

# Faith and Practice

## **Doctrines of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada**

*(As Authorized by the 2000 General Assembly)*

These Articles of Faith and Practice, together with supporting scriptures, are contained in the Constitution of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada available from any Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada pastor; or from the following:

**Evangelical Missionary Church, Canada East**

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## **ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### ***The Triune God***

The one and only true God is Spirit: self-existent, infinite, personal, unchangeable, and eternal in His being; perfect in holiness, love, justice, goodness, wisdom, and truth; omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; Creator and Sustainer of all things, visible and invisible; both immanent and transcendent to creation; eternally existent in three persons, one in substance and co-equal in power and glory -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father is begotten of none. He is the eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Author of salvation, the Father of all who are begotten into newness of life through faith in Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God; is the only Son of the Father; is incarnate since He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, thus uniting the divine and human natures in their completeness into the one unique person Jesus Christ; is sinless in His life and miraculous works; made atonement, through His vicarious death, for the sins of the world; is bodily resurrected and ascended to the right hand of the Father; has sovereign power and lordship; acts, in His present mediatorial ministry, as the believer's Advocate; awaits His imminent coming in power and glory.

The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and being sent by the Son, is one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternally God. His office and work is to reprove or convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; to regenerate those who repent of their sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; to sanctify, endue with power, teach, guide and comfort the believer.

The Holy Spirit works in the church to unite believers into the body of Christ; to possess it as the temple of God; to equip it with gifts and graces for service; to give it the body of inspired truth; and to preside over and guide the church into the will of God.

### ***The Bible***

The Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God given by divine inspiration and is inerrant in the original manuscripts. The Bible remains the unchanging authority in matters of Christian faith and practice. It is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

### ***Mankind***

*Our Creation.* Mankind was created by an immediate act of God and not by a process of evolution. We were created in the image and likeness of God, possessing personality and holiness; enjoying sweet fellowship with God in our original state, we were created to glorify God<sup>2</sup> and enjoy Him forever. Having been created in the likeness of God we are self conscious personalities capable of free and rational choice. Human life has inherent worth from conception.

*Our Fall.* Through the transgression of Adam, mankind is fallen from original righteousness, suffers under sin's curse, and, apart from the grace of God, is not only entirely destitute of holiness, but is inclined continually to evil, and, unless born again, "cannot see the kingdom of God". We, in our own strength, without divine grace, cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God.

As persons we are free moral agents and are responsible for our eternal destiny. Under the influence and empowering of the Holy Spirit and due to the prevenient grace of God we are enabled to exercise our wills to accept God's will and gift.

*Our Redemption.* God has provided redemption for all persons through the mediatorial work of Christ who voluntarily offered Himself on Calvary as a perfect sacrifice for sin, the just suffering for the unjust, bearing sin's curse and tasting death for every person.

## **Salvation**

We are all sinners, guilty before God, and dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, we are unable to save ourselves, but God has, out of His infinite love, given His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to become our Saviour.

*Repentance.* Genuine repentance is a necessary attitude and act of man which a holy and just God requires before He forgives our sins. As an attitude it involves a knowledge of, a change of mind toward, and a godly sorrow for sin; a proper reverence for God's holiness; and a surrender to God. As an act it means confessing and forsaking sin. Repentance is our appropriate response to the grace of God in conviction. As a fruit of repentance, in so far as possible where sin has been committed, restitution should be made.

*Faith.* Faith, which must accompany repentance, is God's gift where, by an act of the will, we embrace the promises of God and appropriate personally the provisions of God's grace. The believer, by faith, rests in the completeness and adequacy of the atoning merit of Christ's sacrifice as the sole ground and hope of salvation. Scripture also teaches that good works characterize a regenerated life. They spring from a true and living faith and are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ.

*Justification and Regeneration.* God justifies and regenerates sinners when they personally believe and repent. Justification is a judicial act which absolves us of the guilt and punishment for sin and restores us to divine favour. Justification has to do with the changing of the sinner's standing before God. Regeneration has to do with the changing of the sinner's nature through the impartation of divine life. Regeneration is a spiritual quickening, a new birth. This experience is witnessed to by the indwelling Holy Spirit who produces in the heart a desire to do the will of God.

*Sanctification and Filling with the Holy Spirit.* Sanctification is defined as the work of God in making believers holy and renewing them in the image of God. It is the will of God that each believer should be cleansed from sin and filled with the Holy Spirit and sanctified. Sanctification involves separation from sin and full dedication to the will of God. God in turn bestows power for holy living and effective service. Sanctification is both a crisis, as the

regenerated believer initially surrenders to the will of God and appropriates the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and a progressive pilgrimage of continual consecration and growth in character and Christlikeness.

