

# Our Response

## as a Mission Community, to the Biblical Covenant

A Basic Document of the World Mission Fellowship

September 1983, Darrell Dorr, April 30, 1985, January 1988, Ralph D. Winter

[Revision 29 Oct 92]

E445.5

[The following document is an interpretation of the Covenant that underlies the Bible. It is not framed as a commentary on the Bible, however, but is stated as a testimony, the conscious testimony of an intentional community. Historically, such a response to the Biblical record has been called a *confession*, as in the Augsburg Confession or the Westminster Confession, although those confessions have been based on quite different assumptions.

The purpose of this statement is both to help clarify things in our own minds, and also to assist others to understand where we are in our understanding.

The basic outline and approach is the work of Winter. Dorr is responsible for the bulk of the elaboration of that outline.]

### INTRODUCTION

In calling Abraham to Himself, God established an “over-arching covenant” which has been expressed and re-expressed throughout Scripture. In its very earliest form it reveals God's concern for all peoples (Gen. 12:1-3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14). It is renewed in the Mosaic period and summarized in Deuteronomy 4:13, 5:1-22, and 6:5,6.

We understand the clear reference in the Genesis texts above to all the peoples of the world, and to Abraham's obligation to be a blessing to them, as simply the earliest statement of the more familiar restatement of these texts which we call the Great Commission.

[This “covenant” has a dual nature. The first part talks of God's love, grace, and mercy towards us—“I will bless you,” a curious phrase which speaks of adoption, including someone in a family, giving the family name, privilege, responsibility.

The second part then talks of God's desire for all peoples to be included, reestablished in His family in the same way—and that those who are already thus blessed should be the ones through whom others would be similarly blessed.

Many Bible expositions have utilized this terminology to conclude that we are “Blessed to be a blessing,” as with the well-known hymn, “Make me a blessing...out on the highways and byways of life.” But two errors of interpretation must be avoided: 1) as we have already noted, “the blessing” is much more than the English word implies, and 2) it is very easy, and incorrect, to suppose that something less than “all the peoples of the world” (Gen 12:3) are within our concern “to be a blessing.” God does not ask us merely to be a blessing to our own family or our own people.

This dual mandate, this dual truth, this dual covenant, is reflected in the Old Testament summary called the Ten Commandments, the first five of which speak of our vertical relation to our heavenly Father, and the second five refer to our horizontal relation to His other children.

The same dual covenant is restated in the New Testament when Jesus Christ gave the terse summary that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves.

It is interesting that both “The Great Commandment” and “The Great Commission” echo this dual covenant, which way back in Genesis constituted the beginning of God's global plan to seek out all of His lost, alienated humanity, through the efforts of the growing number of those who become reconciled to His lordship and become reunited in a family relationship with Him.

The whole story of the Bible thus reflects the ups and downs of those who were first chosen, who were first blessed in their relation to those other nations and peoples of the world who are to be regained to the heavenly family.

We who belong to nations which have been blessed later may very well—as the Bible portrays the first-blessed nation—fail to remember the dual nature of the covenant, fail to

recall specifically the second part of the covenant, and thus damage the quality of our relationship to God in the first part of the covenant, or we may interpret too narrowly the significance of the last five of the ten commandments, or the second part of the Great Commandment, or we may easily assume that the Great Commission is a special verse for a few fanatics rather than simply a re-statement of this basic, root covenant which initiates the dramatic story of the Bible in its earliest pages, and provides the organizing meaning of all scripture and all subsequent history, right understood.]

The Jesus Christ, who came not to abolish but to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17), spoke of two commandments that summarize all others. The first and foremost is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30,31). The apostle Paul echoed, “Love is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom. 13:10).

We, the members of the World Mission Fellowship, understand our obedience to the *Great Commission* to disciple the nations (Matt. 28:18-20) to be simply an outgrowth of the love enjoined by these two *Great Commandments*. The God of the Covenant has revealed His heart in the Scriptures and in the person and work of His Son. Jesus has purchased our salvation by His death and resurrection, and now He bids us obey His commandments as expressions of our sincere love for Him and His world. We do not seek to obey Him to merit His favor, but we *do* submit to the disciplines of “the obedience of faith” in order to yield the fruits of righteousness

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that will praise the glories of His grace. We wholeheartedly agree with those who have said: "Assured of your salvation through the unique grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, be careful that you do not impose upon yourself an asceticism for its own sake. The endeavor to master your person has no other purpose than a greater availability." (Ref?)

