

Welcome to the Family 2021



EFCC

**Unity.
Charity.
Jesus Christ.**

Welcome to the Family

A membership manual for Evangelical Free Churches

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Section 1

Evangelical Free Church of Canada

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC) is an association of over 140 churches, and church plants, joined together by a common commitment to national and international mission, leadership, prayer, accountability, credentialing and encouragement of pastors and missionaries. It is a partner with more than 1500 Evangelical Free Churches in the United States. The EFCC is also an active participant among the 31 members of the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches (IFFEC) worldwide.

“Evangelical” refers to our common commitment to God’s “Evangel”, the gospel of Jesus Christ and our belief in the authority of the Scriptures. It also speaks to our belief that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ form the only basis upon which, by God’s grace, we can be reconciled to our Heavenly Father.

“Free” is a term that historically has designated a church as being one that is not a state-controlled church. Today, since no church in North America is state-sanctioned or controlled, it has come to signify our form of church government as being congregational, and the fact that Evangelical Free Churches maintain their autonomy with regard to the purchase of property, calling of pastors, setting budgets, and so forth. Yet they voluntarily band together interdependently and freely in missions, church planting, education, camping, publications, and other ministries.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE EFCC

The Evangelical Free Church movement in North America began in the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Its religious and philosophical roots are firmly planted on the foundational principles of two major historical events. The first was the 16th century Protestant Reformation which changed the religious climate across all Europe. The Church had strayed far from a biblically-based foundation, and reform back to biblical roots was desperately needed. Three revolutionary principles of the Reformation laid the foundation for spiritual renewal and formed the basis for the “Free Church” movement during the next 250 years:

- * ***Sola Scriptura*** (“only the Scriptures”) – Scripture, not the institutional church, is the primary authority by which humanity must live and against which truth and error must be judged;
- * ***Sola Gratia*** (“only by grace”) – Salvation is by grace alone, the free and unmerited gift of God to a sinful human world;
- * ***Sola Fides*** (“only by faith”) – The gift of salvation and the benefits of being in God’s eternal family come through personal faith in Christ as Saviour, not by any personal good works, the merits of a human mediator, religious ceremonies or institutional efforts.

The second major historical event was a mid-19th century grass-roots movement across Europe to break away from established state-controlled churches, which were, in many cases, simply arms of government. In the Scandinavian countries – Sweden, Norway and Denmark – the Lutheran Church acted in such a manner. A number of issues emerged and brought unsettledness among a growing number of Christians.

- ***The dominance of the State over the Church.*** The relationship between the State and the Church was unhealthy because the State had far more authority over the Church than did the Scriptures. In most places, the State had authority to dictate what the Church was to believe, how it was to worship, and how it was to be governed.
- ***Deadness of the Church.*** As a State Church, it was the Church of all citizens whether or not they were truly believers. The churches' beliefs and practices were not under the control of believers who sought to follow the Scriptures in everything they did. In many churches, the services and ceremonies had become hollow religious experiences with little personal spiritual commitment, involvement in ministries or evangelistic missions outreach.
- ***Mandatory and open communion.*** Instead of emphasizing the need for a personal faith in Christ, the churches' emphasis was on attending communion services, which was often required by law and granted to everyone regardless of their personal spiritual commitments.

A grassroots movement began to return churchgoers to a faith that was founded on the Scriptures and lived out in their lives. As people came to know Christ personally as Saviour and Lord and began studying the Bible, they formed strong convictions regarding the foundational principles for local churches:

- ***Church membership*** of "believers only, but all believers." The church membership was to be composed only of individuals who professed Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and must not exclude anyone except when this confession was lacking.
- ***A scriptural basis*** for theological belief and personal lifestyle. "*Where stands it written?*" was asked on questions of belief and practice.
- ***Local church autonomy*** - the right of self-government, free from the control of the State. Autonomy did not mean isolation or withdrawal from the help or influence of other churches, their local district or their National body. The churches still valued family and wise counsel.
- ***The ordinances*** were for believers only. Baptism and communion were for those who confessed personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.
- ***Active involvement*** of lay persons in the work of the church. The ministry of the church was for all believers, not just for the professionally trained pastors.
- ***Missionary activity.*** Other people needed to know the Good News of the Gospel and missionaries needed to be sent to other parts of the world.

Believers affirming these principles began to develop informal and unofficial gatherings within the larger State Church. But as these new groups began to implement some of the principles, church authorities pressured them to abandon their ways or withdraw from the established Church. They chose to withdraw and began establishing new "Free Churches" on their own. Hence, the "Free Church" was born.

A few years after this movement began, immigrants from the Scandinavian countries started arriving in the United States and establishing churches. In 1884, the Swedish group formally began in Boone, Iowa, and at the same time Norwegian-Danish groups began to worship and fellowship together in Boston, Massachusetts and Tacoma, Washington. Many of the early churches were also established in Minnesota and Illinois.

The two branches of the Free Church grew independently of one another for many years. Because each group still used its respective language and was strongly nationalistic, they rarely fellowshiped together. However, in the 1940's, the two groups developed an increasing desire to merge. By that time, the two groups commonly shared five elements: their heritage, English-speaking services, doctrinal statements, church structure, and a desire for joint ministries. In 1946, the Free Church groups united when both conferences approved the merger of their schools and publications.

Finally, in June of 1950, near Minneapolis, Minnesota, the two associations completed their merger. With 275 churches uniting, the Evangelical Free Church of America was born. The national and international offices of the EFCA have been located in Minneapolis since then.

The EFCA has continued to grow in ethnic diversity, church planting, overseas mission and publications through the leadership of the following presidents:

1950 - 1976	Dr. Arnold T. Olson
1976 – 1990	Dr. Thomas McDill
1990 – 1996	Dr. Paul Cedar
1996 – 2015	Rev. Bill Hamel
2015 –	Rev. Kevin Kompelien

Of particular interest to Canadians was the founding, in 1962, of Trinity Junior College (now Trinity Western University) in Langley, British Columbia.

