**Polity Related to Men and Women in Leadership**

**Council 2023 Actions – One-Page Summary**

1. **Male Elder and Lead Pastor** – No changes were proposed or made in this area. The lead pastor and elders in Alliance churches will continue to be men. The Uniform Constitution for Accredited Churches says, “The call of Christ the Chief Shepherd to men to serve as elders is both discerned and confirmed by the church membership. Elders shall therefore be male members of this church and shall be elected as specified in the church bylaws. The lead pastor and other elders are the highest level of servant leadership in the church” (Article X, Committees and Organizations, Section 1. Elders). This statement remains our denominational policy that governs the practice of each local church.
2. **Clarification on Who Is an Elder** – By Council vote, elders in the local church are the lead pastor, elected lay elders, and, as deemed appropriate by the local church, other male members of the licensed ministry staff. This makes clear that not all pastors are automatically elders and that, in The Alliance, ordination does not automatically confer eldership. At the same time, this allows churches that see the titles pastor and elder as synonymous in their understanding of Scripture to include this in their bylaws so that any or all of their male pastoral staff members are part of the elder team.
3. **The Designation Consecrated and Ordained** – Council voted to move from our previous system of consecrating qualified women and ordaining qualified men, all of whom had completed the same work, to a new system of consecrating and ordaining both qualified men and women. This combines a strongly biblical word (consecration) with a word broadly recognized in the public sector where ministry is carried out (ordination). The designation “reverend” will be granted by the district’s License, Ordination, and Consecration Council to all who are consecrated and ordained. Each local church may determine the use of this designation as appropriate in their church context.
4. **Local Church Option to Use the Title Pastor for Female Official Workers** – Authority was given by Council to each local church to determine by their biblical understanding whether a female official worker may use the title pastor. Whichever option the local church chooses will be acceptable and respected within our Alliance family.
5. **Authority Given to the Board of Directors, in Consultation with the District Leadership Forum, to Update the Manual of the C&MA** – The decisions made by Council 2023 require changes in our Manual. Council granted the authority to the Board of Directors to make these changes in consultation with the District Leadership Forum (district superintendents and association presidents). The changes will be reported back to Council 2025.