All communities of faith must live under the authority of Scripture; God has declared His covenant, and the only reasonable response is ready acknowledgement and glad submission. He has said to us, "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God" (Ex. 6:7). However, communities have varied in their exposition and application of Biblical mandates. We, a mission community whose primary focus is world evangelization, are unique and distinctive, and our response to the Covenant which follows reflects our central concerns. Nevertheless, we view what we are saying as merely an interpretation of the Biblical covenant to which all Biblical communities are subject.

We recognize and call others to see that some 11,000 people groups in our world still lack a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church community in their midst. Love for God and love for our neighbor call us to give ourselves fully to stimulate and encourage the growth of a movement for frontier missions throughout the United States and the world. We commit ourselves to serving mission agencies, churches and students, in strategy, mobilization and training, to the end that a vital, authentic church community will be established among every "Unreached People" as soon as

possible, and hopefully at least by the year 2000. Love will seek no less.

We discern in the two Great Commandments eight dimensions of love that will enable us to do our part in discipling all peoples. Four of these dimensions of love are directed to God Himself and are found in Jesus own words that

We are to **Love our Father in Heaven:**

1. With **all our heart**
2. With **all our soul**
3. With **all our mind**
4. With **all our strength**

Four of the eight dimensions of love are directed to our neighbor, suggested by the responsibilities around us, and endorsed elsewhere by the Scriptures.

We are to **Love our neighbor as ourselves:**

5. **Our family and relatives**
6. **Our daily associates**
7. **Our distant friends and acquaintances**
8. **Our potential relationships anywhere in the world**

We will love the Lord our God

**1. With all our heart.**

Because the Hebrew concept of "heart" is that of the "center" or "inner person" of a man or woman, we understand Jesus to here refer to the spiritual plane of life. We would be those who worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), giving priority to private and corporate seasons of prayer and meditation, praise and intercession.

Holiness is our hunger, justice and righteousness our passion. Only the cleansed community

will be "an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). We press on to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like Him in His death (Phil. 3:10), knowing that unless we abide in Christ and are continually filled with His Spirit we can do nothing of eternal value (Jn. 15:5). What we *are* and *can become* is as important as what we *have* or *do*; the fulfillment of our *tasks* is contingent on the quality of our *character* and of our *relationships*. And yet we also recognize that such purity of heart comes as we "obey the truth" (1 Pet. 1:22) in the minutiae of daily living.

We seek to give daily attention to studying, meditating on and obeying the Scriptures, that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:17). We acknowledge as our own the confessions of faith of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, and the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association. As sons and daughters of Abraham and as joint-heirs with his glorious descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ, we accept no mandate less than one to bless *all* the families of the earth, to disciple *all* peoples. This dominating theme of Scripture has become our mainspring.

We will not only heed God's words; we will seek to recognize His *works*, in our hearts, in our relationships, in our labors, in His Church, in His world. Unlike the disciples whose hearts were dull and unprepared to discern the activity of the living God (Mk.

8:17,18), we would be like the eager, expectant Simeon we find in Luke 2, waiting, looking, listening for the gentle breezes of the Spirit upon the earth and the unfolding of God's purpose for and through His chosen people (Luke 2:25; 1 Kings 19:12,13). Jehovah bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God; I *will* be exalted among the nations, I *will* be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46:10,11). We will pause again and again to listen, see and understand.

Finally, we acknowledge our Adversary, and through intercessory prayer we take up spiritual armor (Eph. 6:11) that we may demolish arguments and pretensions the Evil One has established among the nations (2 Cor. 10:4,5). We recognize that Satan will fiercely resist both the growth of holiness in our community and the advance of the gospel among peoples long resigned to His dominion. Yet we affirm that Jesus has gained the victory over the Enemy of men's souls. Christ will build His Church on the ashes of Satan's strongholds, and the fruits of righteousness will flourish in soil now polluted by sin.