The EFCC owes its beginnings to the Norwegian-Danish side of the two Scandinavian groups in the U.S. As a result of the revival movements among Norwegian immigrants in 1911 the Evangelical Free Church of Canada came into being. These revivals led to the establishment of a short-lived congregation in Winnipeg in 1913 and the formation of a strong congregation at Enchant, Alberta in June 1917. This church is regarded as the official beginning point of the EFCC and continues to this day, having celebrated their 100th anniversary in 2017.

Through the revival movement in Enchant, members of the Fosmark family were converted. It was the Fosmark family, especially brothers Carl and Lee, who gave very significant leadership to the development of the EFCC. In 1993, in recognition of and appreciation for their impact, the building housing the Evangelical Free Church Seminary (Trinity Western Seminary) and the EFCC Home Office was named the Fosmark Centre.

Churches continued to be established. The first Evangelical Free Church in British Columbia was organized in 1938. In 1957, the Fellowship of Gospel Churches merged with the Evangelical Free Church, which brought the number of organized churches in Canada to 56. In 2001, the Evangelical Free Churches in Canada numbered 148, extending from the province of Quebec to the Pacific Coast.

For many of those years, the Free Churches in Canada were a part of the Evangelical Free Church of America. In most respects, the identity, distinctives, mission activities, and

district structures were identical to the American churches. Canadians attended the same conferences, read the same Evangelical Beacon magazine, and so forth. Over time, the EFCC has matured to the place where it became a truly Canadian church, reflecting Christian values in our own way to our unique culture.

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada was incorporated under a federal charter in 1967, but continued in affiliation with the EFCA until 1984, when it became self-governing. Although we had now become a separate entity from our “parent” EFCA organization, we continue to have great relationship with them in communication and cooperation.

Rev. Don Kroening served as our first President and contributed much to the organization of the EFCC. Rev. Ron Swanson succeeded him and brought a strong passion for outreach and evangelism. In 1993, Dr. Rick Penner was elected as the third President of the EFCC. His ministry concluded early in 2001.

Dr. Ron Unruh was elected the EFCC’s fourth President in July 2002 at the Conference held in Lethbridge, Alberta. He brought stability and strengthened the relationships, particularly within the National Ministries Team. Dr. Unruh retired at the end of July 2008 and was succeeded by Bill Taylor, who was elected as the fifth President at the Conference held in Edmonton, Alberta. At that conference, the title, “President”, was changed to Executive Director, which more accurately describes the structure and ethos of the EFCC.

OUR CHARACTER and CALLING (EFCC Ethos)

OUR CHARACTER

The Kingdom of God is His eternal possession, and is present in the world today, in part but not in full. By God's decree, under His direction, and empowered by His grace, the universal Church is responsible for the care and expansion of that Kingdom. Every local church, denomination, and ministry organization is a part of that Kingdom and carries some responsibility in the work of the Kingdom. As a part of that Body of Christ, the Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC) desires to understand and fulfill its particular calling in the work of the Kingdom. The EFCC will seek to live out our calling to be a Community in Christ, reflecting the fullness of His vision for the Kingdom of God "on earth as it is in heaven." We will do this by putting aside the prevailing values of our time and replacing them with the radical demands of the gospel of God's grace.

OUR CALLING: ***IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY;
IN NON-ESSENTIALS, CHARITY;
IN ALL THINGS, JESUS CHRIST.***

The calling and spirit of the EFCC is summed up well in this famous motto. It both defines our call and expresses our aspirations for the 21st century.

IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY...

- Essential Truths: We are called to embody and proclaim the essential truths of Christianity as articulated in the Word of God, expressed through the centuries in the great creeds of the church and defined for us in our Statement of Faith. We continue in the tradition of our EFCC forefathers who said; "Where stands it written?" These truths have led us to Jesus Christ who said "He is Truth" and that the "Truth would set us free."
- Spiritual Unity: This calling is to a spirit of unity in Jesus Christ, with an affirmation of the priesthood and ministry of all believers, congregational government in the local church where He is Head, meaningful involvement within our fellowship of churches, and cooperation with all who share our call to these essential truths.

IN NON-ESSENTIALS, CHARITY...

- Generosity of Spirit: We are called to a generosity of spirit that frees us to embrace a wide variety of Christian brothers and sisters - "simply believers" – some with whom we will not agree in matters that are outside our Statement of Faith. Our spirit is one of warm welcome to all believers who share our commitment to our Statement of Faith and who seek to follow Jesus' command to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves.
- Kingdom Minded: This generous spirit encourages us to joyfully work with those outside our own association, those of "like precious faith" who endeavour to expand the kingdom of heaven.

IN ALL THINGS, JESUS CHRIST

- The Great Command and Great Commission: We are called to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the Lord God. Through His grace and through His Spirit we seek to fulfill His command to love our neighbour by loving each and every person, especially the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed. We seek to fulfill His great commission by making followers of Him from all people groups.
- Godly Living: From the practice and teachings of Jesus, the present ministry of the Holy Spirit working within us, and the pietistic model of our forefathers has grown a spirit that hungers for a closer relationship with Jesus Christ that will transform our hearts, our heads, our hands, and will reveal itself in a Christ-inspired value system and a holy lifestyle.

EFCC Governance

The EFCC has established a structure in order to carry out and insure that our objectives are being accomplished.

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada holds alternating biennial General and Theological Conferences, which provide training, spiritual encouragement and fellowship. An Annual General Meeting is held at these conferences to conduct official business. Every church is eligible and encouraged to send official delegates to the conferences.