The filling of a believer with the Holy Spirit is evidenced by love out of a pure heart and by the fruit of the Spirit. It is this believer's privilege to live, by faith, a Spirit-filled, Spirit-gifted, and Spirit-led life of victory over sin.

*Security of the Believer.* Through the declaration of Scripture and the testimony of the Holy Spirit the obedient believer can be certain of forgiveness, salvation, a continuing walk with Christ, and the promise of resurrection life. The Scriptures do, however, warn against failing to abide in Christ, being hardened by sin, or being overcome by the world. To allow the Devil such a foothold is to open oneself to the temptation to consciously reject Christ, abandon one's faith, and ultimately be lost.

*Resurrection and Glorification.* Christ was bodily resurrected and, because He lives, we too shall live. At the return of the Lord, the bodies of the righteous dead will be raised and, together with the living believers, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. We will all be changed so as to have literal, spiritual and immortal bodies like unto Christ's own glorious body. Our glorification is God's final act in our salvation and will be realized when we see Him as He is.

## **The Church**

The church is an organism composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been called out from the world, separated from sin, and vitally united by faith to Christ, its living Head and sovereign Lord.

The local church is an organized body of believers in Christ who are voluntarily joined together for public worship and evangelism, teaching the Word, fellowship with the saints, observance of the ordinances, exercise in prayer, and who are commissioned with the responsibility to administer discipline.

God equips individuals in the body for service in the world-wide multi-faceted ministry of his church.<sup>1</sup> He gives to each woman and man at least one spiritual gift<sup>2</sup>, by the Holy Spirit, to be used, under the

direction of the Head, Jesus Christ, as an integrated part of the total ministry of his church. Each member has a role, whether as a lay person or as vocational leader, all of whom God chooses and equips.

The characteristic marks of the members of the true church are faith in Jesus as the Son of God, love for God and for those of like faith, obedience to God's commandments, and victory over the world.

The primary duties of the church consist of glorifying God and exalting the Lord Jesus Christ, of building itself up in the most holy faith, and of preaching and practising the Gospel in all the world as a witness to all people.

### **The Last Things**

*The Return of Christ.* The second advent of Christ is the hope of the church and will be personal, bodily, visible, sudden, premillennial, and redemptive. It is a source of encouragement and consolation, a motive for purification and holiness, and an inspiration for activity and service.

*Millennium.* The millennium or thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth will be ushered in by His return with the saints. During this period Satan will be bound, the curse will be lifted, evils such as war, poverty, and injustice shall vanish from the earth, and Christ will reign in righteousness.

*The Judgment and Future State.* There is a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. All persons stand under the righteous judgment of God, both now and in that day. Scripture further teaches an eternal state of rewards in which the righteous dwell in endless life in heaven and the wicked in endless punishment in the eternal lake of fire.

## **ARTICLES OF PRACTICE**

### **Ordinances**

The Christian ordinances are two in number, baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are the outward rites appointed by Christ to be administered in each local church, not as means of salvation, but as visible signs and seals of its reality.

Baptism. Baptism by water is the symbol of one's union by faith with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. It constitutes the public confession of these spiritual realities to the world and is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Baptism is administered, preferably by immersion, to those who have been born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who give evidence of the genuineness of their salvation.

*The Lord's Supper.* The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ himself on the night of His betrayal. It is a memorial of Christ's death, a centre of communion and fellowship, a testimony to saving faith, and a visible token of Christ's redemptive covenant. It is observed only by believers and consists in partaking of the consecrated emblems of bread and the fruit of the vine, which symbolize the death of Christ for the remission of our sins and our continual dependence upon Him for life and sustenance until He comes. While the Lord's Supper is open to all true believers, we are strongly exhorted to examine ourselves "and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup."

### **Divine Healing**

God is able to heal, therefore we ought to pray for the sick. Although healing cannot be demanded of God, it should be sought according to Scriptural instruction. God heals in three ways:

- 1) through the natural processes of the human body which may be aided by medical help;
- 2) through the supernatural intervention of God bringing healing to the body; and
- 3) through the death and resurrection of the body to a glorified state.

### **The Lord's Day**

The Lord's Day, which commemorates the resurrection, is for private and public worship and for rest from unnecessary work. It should be devoted to spiritual development, Christian fellowship, and service. It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian church and important to the welfare of society.

### **Christian Stewardship**

In recognition of God's ownership of all things believers should practice systematic and proportionate giving, adopting the tithe as a minimum

expression of their stewardship. They should regard Christian liberality as a privilege and sacred duty, and freely give of their substance for the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad, for the maintenance of the local church, and for the support of the agencies and enterprises of the denomination.