We will love the Lord our God  
**2. With all our soul.**

The "psyche" is a Biblical term which by itself overlaps other words in this series, including as it often does "the whole person, physical and spiritual." Surrounded by these other words it can be understood in a more restricted sense, focusing on the emotional, psychological, the realm of habit and personality. We recognize that in human life purposeful, skillful attention is required to achieve a balance and

harmony that honor the intentions and designs of the Master Craftsman.

We aspire to excellence and virtue in every facet of our lives and ministry. We press on to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus laid hold of us (Phil. 3:12). We seek to run purposefully, not aimlessly (1 Cor. 9:24), asking the Holy Spirit to bring the habits of discipline and the fruit of self-control into the very fabric of our daily schedules.

But we confess that we cannot reach our aspirations by ourselves. We all too often know the good we ought to do and don't do it, thereby sinning against God and each other (James 4:17). The guilt and emotional fragmentation that results too often debilitates our desire and weakens our resolve. Our Father asks, "Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" (Gen. 4:7).

To narrow the gap between duty and desire, therefore, we not only need the Spirit's enabling, but we also *need each other*. Therefore, we commit ourselves not only to *aspire* to the highest standards of excellence and virtue, but also to *help* each other succeed and to be willing to *be helped*. Our relationships will reinforce our aspirations, for "a cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 5:12). We will not only carry the separate loads that God has apportioned to each of us, but we will also carry each other's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:1-5).

We acknowledge that such commitment to each other will be painful. It hurts to admonish and be admonished, to wound and be

wounded, to sharpen and be sharpened (Prov. 27:5,6,17). But we are willing to serve each other by washing each other's feet so that together we may be clean before our Lord (John 13:10).

We also seek a balance between what often seem to be competing aspirations. "It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. The man who fears God will follow them both" (Eccl. 7:18). We must help each other to establish priorities and to search for the proper rhythms of work and rest, reflection and action, listening and speaking, solitude and fellowship. Exhaustion is no virtue and relaxation no vice even for those engaged in the urgent tasks of world evangelization. We will continually come back for soul-rest to Jesus, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light (Matt. 11:28-30). In *Him* our aspirations find both fulfillment and harmony.

We will love the Lord our God  
**3. With all our mind.**

To love God with our understanding is a high and holy privilege. He in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge has given us the capacity to not only know Him, but also to know much about ourselves and the world He has created. Therefore, we have become lifelong "learners" who delight in learning not only for its own sake but also to heighten our worship of God and further our service to others.

The Bible is the cornerstone of God's revelation, and so we will be diligent students of the Scriptures, careful to act on what we understand; "whoever has will be given more, and whoever does

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not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him" (Luke 8:18). In particular, we will be careful practitioners of the growing discipline of missiology, that delicate and vital meeting place of Biblical mandates and insights from the social sciences. In addition, because we esteem the creative as well as the redemptive work of God, we will improve our knowledge of natural sciences, arts and humanities. The *world* is our curriculum because the *world* is the scope of our commission.

The acquisition of knowledge is only a small part of learning to love our Lord with our minds. In a world in which reason is too often the victim of passion or the slave of petty ambition, we recognize that we must learn to *think* -- calmly, clearly, deeply, selflessly, Biblically. We will learn to listen and meditate as well as to speak and write. "He who answers before listening--that is his folly and his shame" (Prov. 18:13). Too, we recognize that whereas the acquisition of knowledge alone leads to arrogance, the transformation and renewal of our minds brings humility (Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 8:2). Our encounters with a world full of political, cultural and spiritual complexities should lead us to a growing appreciation of the greatness of our God and the limitations of our humanity.

It is our conviction that work and study must be parallel, lifetime activities; our work should suggest the direction of our studies, and our studies should further the development of our work. Learning should both *equip* us for our present work and *prepare* us for service to which we sense God may be calling us. The

work-study lifestyle must characterize our entire community, from the senior member with a Ph.D. to the newest member fresh from college or the marketplace. Where possible, we seek to properly construct work assignments to incorporate academic courses of study. What is more, we aspire that many in our midst enroll in extended degree programs that will enable us to either be disciplined or to disciple others.