The delegates are responsible to elect members of the EFCC Board of Directors and Committees, and to elect the Executive Director of the EFCC.

The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing the entire organization of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada.

The Office of the Executive Director, various ministry departments, the Board and committees, along with the Catalysts, district superintendents and district boards, exist to serve local EFCC churches, as they carry on “front line” ministries.

Purpose Statement of the EFCC

From its inception, the Evangelical Free Church of Canada has been committed to active participation in the mission of Christ’s Church in local congregations within our country and around the world. In 2016, the EFCC Board of Directors updated the purpose statement:

“We exist to help lives be transformed by the power of the gospel.”

The EFCC purpose statement grows from our conviction that the local church is the ideal context for personal transformation. National and international EFCC leaders partner with district leaders to strengthen and expand the fellowship of churches so that they more effectively evangelize the lost and make disciples who impact our world for Jesus Christ. We exist to serve the Lord and to see lives transformed through the local church.

Vision Statement and Core Values

VISION

**To become a growing network of believers and churches
united around the EFCC ethos,
empowered to carry out
the Great Commandment and Great Commission.**

MOTTO

*In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity.
In all things, Jesus Christ.*

CORE VALUES

We value:

The Gospel

The Local Church

The Word

Prayer

Culturally-Sensitive Servant Leadership

Interdependent Ministry

Personal Transformation

Creativity and Diversity

Ministries of the EFCC

The EFCC consists of three primary ministry arms: National, International [EFCCM], and Prayer. Together these ministry arms accomplish the association's overall purpose:

“We exist to help lives be transformed by the power of the gospel.”

Executive Director

The Executive Director provides visionary administrative leadership to the Evangelical Free Church of Canada and serves under the EFCC Board of Directors, which is responsible for the oversight of all ministries of the EFCC. The Executive Director is responsible to provide spiritual and visionary direction to our movement, general ministry oversight, and supervision of pastoral care to Pastors, District Superintendents, and other Leaders in the EFCC. The EFCC Conference elects the Executive Director.

Coordination of Interdependent Ministry

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada includes local congregations, church plants, five districts, a university, a seminary, missionaries in several countries, and the EFCC Home Office. Coordinating ministries and leaders for common vision and direction is a key function of the Executive Director. He is vitally connected with the District Superintendents and the EFCC International Mission (EFCCM). He is a member of the Trinity Western University (TWU) Board of Governors, Trinity Western Seminary (TWS) Advisory Council and the Board of Directors for ACTS Seminaries. He also represents the EFCC on the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches (IFFEC) and in partnerships from time-to-time with like-minded movements outside of the EFCC that contribute to our mission.

Coordination of Vision and Direction

The EFCC is committed to being a movement that has a clearly defined mission, lives by its core values, and has a picture of its preferred future. The Executive Director works closely with the EFCCM Director, the National Mission Director, the Leadership Catalyst, the Prayer Catalyst, and the Stewardship Catalyst. Together these leaders carry out the vision and strategic plan approved by the Board of Directors and other EFCC leaders.

Coordination of Ordination and Licensing

The Office of the Executive Director is responsible for upholding the doctrinal standards of the EFCC and the Character and Calling of our movement. The Ministerial Standing Committee (MSC), of which the Executive Director is a member, oversees the credentialing process. All pastors and ministry personnel are required to affirm annually 1) the EFCC Statement of Faith, 2) the EFCC Character & Calling and 3) the Covenant of Personal & Professional Ethics. Once confirmation of these affirmations is received, a Certificate of Good Standing is issued. Those seeking an EFCC ministry or ordination credential must undergo requirements overseen by the MSC.

Discipline and Restoration of Pastors

Pastors who encounter moral difficulties, who exhibit questionable lifestyle issues or who move away from the theological position of the EFCC may face the revocation of their credential, and may require discipline and, where possible, restoration to ministry.

EFCC National Mission

EFCC National Mission Director

The primary purpose of the EFCC Director of National Mission is to provide leadership to the EFCC National Mission. This person does so by encouraging, coordinating and facilitating the implementation of evangelism, church planting and other EFCC mission activities within Canada.

EFCC Catalysts

Leadership Catalyst

The primary purpose of the Leadership Development Catalyst is to support and develop activities that aid the EFCC/M in multiplying mature, godly leaders, and to develop and facilitate pastor training events and learning opportunities that bring pastors and lay leaders together.

Stewardship Catalyst

The role of the Stewardship Catalyst is to work with the Executive Director in fundraising and to provide stewardship education, especially in the areas of estate planning and will preparation to individuals, churches and districts.

EFCC Home Office

There are numerous resources and services that few of our churches could access individually, but can collectively through the EFCC Home Office.

Pooled benefits: The Home Office is able to negotiate and provide benefits, such as a group extended health care plan and group RRSP/TFSA plan for our pastors, missionaries, church staff, EFCC leadership and Home Office staff.

Credentialing: In partnership with the District and local church, the Home Office coordinates the collection of materials and assists in the process of credentialing.

District assistance: There are several ways that the EFCC Home Office works specifically to assist District Superintendents with: pastoral placement, pastors' orientation, church planting assessment training, credentialing, church health resources, leadership training, etc.

Care and oversight of our missionaries, both in Canada and around the world.

Communications: The EFCC desires to communicate effectively to the members of the EFCC family. *The Pulse* serves as a vehicle to communicate EFCC international, national, district and local church news as well as to share spiritual vision and inspiration. It is distributed regularly by email and then compiled and published quarterly. Increasingly, superintendents, pastors, missionaries and ministry support personal are able to connect by email and a specific EFCC Basecamp. The EFCC website and social media are also channels for sharing vision, stories, videos, podcasts, and blog posts.

