities of the accused person(s) and those submitting the charge, in connection with investigating and remedying the charge and considering and carrying out possible restoration. In addition, the findings and conclusions of the disciplinary proceeding may be announced to appropriate parties who were an integral part of the proceedings, affected members of the church congregation, and licensed workers associated with the body that originally licensed the charged worker, and an overseas national church through its president. In the case of a finding of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult, disclosure shall be made to local authorities as required by law.

If the investigator or a member of the Discipline Committee is contacted by the press, law enforcement authorities, attorney or other individual associated with civil/criminal proceedings, or other persons not involved with the disciplinary proceedings but seeking information, the ecclesiastical authority responsible for the case will be contacted immediately. No information may be disclosed without the permission of the appropriate authority unless such disclosure is required by law.

The findings, conclusions, and records of the disciplinary proceedings may be communicated to churches and entities within the C&MA for decisions concerning employment, volunteer service, ministry work, church membership, and licensed worker's status. A record of the findings and conclusions will be entered in the licensed worker file and may be conveyed with the file if the licensed worker seeks to transfer from one C&MA organization to another. In like manner, the record of a lay member may be transferred to another Alliance entity when determined appropriate by the ecclesiastical authority who conducted the disciplinary proceeding. Information may be transmitted even after restoration to the individual's former position or status.

The C&MA and its ecclesiastical authorities reserve the right, within their discretion, to disclose any information to outside parties as they determine appropriate under the circumstances.

- D. **Relationship to Employment.** In the case of an individual employed by a C&MA entity or by a district or church entity (referred to herein as Employing

Entity), information presented in the disciplinary proceeding may be conveyed to the supervisor(s) of the employee and may affect the employment relationship independent of the disciplinary proceeding. Also, the information may form the basis for a charge or complaint under another C&MA policy or regulation.

An individual subject to a charge or disciplinary proceeding may be immediately suspended from employment or public ministry, or subject to other personnel action as determined by the Employing Entity (which in some cases may be the ecclesiastical authority).

This Policy is not intended to create an expressed or implied contract of employment, to require the procedures of this Policy be followed before any action is taken, or to otherwise modify the at-will employment relationship which may exist between the employee and the Employing Entity.

- E. **Suspension of Public Ministry.** The ecclesiastical authority will have the authority to suspend the public ministry of any licensed/certified/international worker who is the subject of a charge or disciplinary proceeding. For a district worker, this action will be reported immediately to the Licensing, Ordination, and Consecration Council and to the District Executive Committee. For an international worker, this action will be reported to the Discipline Committee, Regional Director, and National Office.
- F. **Required Reporting.** At first opportunity the following should be notified of substantiated, or in the case of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and/or sexual assault, plausible charges:
- a. The district office should be informed concerning a local church member;
 - b. The National Office should be informed concerning a district licensed official worker; and
 - c. The regional director should be informed concerning an international worker presently on an international ministry location along with a preliminary written report.
 - d. When the charge is one of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult:
 - i. The ecclesiastical authority should be notified within 24 hours or as soon as reasonably possible; and
 - ii. Local authorities should be notified as required by local law.
- G. **Non-Retaliation.** Anyone who files a complaint or who participates in a disciplinary procedure shall be free from harassment or retaliation because of filing or participating in the procedure.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

- A. **Inquiry.** Reports or complaints of alleged violations (see Section II, D) or confessions by church members and/or licensed workers will be subject to a preliminary inquiry by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority, or his designee, to determine whether the charges have been properly brought, as outlined below.

When circumstances warrant, the ecclesiastical authority may, with the approval of the District Executive Committee, suspend the right of any licensed worker subject to disciplinary proceedings to minister publicly, pending the completion of the disciplinary process. When the accused is a member of the church, the ecclesiastical authority may, with the approval of the elders of the local church, suspend the right of the accused to exercise the prerogatives of membership, including removal from lay ministry in the local church pending the completion of the disciplinary process.

1. **Interview with Complainant(s).** The person(s) who brought the charge of sinful conduct should be interviewed to ascertain the facts and to clarify any portions of the charge. An advocate to provide guidance and counsel to the Complainant may be included in any interview, and the Complainant will be provided a written copy of the charge once it is drafted.
2. **Interview with the Accused.** The person(s) accused of a disciplinary offense should be interviewed regarding the charges. Prior to the interview, the accused person(s) may be provided with a written copy of the charge and informed of the right to submit a written response to the charge. An advocate may be appointed by the proper ecclesiastical authority to provide guidance and counsel to the accused person(s) once he/she has received a copy of the charges.