In addition, we believe that education must *spring from* and *contribute to* at least four contexts: the family, the local congregation, the mission agency or other vocational community, and the academic college or university. If our learning does not issue from, be accountable to, and also benefit all four arenas, at least indirectly, our education will be short-sighted and possibly irrelevant.

We will love the Lord our God  
**4. With all our strength.**

When Robert Murray McCheyne, the devout young Scottish minister, lay dying at the age of twenty-nine, he turned to a friend who was sitting with him and said, "God gave me a message to deliver and a horse to ride. Alas, I have killed the horse and now I cannot deliver the message."

God has given us bodies that are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14), and therefore we are obligated by the demands of stewardship to care for these bodies in a manner that honors our Maker and serves our brother. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have re-

ceived from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Cor. 6:19,20). To love the Lord our God with all our strength is to be the motive of what we eat and drink, how we exercise, and how we rest.

We decry the self-indulgence and addiction to ever more elaborated personal preference that characterizes American consumption of food and drink. Our convictions are those of the apostle Paul: "Everything is permissible for me--but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me'--but I will not be mastered by anything. 'Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food'--but God will destroy them both" (1 Cor. 6:12,13). Careful thought, conscience, and a deep sense of health and stewardship dictate what we consume, for our true food is to do the will of our heavenly Father.

Our community abstains from the consumption of tobacco and alcohol. This practice is not only in accord with the pattern of life reflected in mission circles, but more importantly stems from a deep concern to put no stumbling block to the gospel before a world bound by addiction to these and other substances. We will not destroy the work of God for the sake of food (Rom. 14:20).

Health and wholeness also require regular, adequate exercise of the body and especially of the heart. For that reason, we each must develop a regimen of exercise that is appropriate to our age and capacity. The resulting vigor and alertness will please our Father and equip us for strenuous service to the Church and the Unreached Peoples. Once again, *ste-*

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wardship, and not preference or convenience, is our overriding motive.

God also calls us to regular, adequate seasons of rest and recreation, and we heed this call as an expression of love and obedience. We shun the compulsion to business that so easily grips Christian workers, for we believe that God's hand, and not merely our efforts, will accomplish world evangelization. "In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat--for while they sleep He provides for those He loves" (Ps. 127:2).

We honor the Sabbath, not in legalistic obligation but in recognition that God calls us to rest from our work as He did from His (Heb. 4:10). Our bodies, minds and spirits *need* this day of weekly rest, and God promises His renewal to those who honor it: "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land..." (Is. 58:13,14).

*[We move now from our vertical relationship to our horizontal relationship. Unlike the first four dimensions, these four are not suggested specifically by the phrase "your neighbor" or any other Biblical statement. The first three categories could be called "givens" or "given relationships," and include people to*

*whom we did not choose to be related, or with whom we had very little choice, ranging from a parent or sibling to a college roommate assigned by a school, or even a chance acquaintance in some temporary circumstance. Yet in all these cases we need to be prayerful about our opportunity for ministry, since we could be the only ones through whom God might minister to these people. The final, "potential" category is where we will hopefully have additional ministry strength, and we may have a bit more choice!]*

We will love our neighbors as ourselves...

### 5. Our Family Relationships.

In America (not in most other countries) it is unfortunately necessary to spell out in a bit of extra detail what is obvious in the Bible but is almost totally obscured by current American secular perspectives.

God has placed us in families of mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, parents and children, as well as of grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, cousins and in-laws. These relationships are divinely ordained and very precious, and so we would give them the attention and time they deserve.

However, not all of us are husbands or wives, not all of us are parents, brothers or sisters. All of us are children. All of us have or have had two parents. The one most fundamental relationship anyone can have is toward those two individuals through whom God's creative power was manifested our our very existence.

Where through some distaster or other perversion of God's intent we lack one or more parents, our early existence has inevitably been one in which surrogate parents of some type have been involved, and our allegiance and our obligation to those other persons will be somewhat parallel to what God intended.

A mission community, in our view, does not set aside this primary relationship. No one can become a member of this community if his parents are irretrievably opposed. This is rarely a problem simply because American parents are taught that they should not impose their will. Thus, we have to listen carefully. On the other hand our parents may disagree with our judgment but want us to make our own decision. We need to be very sensitive. If there is any doubt, our community will side with the parents: we will not accept anyone as a member whose parents are not willing for them to be.