Evangelical Free Church of Canada Mission (EFCCM)

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada Mission (EFCCM) was born out of concern for advancing the gospel in Canada and around the world. In 1977, the Evangelical Free Church of Canada Mission Board was established with its own Canadian Director, Rev. Lea Little. In order to bring further maturity to the Canadian missionary ministry, in 1990 the EFCCM began its first overseas ministries in Europe, Russia, Ukraine and Hungary. A few years later, EFCCM began its first work in Latin America (NW Mexico). Now the EFCCM has expanded its ministries into more than 20 countries throughout Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. Currently, over 60 EFCCM Missionaries are serving in these regions around the world.

Purpose Statement of the EFCCM:

“We exist to help lives be transformed by the power of the gospel.”

EFCCM Vision Statement

**To become a growing network of believers and churches
united around the EFCC ethos, empowered to carry out
the Great Commandment and Great Commission.**

Fulfilling the Purpose Statement

In order to see the purpose statement become a reality, local churches and the EFCCM work together in a healthy partnership. Area Directors work closely with the churches and missionaries sent out by the EFCCM.

EFCCM Director

The EFCCM Director is the point person for general inquiries, developing relationships and implementing connections with EFCC churches, pastors and other mission agencies. He will represent the EFCCM at conferences.

Ministry Coaches

Ministry Coaches support of the work of missionaries.

Education

In 1961, a small group of people had an extraordinary vision to establish a Canadian Christian university to prepare leaders of integrity. They purchased Seal-Kap Dairy Farm and in 1962 opened the first classes of Trinity Junior College with 17 students. The College grew to 800 students by 1984, when it was granted membership into the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). In 1985, the British Columbia Legislature granted a charter under the name Trinity Western University.

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada is grateful to God for Trinity Western University, located in Langley, British Columbia. The EFCC serves as the sponsoring denomination for this unique Canadian university.

The mission of Trinity Western University, as an arm of the Church, is to develop godly Christian leaders: positive, goal-oriented university graduates with thoroughly Christian minds; growing disciples of Jesus Christ who glorify God through fulfilling the Great Commission, serving God and people in the various marketplaces of life.

Trinity Western Seminary is one of four seminaries functioning as a consortium known collectively as the Associated Canadian Theological Schools (ACTS Seminaries), and that together forms TWU's Graduate School of Theological Studies. TWS is also located on TWU's campus in Langley.

TWU is Canada's largest independent Christian university, with an annual total enrolment of over 4000. With a broad based liberal arts and sciences curriculum, the University offers over 40 undergraduate majors, including biotechnology, education, music, and nursing; plus over 15 graduate degrees including business administration, counselling psychology, theology, interdisciplinary humanities, and leadership.

Auxiliary and Affiliate Organizations

ANACEFC is the Association of North American Chinese Evangelical Free Churches. ANACEFC's purpose is to provide a network by which to multiply healthy Chinese Free Churches in North America, and to that end encourages its member churches to be supportive of the vision through prayer, participation, and financial resources. ANACEFC serves as a partner to the EFCC, the EFCA, and the districts of both associations to facilitate Chinese work and church planting within Chinese communities.

Affiliations. The EFCC ministers in close affiliation with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA), 31 other national denominations that are members of the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches (IFFEC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), Abundance Canada, Plan to Protect, Tearfund Canada (formerly World Relief Canada) and Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Districts of the EFCC

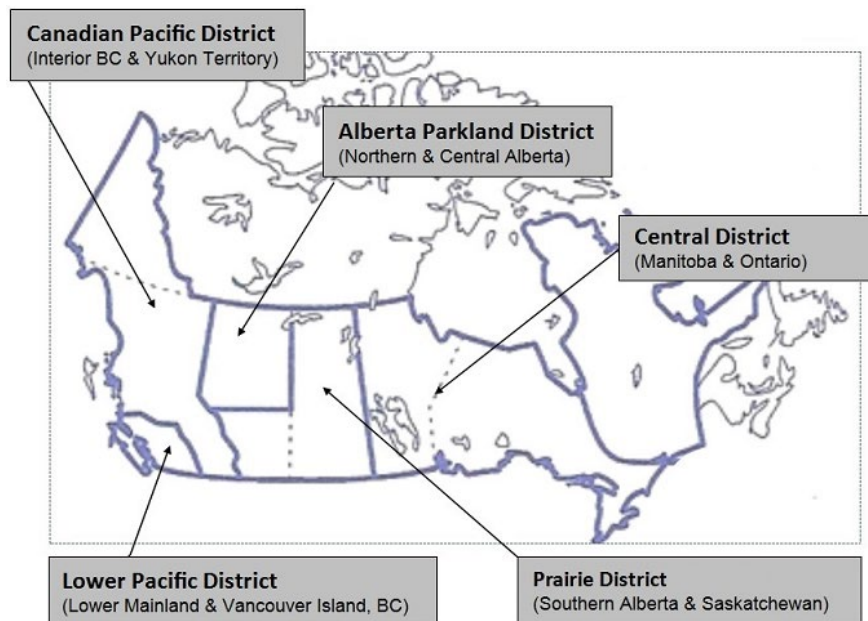
The Evangelical Free Church of Canada is a movement that is committed to the local church. It is our conviction that the context in which the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) are to be fulfilled is that of the local church. Jesus Christ is its Head.

We also believe that a voluntary, interdependent, binding together of churches enables us to fulfill the mandate of the Church more effectively.

Districts in the EFCC join Evangelical Free Churches together by province or geographical region. Within their own district, Superintendents give leadership to ministries such as pastoral placement and care, church planting, credentialing and church consultation.

There are two districts types: Regional and National. Each regional districts has its own constitution and set of bylaws; they elect officers to transact district business and board members assist Superintendents in their ministries. National districts operate under the oversight of the Office of the Executive Director. In both cases, representatives from the churches are selected to be delegates at annual district conferences.

