

CMC Conference 2017 Statement of Confession at the Women's Ministry Workshop

We the Executive Board, our Conference Minister, and Executive Director, acknowledge that women have been affected by extra biblical church traditions. We church leaders have interpreted scriptures in ways that have prevented women from exercising many of their spiritual gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit. We have too often been influenced more by our traditions than the commands of God.

We have at times hindered the body of Christ and thus have wounded our sisters by telling them that their gifts, given to them by the Holy Spirit, are not allowed, not wanted, and even are nonexistent or imaginary.

We are sorry. We confess our sin and ask both God and our sisters to forgive us. We commit to shed mere cultural and traditional practices that have determined "a woman's place" and replace them with genuine biblical practices.

I invite the Executive Board and staff to stand to show their support as I offer this identification prayer as modeled in the scriptures.

Let us pray.

"O Lord, you are a great and awesome God. You always fulfill your promises of unfailing love to those who love you and keep your commands.

We men have sinned and done wrong. We have allowed our culture, our religious traditions, and our own selfish hearts to marginalize our sisters and the gifts given to them by your Holy Spirit. We have failed to follow the example and teachings of Jesus. This has hurt our sisters in the church and hindered your body. Our faces are covered with shame because of this sin against you and our sisters.

O Lord, hear your servant's prayer. Forgive us of this sin. For your own sake, Lord, remove the strongholds we have given to the enemy by our sin. We publicly confess our sin to our sisters.

We declare today that we will seek to follow your scriptural commands. We ask your Spirit to guide us in empowering and releasing our sisters to minister in your church while being true to your Word.

We ask you to anoint both men and women in our churches with a fresh baptism of your Spirit. Release in us the gifts of your Spirit to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to your power that is at work within us. We pray this in the name of Jesus, for your glory. Amen

A Response from the women on the panel:

On behalf of the women in CMC and beyond, we are deeply moved by your repentance, wholeheartedly accept your words, and extend our forgiveness. We also thank you for the many ways you have stood in the difficult spot of leadership in our homes, churches and communities, for the times we have been protected and provided for. And for the ways you have worked wholeheartedly to the best of your understanding to “equip the saints for the work of ministry.” We acknowledge that some of the ways you may have limited our ministries have nevertheless grown out of your sincere desire to follow God and honor His word. We commit ourselves to study with you God-honoring ways to minister in each context where God calls us.

Our deepest desire is to glorify God in all of our words, deeds, and being. For those of you who have opened doors for us and championed our work and ministries, thank you. We also appreciate the ways that our fellowship of faith has stood against the objectification of women by teaching biblical modesty and simplicity. Together, by the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit we commit ourselves to living together as God's “royal priesthood, holy nation” until the whole earth is filled with the glory of God “as the waters cover the sea.”