We regard this relationship as being so important that the function of the leadership of this community is essentially functioning, by permission, in the parents' stead.

One way to look at this is to realize that none of us would have survived apart from a God intended upbringing by parents from the point of total helplessness to maturity. Then, in our maturity our parents become increasingly helpless, and it is equally God's design and intent for us now to help them.

But then we ourselves grow old. None of us can in either our early or our later years get along without others helping us. First

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we are helped as infants, second we help our own children, next we help our own parents, finally we ourselves are helped again in our old age by those children whom we raised—especially if they have witnessed and worked along with us in taking care of our own parents.

Those who are not married (even those who are married) will quite possibly have opportunity to be surrogate parents for children who lack parenting. We have all received from our parents, and in turn given, presumably to our (or to others's children), and having been taken care of when we were helpless, we now help others in their early helplessness, and they watch us help our parents. In our hour of need, then our children, in God's design, are to love us as we have loved our own parents, or others in need in their later years.

[It is necessary here to pause and recognized how radically different this is seen in America today.

Parents in America learn to wash their hands of their children's needs, on the grounds of the good old American idea of letting people go it alone, make it on their own. They may stash away funds for themselves rather than helping their children who in God's design would serve them in their later years far better than a pension check ever could.

Children in America learn to demand independence, and are just as glad to make all their own decisions as their parents are to let them. It seems like a good system.

But after about 50 years of Social Security the actuarial experts are realizing that any other kind of care than family care is both vastly more expensive and vastly inferior. Today untold millions of both young children and older persons are in the

throw-away category or in the "git away" category, sad to say. Our emphasis on individual self-determination, with all its merits, has within it a poisonous, humanistically conceived evil. It will not work.]

We who are husbands or wives affirm that our relationship with our spouses is exceedingly precious, and that we will not allow the passage of time, the pressures of home, or the duties of ministry to diminish our love and commitment to our spouses. We who have children affirm that our zeal to disciple the nations must be reflected in the zeal with which we love, disciple and nurture our sons and daughters. We who are single recognize our singleness as a unique opportunity for single-minded consecration. Whether single or married, we yield our homes to our Lord and His commission.

The principal work assignment for mothers of small children is to be the home and the care of their children. However, while the home/family ministry is *principal*, it is not *primary*. As part of the missionary tradition, the needs of our community and ministry, and the gifts God has given, are expected to attract mothers to additional areas of service. In the missionary tradition wives have been considered equally called along with their husbands. They are not second class citizens. And all members of our community are equally subject to the disciplines of supervision and accountability. Children are not members—in the voluntary sense—of the community but are wards of their parents. Wives are members of the community, not wards of their husbands. Wives equally and separately become

members of a mission community. This is not to imply that spouses have nothing to say about what their husbands or spouses do. This is not to question or qualify the God-intended hierarchy within the family.

In recognition of the importance that both the Bible and other contemporary cultures give to the family, we commit ourselves to fulfill our responsibilities to relatives outside our households. We will not declare our time and possessions to be "Corban" when our families need these resources (Mark 7:11), and we will not allow the American tradition of family fragmentation to nullify the application of the word of God in our families (Mark 7:13). If indeed the "families of the earth" are the targets of our missionary efforts, our own families merit similar care and attention.

We will love our neighbors as ourselves...

### 6. Our Daily Associates.

As men and women who have yielded our lives to our Lord's Great Commission, we are reminded that Jesus said that all men will know that we are His disciples by the love that we have for one another (John 13:35). We want *all* our relationships to validate the Gospel that we proclaim. Therefore, we must love fellow believers in our mission community and in the local congregations of which we are part, and we must love those with whom we daily associate even if they are outside the household of faith.

Insofar as a mission community is a surrogate family, what we have said under the previous

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heading equally applies. Across all of the centuries from the days of the apostles there have been surrogate family communities, sometimes called “orders” which have functioned in a supplementary way to the genetic families in which God has created us.

Thus, just as we are told to respect and obey our parents, the apostle admonishes us, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17).