EFCC Districts



Canadian Pacific District (CPD) – Regional District: BC Interior and Yukon Territory

Lower Pacific District (LPD) – Regional District: Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island

Alberta Parkland District (APD) – Regional District: Northern and Central Alberta

Prairie District (PRA) – Regional District: Southern Alberta and Saskatchewan

Central District (CEN) – National District comprising churches from Manitoba and Ontario

Specific District Information

This space is provided for notes on specific information for your district.

District Superintendent

Office Location

Number of Churches in the District

Number of Pastors in the District

Church Plants

Unique Ministries of District

Section 2

EFCC Statement of Faith

The book, “Gospel Truths”, published in September 2011, is available through the EFCC Home Office.

It is a theological exposition of the 2008 Statement of Faith. It is a vital tool and an invaluable resource in the ongoing efforts of the EFCC to ensure that we remain centred in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EFCC Statement of Faith

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada is an association of autonomous churches united in a common commitment to God's evangel -- the gospel of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to give us eternal life. To God's glory, the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Our essential theological convictions are vitally connected to this gospel.

God's gospel originates in and expresses the wondrous perfections of the eternal, triune God.

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

God's gospel is authoritatively revealed in the Scriptures.

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavour should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

God's gospel alone addresses our deepest need.

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

God's gospel is made known supremely in the Person of Jesus Christ.

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

God's gospel is accomplished through the work of Christ.

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

God's gospel is applied by the power of the Holy Spirit.

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

God's gospel is now embodied in the new community called the church.

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

God's gospel compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world.

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

God's gospel will be brought to fulfillment by the Lord Himself at the end of this age.

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ with His holy angels when He will bring His kingdom to fulfillment and exercise His role as Judge of all. This coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

God's gospel requires a response that has eternal consequences.

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

EFCC Statement of Faith

“God’s gospel originates in and expresses the wondrous perfections of the eternal, triune God”

Article 1

God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

I. The Gospel is the Expression of God’s Essential Nature.

A. We believe in one God

- Deuteronomy. 6:4; Psalm 86:10; Isaiah 46:9; Mark. 12:29

B. God is the Creator of all things

- Genesis 1-2; Psalm 33:6; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:24-25
- Do the above verses indicate that God actively or passively created?
 1. God alone is the Creator
 - Nehemiah 9:6; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11
 2. God’s creation is ordered and purposeful
 - Psalm 19:1; Colossians 1:15-17
 3. God’s creation is good
 - Genesis 1:31; I Timothy 4:4

C. God is holy.

- Exodus 15:11; Leviticus 10:3; I Samuel 6:20; Isaiah 6:3; 57:15; I Peter 1:16
- What other characteristics of God’s holiness does Isaiah 5:16 highlight?

D. God is Infinitely Perfect

- Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 18:30; 145:3; Matthew 5:48; Romans 11:33

E. God exists eternally

- Psalm 90:2; 102:25-27; Daniel 4:34-35

F. God is loving

- John 17:24; 1 John 4:8, 16

G. The One God is Triune

- He exists in three equally divine Persons
- Matthew. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians. 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2
- God is one in essence but plural within His nature.
- Father (Deuteronomy 32:6; Matthew 6:6; John 17:5,11,21,24; I Corinthians 8:6)
- Son (Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 2:5-7; John 1:1, 14; 3:16; 5:18; Romans 9:5; Galatians 4:4; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:1-5)
- Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29; John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 5:1-4; Romans 8:9, 26-27; Galatians 4:6)

II. The Gospel is the Outworking of God's Eternal Purpose

A. God acts with Limitless Knowledge and Sovereign Power

1. Limitless knowledge
 - Psalm 139:1-16; 147:5; Isaiah 46:10; John 21:17
2. Sovereign power
 - Isaiah 46:10; Jeremiah 32:17; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 3:20; Revelation 1:8
 - How do Jeremiah 23:24, Matthew 19:26 and Deuteronomy 10:14 speak to God's sovereign power?

B. God has Purposed from Eternity to Redeem

- I Chronicles 17:21; Romans 8:29-30; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:3-5, 10-11; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; 2:14; 1 Peter 1:20; 2:9; Revelation 13:8

C. God Will Redeem a People for Himself

- Genesis 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:11; Revelation 7:9-10

D. God will Make All Things New

- Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:21; Romans 8:19-21; Revelation 21 & 22

E. God Will Act for His Own Glory

- Psalm 19:1-2; Isaiah 43:7; Jeremiah 13:11; Colossians 1:15-23; Revelation 4:11; 5:9-14

Additional Study:

- Isaiah 40:9-31. What attributes of God are highlighted here?
- Ephesians 1:3-14. How does this passage link the character of God to His gospel?

Questions for Further Discussion

1. What does it mean that God is the Creator of all things? What does this affirm? What does it deny?
2. God is "holy." What does it mean that God is holy? How is He unique in His holiness? What are the implications of God's holiness on His creation and His creatures? What might the moral dimensions of God's holiness be and how is this relevant to us?
3. God is also "infinitely perfect" in all His attributes and in all His ways. This means that He never has and never will lack anything. It also means that He does not grow or change for He is unchangeable. What does this mean for God? What about for us?
4. This "one God" is "eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." The Trinity is one doctrine that distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. Can you think of some other biblical texts that support the doctrine of the Trinity? What is the significance of the Trinity in creation? What about redemption? How does this belief in the Trinity differ from Islam, one of the growing religions of the world today?

5. God has “limitless knowledge and sovereign power.” This means God is all-knowing (omniscient) and all powerful (omnipotent). How does this truth about God’s person and attributes differ from the position of open theism, which teaches that God has limitations to what He knows?
6. “God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself.” God created with a purpose and He redeems for a purpose. We are redeemed “for Himself.” What does this mean, and what are the implications for our lives? What is the importance of the reference to the church?
7. God will “make all things new for His own glory.” God’s work in creation and redemption is for His own renown. What does God’s glory mean? Why is it right that He would only do things for His glory, whereas for us it would be so wrong? This puts God and His work at the centre of everything, and anything that would displace Him would be a chief act of treason. As you examine your life, is it about God in all His fullness, or is it about you?