Believers should also dedicate themselves, their time, talents, and substance to God and to the advancement of His kingdom. Christians are encouraged to spend time in Bible study, prayer, and in sharing the gospel.

### ***Dedication of Children***

God is concerned for the well-being of children who are under the atonement of Christ. We encourage the formal dedication of children in a public service of the church.

### ***Marriage, Singleness, Family, and Human Sexuality***

As human beings, men and women, we are created in the image of God. God saw that his creation of humankind was very good. As a result we have intrinsic worth and are found to be equally valued by God.

We believe God has established the church as a family of faith in which we are each sons or daughters. It is within this family of faith that we are established, rooted, fulfill our ministry, and find maturity in Christ.

We also believe the family of faith is where the goodness of being either single or married is to be honoured. We recognize that God has created human beings for relationship with him and with each other. God's intention is for people to be blessed through families: both the family of faith and the family into which we are born. God created the family to be the cornerstone of social order.

The home is a divinely established institution<sup>1</sup> in which the husband is the head<sup>2</sup> but serves its members by the law of love, and in which husband and wife are to work together to raise their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord."<sup>3</sup> Obedience to parents is to be rendered by children in the spirit of mutual respect and love.

Marriage is part of God's design in establishing the family. We believe that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. This heterosexual union<sup>4</sup> is the only appropriate relationship within which the joy of sexual intimacy is to be expressed. We affirm such marriage as God's design for a lifelong loving relationship, sexual intimacy, and the birth and nurture of children. Christian marriage is intended for those who share a common faith in Christ<sup>5</sup>. Such a marriage is blessed of God.

### ***Divorce***

Divorce is viewed in the Scriptures as contrary to God's will. Christians should seek by forbearance and forgiveness to preserve the marriage bond.

Persons divorced and remarried who give evidence of being genuinely born again are eligible to be received into membership in the church.

Divorce between members of the church is an occasion of great tragedy. Such conduct brings the teaching and reality of Christian reconciliation under reproach and offenders are to be disciplined.

The church board shall provide counsel and take proper disciplinary action giving consideration to appropriate aspects of Article 13.3.3.

Care should be exercised that such action be as redemptive as possible for all parties involved.

Ministers are to refrain from performing marriage ceremonies where one or both parties are divorced. However ministers are permitted, at their discretion, to solemnize the marriage of a person whose previous marriage partner committed adultery, who is recognized as living a genuine Christian life, and where there is good evidence that a true Christian marriage is intended.

### ***Practices and Conduct***

Believers are not to be conformed to the view and lifestyle of the world of which they are a part, but, on the contrary, are to function as salt to prevent the spread of moral corruption, and as light to dispel spiritual darkness. High standards should therefore be set for their personal and collective life including the following:

- 1) their disposition and attitudes be characterized by godliness and the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control;
- 2) their social relationships bear witness to Christ, their entire conduct reflecting the spiritual ideals of Christianity rather than the world; they shall not marry unbelievers, shall not hold membership in oath-bound secret societies, and shall not compromise Christian principles in partnerships;
- 3) their bodies be treated as temples of the Holy Spirit thus making it inconsistent with both Christian testimony and sound principles of health to compromise their influence and injure their bodies through inappropriate practices or substance abuse.

**Attitude Toward Civil Government**

Civil government is ordained of God for the welfare of society to promote and protect the good and to restrain and punish evil. Therefore, we consider it the duty of Christians to pray for rulers and for those who are in authority over them and to give due loyalty, respect, and obedience to them. Christians are also encouraged to take an active interest in government at all levels. Where the demands of civil law would militate against the supreme law and will of God, Christians should obey God rather than man.

**Attitude Toward Strife and Military Service**

Believers are to love their enemies, do good to them that hate them, overcome evil with good, and, as much as possible, live peaceably with all men. Therefore, it is not fitting for the Christian to promote strife between nations, classes, groups, or individuals.

Sincere Christians have conscientious differences as to their understanding of the teaching of the Word of God with reference to their responsibility as Christian citizens to human government both in times of war and times of peace. We are, therefore, to exercise tolerance and understanding, and respect the individual conscience with regard to participation in war.

**Oaths**

A Christian's life should be so transparent in its honesty and integrity that his or her word can be fully trusted without swearing on the Bible in judicial situations or taking the Lord's name in vain.

## Application for Membership in the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada

Name of local church where you are applying for membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you experienced salvation by faith and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you read and are you in agreement with the attached doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Missionary Church and are you willing to live by these principles? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you now a member of any other church? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what church? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City Province Postal Code

I desire, as an expression of my commitment to Jesus Christ and His Church, to become a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelical Missionary Church and join with them in doing the work of Christ in the world.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_