We are members of this community solely because we believe God has called us to be part of what He is doing here, and because those in authority here have invited us to follow their sense of God’s leading.

In this sense we must believe that we are following our leaders even as they are yielding to Christ’s lordship. This is not to suggest infallibility for our leadership anymore than we expect parents to be infallible. They simply have the superior right to be wrong!

If, at the time we joined, we could not believe that we could exercise faith in this dimension, we could not have accepted the invitation to join. In the same manner, if at any point after joining we cannot believe that we are to continue to yield to the decisions of leadership then we are free to seek to join some other group whose leadership we believe God would have us follow.

We do not believe that there is anything mysterious about this. In one sense this is not different

from any privately owned business. If, as believers, we go to work for even a secular company we better believe that God is guiding us and that He expects us to do what we are told, offering our own thoughts to the fullest extent of our ability and opportunity, but not subverting the authority and purpose of the company. Those who go to work for a small business cannot “vote” the leadership out. They can quit. They can go somewhere else. They can perhaps greatly influence the direction of things. But if they want to rule they must start their own business. The industrial and commercial work of the world would grind to a halt tomorrow if it were governed by the democratic vote of the employees. In the case of a town government the mayor is elected by the people, who are the given. The leaders are replaceable. They come and go. The citizens stay. In a small business the employees are elected by the owners, who are the given, and employees come and go as they wish, although the longer they stay the more influence they have.

In the case of this mission community, Ralph and Roberta Winter believe God was guiding them in founding an organization with the specific characteristics of a mission order. Those whom our leadership sense God’s leading to invite into trial membership, and those who also sense God’s leading to accept that invitation, voluntarily become members, committed to following and helping. They gain standing and seniority over time, but they do not gain an inherent right to oppose the leadership as they would

if they joined a municipal community that elects its own officials, or even a church congregation which is organized along those lines.

While our commitment to excellence and virtue requires us to faithfully offer constructive criticism to our leaders, our recognition of the principle of sponsored authority requires us to humbly and gladly defer to their judgment when decisions must finally be made. In particular, we recognize that this community is a mission society or order (sodality), in which decisions are more authoritative and conclusive than those in the local congregation (modality), where a vote one way or the other can reverse things. We would flee from the sins of grumbling, backbiting and silent resistance that are characteristic of the carnal man. We recognize that the living God often speaks to us and deals with us through the leaders whose authority He has expected us to recognize, and we would not find ourselves in rebellion against our Maker.

Those of us who are leaders and elders of this community acknowledge that ours is a sober and holy responsibility. We lead out of gladness of heart, not from the pressure of duty. We will not seek praise, but will be the first to serve. We will not lord it over those entrusted to us, but will be examples to the community. We will clothe ourselves in humility and in mutual submission and will seek God’s face for the direction He would give (1 Pet. 5:1-6).

All of us will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21). We will be devoted to one another in brotherly love, honoring each other (Rom.

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12:10). We will discard selfish ambition and vain conceit, in humility exalting one another and in zeal looking out for each other's interests (Phil. 2:3,4). And, as we have declared earlier in this covenant, we will not only help one another; we are also willing *to be helped*.

We will not be caught unaware of the activity of the Evil One in our midst, knowing that Satan plays upon the absence of extended forgiveness (2 Cor. 5-11), the presence of suppressed anger (Eph. 4:25-27), and the prideful self-centeredness that is endemic to the "old man" (James 3:13-4:10). Therefore, we must forgive each other freely and fully, truthfully and quickly acknowledge anger, resentment and frustration in ourselves, and corporately resist the devil, seek heavenly wisdom, and humble ourselves. We will *not* give Satan a foothold in this community dedicated to the evangelization of the Unreached Peoples. The wisdom from above is considerate, submissive, reasonable and impartial.

Equally applicable to the USCWM community are the words of James Hudson Taylor concerning the China Inland Mission: "If the members are godly and wise, walking in the spirit of unity and love, they will not lack divine guidance in important matters and at critical times, but should another spirit prevail, no rules could save the Mission nor would it be worth saving. The China Inland Mission must be a living body in fellowship with God or it will be of no further use and cannot continue."