No statement or action by the Accused shall terminate the disciplinary process, including an oral statement of confession, a written or oral statement of intent to resign one's ministry, return credentials as a licensed worker and/or resign membership in the C&MA, or an oral decision to immediately resign one's ministry, return credentials and/or membership in the C&MA. The statement or action will be noted by the Investigator(s) and recorded by the ecclesiastical authority. However, the ecclesiastical authority shall continue the investigation process as outlined herein with or without the cooperation of the Accused. A resignation from membership, return of license to minister in the C&MA, or resignation from one's place of ministry while a disciplinary action is pending shall not be given effect until the church has fulfilled its God-given responsibility to encourage repentance, attempt the restoration of the accused person(s), and bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion.

3. **Proper Submission of Charge.** If it is determined that the charge was submitted properly under this Policy, the ecclesiastical authority will proceed with a formal investigation as outlined below. If it is determined the charge was not submitted properly, the charge will be dismissed and all involved personnel notified. A charge is not properly submitted if it is not a basis for discipline, if the accused is not subject to discipline, or if the charging party(ies) has no standing to submit a charge.
4. **Rights of Ecclesiastical Authority.** The ecclesiastical authority, at its sole discretion, may dismiss or delay the formal investigation of a charge relating to a private dispute regarding matters not normally considered a basis for discipline. In such instances the ecclesiastical authority will provide instructions on resolving the matters according to Matthew 18:15-16 (see "Preliminary Considerations" above).

When circumstances warrant, the ecclesiastical authority may suspend the right of any licensed/certified/international worker subject to disciplinary proceedings to minister publicly, pending the completion of the disciplinary process. When the accused is a member of the church, the ecclesiastical authority may, with the approval of the elders of the local church, suspend the right of the accused to exercise the prerogatives of membership, including removal from lay ministry in the local church pending the completion of the disciplinary process.

5. **Request for Review.** If a charge is dismissed, the individual(s) who brought the charge may request review of the decision to dismiss the matter as outlined in Section X below.
- B. **Investigation.** When warranted, the appropriate ecclesiastical authority will appoint two or more persons (at the local church, elders) to conduct an investigation of the charge. The lead pastor or another member of the pastoral staff of the church may be appointed as one of the investigators. A female shall be included as an investigator when either the Accused or the Complainant is a woman. In the case of a charge of child or vulnerable adult abuse, local government authorities will generally conduct the investigation but in a case where this does not occur, the investigative committee should include at least three members, including both genders and every effort should be made to appoint one investigator with background or training in abuse investigations as referred by or approved by the National Office and an independent observer. The appointment of the investigators will be by letter, and a copy of the letter will be provided to the Accused and the next level of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Every effort should be made to complete the investigation within 30 days from the date of appointment. The investigative process will include:

1. Interview with the Complainant(s).
2. Interview with the Accused. Unwillingness to appear at a scheduled interview without acceptable reason will be noted in the report. The ecclesiastical authority shall continue the investigation as outlined herein.
3. Interview with witnesses identified by the Complainant(s) and the Accused.
4. Review of any written statements provided by the Accused and any documents presented by the Complainant(s), or any other person identified as having relevant information.
5. Collection and review of other documentary evidence relevant to the charge.

The investigators will determine the scope of investigation. Interviews with the Complainant(s), victims of the alleged wrongful conduct (if they did not submit the charge), and the Accused will be conducted by at least two investigators. Recordings may be made of any sessions of investigation.

- C. **Summary of Investigation.** The investigators will prepare a written report of the investigation including a summary of evidence relevant to the charges, specific charges substantiated by the evidence, and recommendations. A copy will be provided to the Accused, and the ecclesiastical authority. A non-detailed summary report will be given to the Complainant(s) that will indicate only whether the charge(s) was found to be substantiated or unsubstantiated. If the charge(s) is found to be unsubstantiated, the report will indicate that the case is closed. If the charge(s) is found to be substantiated, the report will indicate that the charges are being passed on to a Discipline Committee.
- D. **Intermediate Action.** Upon receipt of the report of investigation, the ecclesiastical authority will take one of the following actions.
1. If it has been determined by the investigating committee that the charge is unsubstantiated, and there is no reasonable basis for proceeding with a hearing, a letter will be provided to the Complainant(s), the Accused, and all appropriate personnel who had knowledge of the allegation(s) informing them of the decision to dismiss all charges. The Complainant(s) may request a review of the decision to dismiss according to Section X below.
 2. If it is determined that the charge is substantiated, or in the case of an allegation of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and/or sexual assault that is