“God’s gospel is authoritatively revealed in the Scriptures”

Article 2

The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

I. God Has Spoken

- Genesis 1:3,6,9,14,20,24,29; Psalm 19:1-2; 33:6,9; 60:6; Acts 3:17-19; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 1:1

II. God Has Spoken in the Scriptures

A. The Bible Consists of Both Old and New Testaments

- Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 24:44
- Trusting the Scriptures was an important issue to EFCC founders. They submitted every point of doctrine and practice to the authority of Scripture, asking “*Where Stands it Written*”. Since our founding fathers came from Scandinavian countries where final authority rested in the State and church authorities, this was a notable stand for them to take. The EFCC is still committed to this position today!

B. God has Spoken in the Scriptures Through the Words of Human Authors

- Matthew 1:22; 4:4; 19:4,5; Luke 1:1-4; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 3:15,16
- The Bible did not write itself – God, by His Spirit, moved human authors to give us His Word.

C. The Bible is the Verbally Inspired Word of God

- Mark 12:36; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 3:7,8; 2 Peter 1:20, 21

1. The Bible is without error in the original writings

- Numbers 23:19; I Samuel 15:29; Psalm 12:6; 119:89, 96; Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 45:19; Matthew 5:18; John 10:34-36; 17:17
- We have confidence that God used human personalities and styles to produce divinely authoritative writings. We believe that every word and idea in Scripture originated in God and were recorded without error in the original manuscripts.

2. The Bible is complete

- Isaiah 40:6-8; Matthew 24:35; Luke 16:29-31; John 1:1,14; 6:68; Colossians 2:2,3; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:24-25
- The Bible contains clear teaching as to how a person can be reconciled to God and obtain eternal life.
- While God does reveal something of His nature through creation, the Bible most fully reveals His nature and plan of salvation.

3. The Bible is authoritative

- Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Psalm 119:160; John 17:17; 1 Corinthians 14:37-38; Galatians 1:8; 1 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:23
- The Bible is true not only in matters of salvation but in every field of study it touches.

III. Our Response to God's Word

- We believe all that the Bible teaches (Genesis 15:6; Isaiah 53:1; John 1:7; Acts 4:4; 13:48; 24:14)
- We obey all that the Bible requires (Psalm 119:44-45, 162-168; Matthew 28:20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Hebrews 4:12; 1 John 2:5)
- We trust all that the Bible promises (Romans 1:2; 4:21; Hebrews 10:23; 2 Peter 1:4; 3:13)

Additional Study:

- Psalm 119 – What do we learn about God's Word?
- 2 Timothy 3:10-17 – What is the Word useful for?
- Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19; Matthew 15:1-9 – Why should we not make our own rules/ideas as authoritative as the Word?

Questions for Further Discussion

1. What are the similarities and differences between these terminologies: Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, Word of God, Bible?
2. God who has always been has spoken.
 - Why is it important to state that God has spoken in the Scriptures rather than God has spoken through the Scriptures?
3. The Scriptures consist of the "Old and New Testaments."
 - How many books are there in the Old Testament? What about the New Testament? Why is it important today to state explicitly the scope, or canon, of the Scriptures? How is the Bible being undermined?
4. "God has spoken... through human authors."
 - This explains specifically what is meant by "verbally inspired." How would you explain the verbal inspiration of the Bible?
5. Because this is a word from God accurately recorded by human authors, it is "without error in the original writings."
 - The technical term for this is *inerrant*. What or who is at the heart of inerrancy? Why is it important to state that it was the original writings that were without error? Do we have the original writings, and if not, what is the importance of this statement?
6. The Bible is "the complete revelation of His will for salvation."
 - What does it mean that it is complete? Why is it that many look elsewhere for something to add to what is in the Word?
 - "Revelation" carries the meaning of "to make known." God has ultimately revealed Himself through the Bible, which is special revelation. God has also "spoken" or revealed Himself in nature, which is known as general revelation. What is the difference between general and special revelation? How do we know and where will we find the divine interpretation?
 - What is the role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the Bible, and what is His role in my understanding of it?
 - What are some challenges to the sufficiency of the Bible today?

7. It is also “the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged.” Because it is God’s Word, He has the final say in everything. This is true with what the Scriptures state explicitly, but it is also true with what it states implicitly. No matter the discipline, it submits to the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Word.
 - How is this true in your life? The fact that the word “should” is used acknowledges that not all use the Word to judge all they do and say.

8. The appropriate response to God and His Word, as recorded in the Bible, is to believe “all that it teaches”, to obey “all that it requires” and to trust “all that it promises.”
 - Though the Bible is true with or without our response to it, what is wrong when it merely remains abstract words that do not affect our lives? Why is Biblical illiteracy is so rampant even among Christians? Why is it that the morality of many Christians is not noticeably different than that of non-Christians?

“God’s gospel alone addresses our deepest human need.”

Article 3

The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God’s saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

I. The Source of Human Dignity: Our Creation in God’s Image

A. Human Beings as God’s Image

- Genesis 1:26-27, 31; 5:1; 9:6; Proverbs 14:31; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 3:9-10; James. 3:9
- Why is it important to state that God created Adam and Eve?
- What does it mean to be “created in God’s image”? Are characteristics like intelligence, emotion, will, creativity, dominion, and desire for relationship the only ways we are like God?

B. The Significance of Adam and Eve

- Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:3-9; Acts 17:26; Romans 1:26-27
- How is the image of God reflected in both genders?
- What does the Genesis account of the creation of man and woman assume with regards to equality? Differences?
- What do these passages tell us in relation to God’s design for marriage and procreation?