While we believe that a mission society, as a sodality is a legitimate and necessary represen-

tation of Christ's church, we acknowledge that the foundation for worship, instruction, and nurture is constituted by the local congregation, as a modality. This acknowledgement we make gladly, not grudgingly, for each of us is part of a local fellowship of believers in which we both give and receive. Because our community is task-oriented, we need the full-bodied nurture of the local congregation in order to attain godly balance between work and worship. We give our local fellowships humble and willing service, honoring pastoral and lay leadership as fellow workers in the gospel.

We must also love our friends and neighbors nearby who do not yet know our Lord Jesus Christ. God forbid that the banner of the Unreached Peoples should ever blind us to the desperate needs of neighbors on our own doorstep. God forbid that we should ever become so glib about the complexities of cross-cultural evangelism that we never develop or we lose the ability to share the Gospel with a person of our own or another culture.

We must actively seek to proclaim the Good News to people and peoples in our neighborhoods and to others whom we meet in the course of daily work and travel. We want the joy of the Gospel to radiate from our eyes and flow from our lips. We want to distribute our goods and talents to the poor and afflicted so that they will praise God for the obedience that accompanies our confession of the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 9:13). We acknowledge that unless we share the Good News regularly and demonstrably to those near us, our efforts on behalf of

Unreached Peoples far from us may become stilted and ingrown.

We will love our neighbors as ourselves...

### 7. Our Distant Friends and Relationships

We exist to serve. The United States Center for World Mission and the William Carey International University, for example, have no meaning apart from our aspiration to be a "cooperative" mission center which avoids duplication of what others are doing in order to concentrate on that which is undone and yet which must be done. We do not send missionaries, but we seek to "fill the gaps" in the frontier mission movement. The towel and basin will be our symbol, and excellence in service will be our hallmark.

What is more, we seek to serve those we may never see. God has given us such a breathtaking glimpse of what He is doing in the earth and in our midst that we feel as though we are debtors to the world; our vision and hope cannot be confined to the boundaries of Pasadena. While others may adhere to the dictum "Out of sight, out of mind," we recognize that our service-at-a-distance is a God-given obligation and opportunity that calls for the full extent of our attention and creativity. Too, we believe that by listening carefully to those we serve we keep our work and our witness fresh and relevant.

a. We serve mission agencies. We ourselves are a mission agency, under disciplines and "regula" that exceed the demands of the customary local congregation, and we take special pride that we

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can join the ranks of other second-decision “committed communities” whose energies are focused on the world's unreached. Our research institutes, mobilization projects, training courses, and auxiliary services are not our own, but belong to the entire mission community. We will be active and enthusiastic participants in the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association and the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, seeking to be both good listeners and productive contributors.

b. We serve in local congregations. As the pastor, Sunday School teacher, and missions committee member are called to “prepare God's people for works of service” (Eph. 4:12), so we are called to equip leaders and other members of local congregations to effectively make these fellowships “frontier mission outposts” that will bless the peoples of the world by their prayers, their gifts, and the missionaries they nurture and commission.

c. We serve students. Sober evaluation reveals that a wave of missionary retirements is not only leaving wide gaps in present fields and critical shortages in pioneer fields, but also is eroding the base of mission awareness and support. We offer and promote training courses that will enable today's generation of youth to discover and fulfill their roles in the World Christian movement.

d. We serve our donors and those who come to us to request information, materials and services, knowing that in serving them we serve the God who prompts their initiative. We aspire to answer every letter, receipt every

gift, and complete every order with promptness, accuracy and clarity, but also with sensitivity to the growing, real people behind these contacts. When we cannot provide the help requested, we will readily and quickly acknowledge our inability and will make referrals to other possible sources of help. Those sources of help include our area offices and sister centers, to whom we are also deeply committed.

e. We serve members of our respective “ministry teams,” who by their fervent prayers and generous gifts enable us to give full-time attention to the standards of this covenant. We will update these friends with letters, acknowledge their gifts with prompt receipts, and foster their missions vision by transparently sharing what we are learning. Each year we set aside time to minister face-to-face to those who have ministered to us at a distance throughout the year.

f. Finally, we serve other friends and acquaintances whom the passage of time and the distance of space have separated from us—college roommates, fellow workers in previous jobs, anyone whom we have known in any depth who may not have any other link besides ourselves to the resources of the Christian movement. Some of these still do not acknowledge the Lordship of our Savior, and so we would continue to point them to Jesus. Others do live in submission to Christ, and so we would seek to continue to edify and encourage these brothers and sisters. How marvelous is the fellowship of the Spirit, which transcends the limitations of both time and space!