- deemed plausible, and that it is neither possible nor appropriate to conduct a mediation in accordance with Alliance policy set out in Section II (A) above, and that formal disciplinary action is warranted, the appropriate ecclesiastical authority shall appoint a Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee shall consist of no less than three members. The elders shall serve as the Discipline Committee in the local church (see Section III, A above). The “president” of the appropriate C&MA entity or his appointee shall serve as the moderator and will provide copies of the following documents to each member of the Committee: the written charge, the written response statement, if any, and the investigation summary. If the charges are undisputed or admitted, the hearing may be limited to specific matters of restitution and restoration to full fellowship with Christ and the church.
3. The Discipline Committee shall have the authority at any time in the proceedings to allow the matter to proceed in mediation in accordance with biblical principles and upon the stipulation of the Complainant(s) and the Accused. The Discipline Committee may also require successful completion of a mediation or peacemaking coaching as a condition of probation or as an element of a Restoration Plan. In the event that a matter is ordered to mediation by the Discipline Committee prior to judgment, the disciplinary process will be stayed until a certain date set by the Discipline Committee. If all matters are not resolved in mediation or coaching to the satisfaction of the Discipline Committee after report by the mediator, whether occurring prior to judgment or as part of the restoration process, then the disciplinary process shall be resumed and shall continue until completion.
- E. **Scheduling the Hearing.** Normally, the disciplinary hearing will be conducted within 30 days of the appointment of a Discipline Committee. The moderator will schedule the disciplinary hearing at a date and time mutually agreeable to the Accused and others participating in the hearing. The hearing may be held by written submission of statements and evidence at the discretion of the Discipline Committee if requested by either the Complainant or the Accused.
- F. **Prehearing Conference.** A prehearing conference may be (and will be if the Accused requests) set by the moderator no later than one week prior to the hearing. The purpose of the conference is to narrow the number and scope of disputed issues and to plan for an orderly hearing. At that time the Reporter (as defined below) and the Accused will identify all probable witnesses and give a summary of their anticipated testimony.

V. DISCIPLINARY HEARING

- A. **Discipline Committee.** The Discipline Committee will make decisions by majority vote and determine its own procedure as consistent with this Policy.
1. **Moderator.** The moderator will be responsible for the orderly conduct of the hearing and may rule on all procedural questions and questions related to the admission of tangible evidence including witness testimony, subject to reversal by a majority vote of the Committee.
 2. **Secretary.** A secretary will be appointed by the moderator to keep accurate records of all proceedings and to preserve all documents submitted to the Committee.
 3. **Reporter.** The investigators shall choose a Reporter to present the findings of the Committee along with any witnesses and documents relevant to the charge. An effort will be made to present only the witnesses and documents of greatest relevance to the issues raised in the charge, both favorable and unfavorable to the Accused. If possible, repetitive testimony will be avoided. He/she will be excused prior to final deliberations.
- B. **Accused.** The Accused may recall witnesses presented by the Reporter, call additional witnesses, provide additional testimony on his/her behalf, and/or submit a written statement at the time of the hearing. He/she will have the right to an advocate at the hearing and may choose a colleague, Christian friend, or member of the church whether in the United States or overseas national church. Since this is an ecclesiastical hearing, legal counsel of any kind is not permitted.
- If the Accused is unable to be present at a scheduled hearing, he/she may request to have an advocate to appear in his/her place or may request a rescheduling of the hearing. Unwillingness to appear or be represented at an agreed-upon hearing without acceptable reason may be considered an implication of guilt. The absence of the Accused or an advocate at any hearing will not prevent the Discipline Committee from proceeding with the hearing.
- C. **Witnesses.** Witnesses may be examined by the Reporter, the Accused (and the advocate for the Accused, if any), and one or more members of the Discipline Committee including the moderator. One or more members of the Committee (usually not the moderator) may be selected to question the Accused and any witnesses on behalf of the Committee.
- D. **Evidence.** Along with witness testimony, the Committee may also consider relevant documents, the summary of investigation, and other documents submitted by the parties. Tape recordings and other types of magnetic and/or digital recordings will be admitted as evidence if the recordings had been

made with the full knowledge of those giving testimony or being charged, recognizing exceptions may be necessary at the discretion of the Committee.