II. The Source of Human Depravity: Our Fall into Sin

A. Tempted by Satan

- Adam and Eve sinned. Genesis 3:1-6; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; Revelation 12:9; 20:2

B. The Nature of Sin

- What is sin?
- What was Satan’s strategy to get Adam and Eve to disobey God?
- What was the sin Adam and Eve committed? What was the essence of their sin (and ours)? ie what is all sin ultimately?
- Why did God give Adam and Eve a free will if He knew they would use it to rebel against Him?

III. The Continuing Effects of Sin: Our Union with Adam

A. Sinful by Nature and by Choice

- Psalm 51:5; 58:3; 130:3; 143:2; Proverbs 20:9; Romans 3:23; 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:22

1. The Breadth of Sin

- Genesis 6:5; Isaiah 6:5; 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Ezekiel 11:19; Romans 3:10-15; 8:5-8; Ephesians 2:1-2; 4:17-19; I John 1:8

2. The Depth of Sin

- Romans 3:9-20, 23

B. Alienated from God

- Genesis 3:24; Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:1, 4-5; 4:18; Colossians 1:21

C. Under God's Wrath

- Romans 1:18, 21, 23; 2:5; 5:9; Ephesians 2:3; I Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 6:17

IV. Our Only Hope: God's Saving Work in Jesus Christ – Rescued, Reconciled, Renewed

A. Rescued

- Acts 4:11-12; Romans 8:1; 6:18, 22; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9; I Timothy 2:5-6

B. Reconciled

- Romans 5:1-2, 10-11, 18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:19-20; Hebrews 1:3

C. Renewed

- Romans 8:16, 29; I Corinthians 15:45, 49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2

Additional Study

- Genesis 3 - What is the tragedy and triumph of this passage? How does it account for human history?
- Romans 5:12-21 - Describe the contrasts between Adam and Jesus contained in this text.

Questions for Further Discussion

1. What is the significance of the reference to "in union with Adam?" Who does that include?
2. Because of "union with Adam," there are implications? What are they? How do they affect us? What does it mean that we are "sinners by nature and by choice"?
3. We often think of sin's implications as being primarily personal or communal in nature (the results of sin in my life or between me and others); so why is it imperative to also mention the vertical implications of our sin against God – being alienated and under His wrath? Is this conversation avoided today? Why or why not?
4. What is the lone remedy that God has provided for our sin?
5. What is the significance of the words "rescued, reconciled and renewed?" How does this prepare for the next article in the flow of redemptive history?

“God’s gospel is made known supremely in the Person of Jesus Christ.”

Article 4

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel’s promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

I. Jesus’ Identity: He is God Incarnate

- We believe that 2000 years ago, Jesus, “Emmanuel” (which means, “God with us”), was fully God and fully human when He came and lived in human history in time and space.
- John 8:58; 14:6; 20:31

A. Jesus Christ is Fully God

1. Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1,14; 5:18; 10:30, 33; 14:9; 17:5; I Corinthians 8:4-6; Philippians 2:6; Hebrews 1:1-2

B. Jesus Christ is Fully Man

1. Romans 1:2-3; 5:19; 9:4-5; I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:14,17; I John 4:2-3

C. Conceived Through the Holy Spirit, Born of a Virgin

- Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:34-35; I Corinthians 15:47
- Why was it important that Jesus be born of a virgin?

D. Jesus is Israel’s Promised Messiah

- Jesus came to time and space as a Jew – the Messiah, who fulfilled the promises recorded by the prophets of the Old Testament.
- Genesis 49:8-12; Matthew 1:1,17; Luke 1:32-33; 4:16-22; 24:25-27; John 1:41; 4:25-26; 5:46; Acts 2:36; 13:23, 32-33; Galatians 3:29

II. Jesus’ Life

A. Jesus Lived Without Sin

- Why was it important that Jesus lived a sinless life?
- 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; I Peter 3:18; I John 3:5

B. Jesus was Crucified Under Pontius Pilate

- Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Matthew 16:21-22; 20:18-19; 26:2; 27:26, 30-35; Mark 15:15; John 19:16; Acts 2:23; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 3:1

C. Jesus Arose Bodily From the Dead

1. Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24; John 20:19, 26; Acts 1:3; 17:31; Romans 1:3-4; 4:25; I Corinthians 15:3-6; 20; Colossians 1:18

D. Jesus Ascended to the Father’s Right Hand

- We believe Jesus arose bodily from the dead. Why is it important that Jesus triumphed over the grave, rising from the dead? (I Corinthians 15:12-20)
- 1. Luke 24:51; Acts 1:6-11; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:18-20; 4:8-10; Colossians 3:1; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 3:21-22; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1-2; 10:11-12; 12:1-2; Revelation 3:21

E. Jesus is our High Priest and Advocate

1. Romans 8:34; Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 7:25; 8:1; 9:24; 1 John 2:1

Additional Study

- Genesis 3:15 - How is Jesus the fulfillment of this promise?
- Romans 1:1-6 - What do we learn here about Jesus and God's gospel?
- Hebrews 1:1-2 - How was Jesus the revelation of God?
- Philippians 2:1-8 - What do we learn about Jesus in this passage?
- John 1:1-14 - How is Jesus the Word of God?