We will love our neighbors as ourselves...

### 8. Our Potential Relationships anywhere in the world

God forbid that we should ever become so preoccupied with our common life that we lose touch with the world on whose behalf we have come together. We have adopted simplicity and parity of support as our way of life explicitly to recognize the very emergency of our times--the essentially wartime footing of the Christian believer in a world as yet unredeemed.

The USCWM is committed to an all-out attack upon the gravest problems of a world seriously in trouble on a global level. The people and organizations associated with the USCWM must be involved heart and soul in this endeavor, and it is inevitable that their convictions will be radiated in their daily lives, attitudes and behavior.

The Frontier Mission Fellowship has no desire to be *restrictive* upon the human spirit in any way but to be *expressive* of the urgent, even emergency concerns which have brought the FMF into being.

On the other hand, since the FMF is at work within the wealthiest and most powerful society in the world, it is exceedingly difficult, apart from a determined constant questioning of conventional American values, to act sensibly and reasonably with reference to the needs of real people and real opportunities beyond our immediate psychological horizons.

Thus, in order to withstand the social pressures of an affluent, wasteful society, we must agree positively to promote alternative

## Our Response

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patterns of life. It is not easy simply to disengage from the entire U.S. culture, nor is it deemed strategic, since in fact we must both deal with and seek to enlist the collaboration of the people of our time in the real world in which they find themselves.

Each member organization will naturally have its own approach in the task of developing a wholesome lifestyle as free as possible from the culturally approved evils of our society. But the Fellowship must also encourage and support such concerns on the part of its own members and will therefore establish certain minimal general goals which all members will be expected to pursue. Our orientation is primarily to the pattern of life reflected in mission circles over the past two centuries rather than to the generally less demanding standards found in American church life.

For example, we seek the goal of courteous recognition of all ethnic and cultural traditions as such. It must be deemed unacceptable for entities associated with the USCWM and the WCIU to judge the physical, social or cultural characteristics of any other group as inferior or immoral by reason of their differences from our own. All cultures are to be judged solely under the common absolutes of Scripture, not by each other on any social, cultural, or personal basis.

Our concern for "international development" leads us to advocate the goal of effective land use. We thus decry the *excessive* use of animal protein, which not only tears down health but wastes huge percentages of land otherwise available to cultivation of more efficient foods.

Similar reasoning applies to the vast misuse of land and damage to health occasioned by the cultural protection granted in the U.S. to tobacco and alcohol and to the perfectly enormous consumption of land that could be better utilized than in the production of nicotine and alcohol for dysfunctional purposes. We feel we must be determined to avoid—and all those associated with us must be at least supportive of our efforts to avoid—any unthinking acquiescence in the use of these drugs that are culturally approved and for that very reason are devastatingly more harmful than the unapproved narcotics.

It would seem unwittingly hypocritical for our government to spend millions in the endeavor to shut down the production of coca in Bolivia, which provides almost half of Bolivia's foreign exchange, while vastly more damaging drugs are not only condoned but economically subsidized by our same government in our own country.

Our commitment to "international development" in developing countries is undergirded by our conviction that all true social transformation and development depends upon the transformation of the human heart. The gospel of the Kingdom must be proclaimed and obeyed if social development is to have a solid foundation. As one has said, "Evangelism is at the core of true development. It is the catalyst that makes the rest of the mix take form and endure." (Ref?)

And, finally, we long for the fruit of our lives and our ministry to be "A church for every people by the year 2000." We work in the calm assurance that God is the

Victor and that before the throne of the Lamb will stand "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language" (Rev. 7:9). We will ultimately evaluate the effectiveness of our work not by the frenzy of our activity, the number of our receipts, or the size of our mailing list, but by the verifiable direct or indirect impact of our work on reaching of the remaining Unreached Peoples of the world.

*It is for them that we seek to understand and obey God's covenant with us.*