- E. **Persons Present.** Persons present during the hearing will only include the members of the Discipline Committee, the Reporter, the Complainant(s), the Accused, and one witness at a time while testifying. The spouse and the advocate for the Accused may also be present while any testimony is being given.

In cases involving sexual abuse or the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, the alleged victim of abuse will be requested but not required to appear at the hearing where the accused is present. The victim's testimony taken during the preliminary and formal interviews may be presented by the Reporter.

- F. **Record of Proceedings.** A recording will be made of the hearing proceedings when possible. The recording may be used during the hearing, Committee deliberations, and appeal. The names of all individuals whose voices are recorded will be given at the beginning of the recorded testimony. The recording of the hearing and any documents or other evidence admitted shall become the record of the proceedings. The record of the proceedings, after being approved by the secretary and moderator, will be given into the custody of the moderator. If an appeal is made, the record will be forwarded to the proper body and returned to the moderator after use. All investigations involving official workers as well as the records of all disciplinary actions involving official workers shall be reported to the National Office, and all records of actions relating to the revocation of license and/or the expulsion of official workers from the C&MA shall be forwarded to the National Office along with all personnel records. For cases involving international workers presently at international ministry locations, all records of the disciplinary actions including charges, evidence, defense, and conclusions shall be sent to the appropriate regional director or specialized structure director. The international worker against who the charges have been brought will also receive copies of the complete written record.

- G. **Hearing Steps.** In circumstances where the person subject to disciplinary action has confessed, and where there is evidence of genuine repentance and a willingness to submit to a restoration process as outlined by the ecclesiastical authority, it is permissible to conduct the disciplinary hearing informally. In addition, the Accused must agree in writing to waive a formal hearing.

When a formal hearing is required, it shall proceed in the following manner:

1. Reading the charge.
2. Accused's response to the charge.

3. Presentation of the Reporter's evidence.
4. Presentation of the Accused's evidence.
5. Statement by the Reporter.
6. Summation by the Accused.
7. Summation by the Reporter.
8. Deliberation of the Discipline Committee in executive session and a decision on each charge. A majority vote is required for a decision of guilty. At its option, the Committee may permit a written summation by the Reporter and the Accused to be submitted within five (5) days of the hearing but prior to any deliberations.
9. Judgment of the Discipline Committee. The Committee will submit its decision in writing with respect to each charge and the discipline to be imposed and will advise the Accused of the right to appeal and the process to be followed. Each member of the Committee will sign the document and a signed copy will be given to the person(s) subject to discipline. A copy will be forwarded to the next higher level of jurisdiction. The Committee may announce its decision at the conclusion of the hearing or later in its written report. Usually, the Committee's written decision will be prepared and issued following the conclusion of the hearing.
10. Statement to the Complainant(s). The Committee will submit a written statement to the Complainant(s) indicating the verdict reached by the Discipline Committee and, if found guilty, the penalty that will be imposed.

VI. RESTITUTION AND RESTORATION

- A. **Form of Discipline.** One of the following forms of discipline will be imposed for any offense for which a person is found guilty.
1. **Reprimand.** Reprimand is the lowest degree of censure and consists of reproving, warning, and exhorting the offender to a more consistent walk with the Lord. This form of discipline may be applied to all persons subject to this Policy, including employees who are neither church members nor licensed/certified workers. The official relationship with the National Office, a C&MA church or status as a licensed/certified worker is not altered. The appropriate ecclesiastical authority will administer the discipline.
 2. **Probation.** During the period of probation, the erring person's(s') relationship with the church and/or the privileges and responsibilities of ministry and/or employment may be limited as determined by the Discipline Committee. This form of discipline may be applied to all persons subject to this Policy, including employees who are neither church

members nor licensed/certified workers. In the case of an international worker, probation will be administered only if it has been determined that the international worker's continued presence at the international ministry location will not be detrimental to the overseas national church and/or the missionary community. The duration of the probation will be set by the Committee in view of the circumstances of the case but usually will not exceed six months.

During the period of probation, the person(s) subject to discipline will meet regularly with a spiritual advisor appointed by the ecclesiastical authority, will daily live a life above reproach, fulfill all requirements for restitution as necessary and directed by the Committee, and prove himself/herself before God and the church. During probation the Committee may impose additional measures if it determines that the person(s) subject to discipline has not progressed appropriately. At the conclusion of the period of probation the Committee will evaluate evidence of genuine repentance and whether other expected progress has been achieved (as defined in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11). If the terms of the probationary period have not been met, or if satisfactory progress has not occurred, the individual(s) may be subject to an additional probationary period, revocation, or expulsion.

- 3. Revocation.** Revocation applies to licensed/certified workers and church members, but usually does not apply to persons who are employees only. During the period of revocation, the guilty person's(s') privileges and responsibilities as a licensed/certified worker will be discontinued. For laity, all public ministries will be discontinued. Further, the official worker license and other certifications (except ordination) will be surrendered to the appropriate ecclesiastical authority. The Discipline Committee will determine the appropriate duration for revocation, usually from six months to two years. In all cases of sexual moral failure involving marital unfaithfulness, and/or direct sexual contact outside of marriage or with persons of the same sex, the period of revocation will not be less than two years. The Committee may extend the period of revocation or it may initiate expulsion if it is determined that the guilty person(s) has not demonstrated an attitude of genuine repentance for the prior immoral conduct and progressed satisfactorily toward spiritual wholeness, moral rectitude, and marital harmony (where applicable). The Committee may require regular meetings with a spiritual advisor and may impose other conditions as appropriate, including prohibiting an unrepentant person(s) from participating in Holy Communion.

The ecclesiastical authority may lift the revocation after evidence of genuine repentance and other expected progress has been achieved and a request for restoration received. If a request for restoration is not filed 30 days following the end of the period of revocation, the person will remain

classified under revocation indefinitely. Reinstatement may be requested after the originally established period of revocation has been completed and the terms of the plan for restoration have been fulfilled. If in the future the person shows evidence of repentance and requests to be placed in the restoration process, steps toward the restoration of fellowship (as outlined in Section VIII below) may be initiated at the discretion of the appropriate ecclesiastical authority.

In addition to the above, on occasion a C&MA ordained/consecrated individual may have made the decision to resign from C&MA ministry, return his or her credentials, and/or surrender membership in the C&MA. When circumstances arise that would normally warrant the initiation or completion of the disciplinary process, but the C&MA no longer has direct authority over the individual, it is within the purview of the Licensing, Ordination, and Consecration Council of the ordaining/consecrating district to withdraw the individual's ordination/consecration. The recommendation to withdraw ordination/consecration shall be presented to the Licensing, Ordination, and Consecration Council by the district superintendent or, in the case of an employee of the National Office including an international worker; the recommendation shall be presented to the Board of Directors of the C&MA by the president. A decision to withdraw an individual's ordination/consecration will be automatically appealed to the National Office (as defined in Section IX, B below) before becoming effective.

Upon the return of an international worker to the United States, the National Office may ask the district where the individual resides in the United States to work on behalf of the National Office to oversee and implement a plan for restoration.

- 4. Expulsion.** Expulsion is the most severe penalty that may be exercised by the church. A decision to impose expulsion will be automatically appealed to the next higher level of jurisdiction (as defined in Section IX, B below) before becoming effective. Expulsion applies to licensed/certified workers and church members, but usually does not apply to persons who are employees only. Expulsion results in the discontinuation of all rights, responsibilities, and privileges of membership in the local church and the automatic withdrawal of the Certificate of Membership. For licensed/certified workers, expulsion results in the discontinuation of all credentials and all rights, privileges, and responsibilities associated with the status. It will result in the automatic withdrawal of ordination. Individuals who have been expelled from membership and/or whose credentials have been withdrawn as a result of expulsion may not be received into membership in another congregation of the C&MA or licensed to serve in ministry in another C&MA entity.

If in the future the person shows evidence of repentance and requests to be placed in the restoration process, restoration (as outlined in Section VIII below) may be initiated as determined by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority and may result in a reinstatement of credentials and/or local church membership.

- B. **Employment.** In addition to or in lieu of the above penalties, the Discipline Committee, at its discretion, may impose requirements on the terms and conditions of the guilty person's(s') employment, including but not limited to personnel action such as adjustment in job duties, transfer, demotion, or reassignment; disciplinary action; and/or immediate termination of employment. This Policy is not intended to create an express or implied contract of employment, to require the procedures of this Policy be followed before any action is taken, or to otherwise modify the at-will employment relationship which may exist between the employee and the employing entity.

In the case of an international worker, if there is a finding of immorality, propagating doctrines contrary to the basic teachings of the C&MA, or other serious offenses and the international worker shows no evidence of repentance or desire to be placed under discipline or if there is a finding of sexual abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, such worker shall be dismissed from service with the C&MA. The official credentials of a licensed worker of the C&MA shall be surrendered to the ministry location leader immediately. The ministry location leader shall arrange for the international worker's immediate return to the worker's home country. In the case of other forms of abuse, the decision to dismiss such worker and/or to require the surrender of the official credentials of a licensed worker of the C&MA will be determined based on the details of each specific case.

- C. **Non-Offending Spouse.** In the case of a married international worker where the spouse is judged innocent of any wrongdoing, penalties of reprimand and probation shall not be applied to the innocent spouse. Where revocation, dismissal, or expulsion is the form of discipline imposed, the innocent spouse will incur the effects of the discipline of the offender by virtue of the marriage relationship. However, a statement declaring the innocence of the non-offender is placed in the couple's file. The National Office may grant permission for the innocent spouse to be involved in ministry during the discipline period.
- D. **Discipline of Non-U.S. C&MA International Workers.** The international worker's sending agency is the only body authorized to discipline and dismiss its personnel. However, the U.S. C&MA reserves the right to terminate working agreements with non-U.S. personnel when such action is deemed necessary.

VII. DETERMINATION OF SEVERITY OF DISCIPLINE

The facts and circumstances of an individual case determine what discipline will be imposed. If the offense is isolated and considered relatively minor with no actual harm to others, then a less severe discipline may be appropriate. If the offense involves flagrant misconduct, maliciousness, gross rejection of scriptural principles or C&MA doctrine, failure to submit to constituted authority, repeated incidents, or a pattern of wrongful behavior involving harm to others, then more severe discipline may be deemed necessary. Evidence of remorse and repentance and a genuine desire to change, especially if occurring prior to the disciplinary proceeding, may be grounds to opt for a lesser penalty. In determining the discipline to be imposed, the Discipline Committee will seek guidance in Scripture and through prayer and will seek to promote the purity and faith of the spiritual body of believers while striving to promote growth and restoration of the erring believer to fellowship with Christ and the church.

VIII. RESTORATION PROCESS

- A. **Determination of Restoration.** If the disciplinary measure imposed on a guilty person(s) is revocation, the Discipline Committee will consider whether a plan for restoration to fellowship is appropriate.
1. The primary goal of a plan for restoration is to return an erring believer to full fellowship with Christ and the Christian community. Reinstatement to licensed ministry, active membership in the local church, or a place of leadership or ministry in the local church is not guaranteed.
 2. In rare instances the Committee may determine the person's(s') conduct was so heinous and his/her attitude so contrary to Christian principles that reinstatement to licensed ministry, church membership, and/or other public ministry is not possible at any time. In the case of an official worker found guilty of sexual abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, by either a Discipline Committee or a court of law, there will be no possibility of regaining credentials for ministry in the C&MA. In the case of other forms of abuse, the decision to permanently deny credentials will be determined based on the details of each specific case.
 3. Restoration will not involve an agreement by the ecclesiastical authority, Discipline Committee, employing entity, or any other person involved in the disciplinary proceeding to withhold information concerning the proceeding, including the results, in the event the restored individual seeks new church membership or a new position with the denomination, district, or C&MA church entity, or a supporting organization of the C&MA.

B. Restoration Process/Plan.

1. The individual seeking restoration will:
 - (a) In cooperation with a spiritual advisor appointed by the ecclesiastical authority, develop a plan for restoration within 30 days of the date when disciplinary measures were communicated. The plan must be approved by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority before it is implemented. Permission may be granted to receive, approve, and direct plan implementation at any time before and after the 30-day time frame. The National Office may ask the district where the individual resides in the United States to work on behalf of the National Office to oversee and implement the plan for restoration. Arrangements may be made for a plan for restoration to be submitted to an ecclesiastical authority in another community and/or district if the individual seeking restoration has relocated and permission has been extended by the original Discipline Committee. In these circumstances the ecclesiastical authority receiving the plan for restoration will obtain and review the record of the original disciplinary proceeding and, if possible, consult with the original ecclesiastical authority and/or members of the Discipline Committee to become informed regarding the history of the case before approving the plan.
 - (b) Where appropriate, engage in ongoing fellowship in an Alliance church which has been approved by the Committee.
2. The ecclesiastical authority will:
 - (a) Provide oversight and direction during the restoration process.
 - (b) Outline the specific process of restoration and the expectations and requirements.
 - (c) Appoint an advisor.
 - (d) Assure that specific biblical principles and standards of conduct and belief are identified and implemented by the offender.
 - (e) Provide a schedule for review of the offender's progress.

- C. **Reinstatement.** An individual who has been restored to fellowship with the church is not guaranteed full reinstatement to all rights and privileges previously held.

Reinstatement to a position of ministry in The Christian and Missionary Alliance and/or the local church is not assured even if an individual has satisfactorily completed requirements for restoration to fellowship. Person(s) wishing to be reinstated to ministry as an official worker must comply with all requirements for licensing and if the period of revocation has exceeded one year, may be required to appear for a licensing interview before the Licensing, Ordination, and Consecration Council and/or, in the case of an international worker, before the appropriate authority in the National Office. The individual who wishes to be reinstated must submit a written request for reinstatement and provide evidence of successful completion of the plan for restoration to the appropriate ecclesiastical authority. Factors prohibiting the offender from obtaining reinstatement include but are not limited to:

1. Failure to provide satisfactory evidence that the patterns of behavior which led to the sinful conduct for which the discipline was imposed have been abandoned.
2. Involvement in multiple offenses, repeated sexual misconduct, or any child/vulnerable adult abuse.
3. Refusal or failure to fulfill any aspect of the disciplinary or restoration process.
4. Refusal of the secular or religious community to respect the offender as a person of trust and/or a spiritual leader.

The decision on reinstatement will be subject to the appeal to the appropriate official as outlined below.

IX. APPEAL

- A. **Grounds for Appeal.** One and only one appeal may be made from any verdict of the Discipline Committee to the next higher level of jurisdiction, and the resulting decision on the matter will be considered final. Grounds for appeal are:
 1. Material error in the Committee's factual determination based on the evidence presented.
 2. Material error in the Committee's application of standards of conduct and belief as expressed in the Scripture or C&MA doctrine.
- B. **Procedure for Appeal.** Only the Accused has the right to appeal a decision of the Discipline Committee.

1. The appeal must be made in writing to the next level of jurisdiction no later than 30 days after the verdict of the Committee has been communicated. A copy of the appeal will be submitted to the ecclesiastical authority that convened the original disciplinary hearing.
2. The original ecclesiastical authority will forward a copy of all proceedings to the ecclesiastical authority to whom appeal has been made, along with copies of all correspondence with the individual making the appeal.
3. The ecclesiastical authority to whom the appeal has been made may appoint a committee to assist in the appeal process and in reviewing all previous proceedings.
4. The ecclesiastical authority and committee, if any, may:
 - (a) Affirm the decision of the Discipline Committee.
 - (b) Reverse the decision in part or in whole.
 - (c) Return the case to the Discipline Committee for further consideration.
 - (d) Modify the plan for restoration.
5. Disputes regarding or arising out of the appeal process, including whether the decision was supported by the evidence, will be decided by this appeal process as a matter of ecclesiastical law, and not in or through a court of law or according to civil law.

C. **Levels of Jurisdiction.** Levels of jurisdiction used in the appeal process:

1. If the Accused is a church member, the appeal is made to the district superintendent.
2. If the Accused is a district worker, the appeal is made to the National Office.
3. If the Accused is an international worker, the appeal is made initially to the National Office. If the National Office rejects the appeal, the accused may make a final appeal to the C&MA Board of Directors. The National Office is obliged to forward the appeal to the chairman of the C&MA Board of Directors.
4. If the Accused is a National Office employee or officer, the appeal is made to the chairperson of the C&MA Board of Directors.

X. REQUEST FOR REVIEW

The Complainant(s) may request a review of the decision to dismiss the charge as outlined in Section IV, item A or C above. The request for review must be submitted in writing to the appropriate level of jurisdiction as identified in Section IX, C. The request will be submitted within 14 calendar days following the decision to dismiss the charge. The scope of the review is determined by the ecclesiastical authority conducting the review. The review decision is final.

XI. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this document may be made by the Board of Directors of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.