Questions for Further Discussion

1. Why is it important to spell out more fully what it means to say that "Jesus Christ is God incarnate"? What does this expression mean today to those outside the church and to those who are the church?
2. What is the significance of the statement "Israel's promised Messiah"? How does this reference to Jesus connect the two testaments, the Old and the New? How will this affect our understanding of the Bible?
3. What is unique about Jesus' conception? Though not an immaculate conception, would it be accurate to refer to this as a miraculous conception? Why? Why is the miraculous conception important, i.e. what does it mean for Jesus?
4. How was Jesus able to live a sinless life? Were His temptations real, i.e. could He or could He not sin?
5. What is the importance of Jesus' obedience in both His life and His death?
6. What does Jesus' resurrection mean? What are the implications of Jesus' resurrection for those who are in union with Him? Why is it important to emphasize Jesus' bodily resurrection?
7. Not only did Jesus rise from the dead, He also ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. What does this mean for the earthly work of Jesus? What does the posture of "sits" mean? What is the significance/meaning of sitting at God the Father's right hand?
8. Jesus now carries on a ministry as High Priest and Advocate. This means that though His earthly ministry is complete, He still carries on a heavenly ministry. Who does this ministry affect? What does it mean? Why is it vital?

“God’s gospel is accomplished through the work of Christ.”

Article 5

The Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

I. Of Central Importance: Jesus Christ Shed His Blood on the Cross

- Our sin separates us from a holy God. In order for sins to be forgiven, someone who was perfect had to pay the penalty – Jesus Christ bore our sins on the cross by giving up His life’s blood and dying on our behalf.
- Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Hebrews 9:14, 22; 10:19; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 12:10-11

II. Christ’s Atoning Death: The Perfect. All-sufficient Sacrifice

- What made Jesus’ sacrifice perfect and all sufficient? How does this connect with Jesus being “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29)?

A. The Atonement

1. Jesus, Our Substitute: Penal Substitution

- Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 26:28; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:25-26; 5:8-9; I Corinthians 15:2-3; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15, 17; 9:14, 22; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; I John 1:7, 29; 2:2; 4:10; Revelation 1:5
- God’s wrath: How do the passages speak to our need for Jesus’ sacrifice?
- Our sins: What does Romans 3 teach us about the reality and consequences of sin?
- How and why could Jesus’ death atone for our sin?

2. Jesus, Our Representative: Union with Christ

- Jesus died in our place. As sinners, we appropriate this gift of salvation by receiving Christ by faith and becoming children of God (John 1:12).
- Matthew 1:21; Romans 4:25; 5:12-21; 6:2-11; Hebrews 2:10-11,

III. Christ’s Victorious Resurrection: His Victory and Ours

A. Jesus’ Vindication and Victory

- Isaiah 53:11-12; Matthew 28:16-18; Luke 24:26; Acts 2:24, 36; Romans 1:3-4; Ephesians 1:18-22; Philippians 2:5-11; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; I Peter 3:20-22
- Victorious resurrection: I Corinthians 15:1-20 speaks about the importance of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead – why is it so important for salvation?
- Salvation: This means that a person is “saved” from the penalty of sin, is no longer separated from God, becomes part of God’s family and has eternal life.

B. Our Great Hope

- Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14; Philippians 3:20-21; I Peter 1:3-4; I John 3:2; 5:12

Additional Study

- Isaiah 53:1-12: How did Jesus fulfill the prophecies found in this passage?
- Romans 3:21-26: How does this passage speak to our justification before God?

Questions for Further Discussion

1. What is the significance of Jesus being our “representative and substitute?” Why did we need a representative? Why did we need a substitute?
2. Why is the reference to Christ shedding “His blood on the cross” important? What are the roots of the necessity of a blood sacrifice under the old covenant?
3. Jesus’ death is “the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins.” What is the importance of this statement? Can anything be added to what Christ has done to address our sin problem?
4. This cross-work of Christ is referred to as “His atoning death and victorious resurrection.” What does this mean to God the Father? What does this mean for us? Is there any other grounds for salvation?
5. Why is it important to emphasize this truth of the work of Christ today? In what ways is this biblical truth being undermined today?

“God’s gospel is applied by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Article 6

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

I. Who Is the Holy Spirit?

- The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s primary goal is to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:13-14). The Spirit is our “Helper” who lives in us and enables us to walk in obedience to Christ.
- Genesis 1:2, Exodus 31:2-5; Numbers 11:25; Ezekiel 2:1-2; 8:3; 11:1, 24; Isaiah 11:1-5; 42:1-4; Joel 2:28-32; Luke 1:35; 4:14, 17-21; John 15:26; 16:5-15; Acts 10:37-38; Romans 1:3-4; Ephesians 4:30

II. What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

A. Convicts the World of its Guilt.

- John 16:7-11; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

B. Regenerates Sinners

- Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 24:7; John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:4-5; Colossians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Peter 1:2

C. In the Holy Spirit, believers are baptized into Union with Christ

- Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 4:13

D. In the Holy Spirit, believers are Adopted as Heirs in the Family of God

- Romans 8:15-16, 23; 9:3-4; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Gal 3:26-27; 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:5, 14; Titus 3:5-7

E. Indwells Believers

- Luke 1:15-17; 41, 67; John 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 6:3-5, 24; 7:55; 9:17; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 1 John 4:13

F. Illuminates Believers

- Acts 15:28; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Ephesians 1:17-19

G. Guides Believers

- Luke 4:1; John 16:13; Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2, 4; 15:28; 20:22-23; Romans 8:3-4, 12-14; Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 1:17; 6:17

H. Equips Believers

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

I. Empowers Believers for Christ-like Living and Service

- Ezekiel 36:26-27; Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:4-6, 12-16; 15:13; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 3:16-21; Philippians 2:1-2; 2 Timothy 1:7
- What sorts of things constitute Christ-like living and service? Why do we need help?

“God’s gospel is now embodied in the new community called the church.”

Article 7

The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

I. The Nature of the Church

A. True Church

- This is composed of people from every nation who are justified before God and united with Christ through faith. Those who are justified are those declared not guilty by God because their sin has been forgiven by virtue of accepting Jesus’ gift by faith.
- John 3:14-21; Acts 2:42-47; 11:25-26; 16:31; Romans 3:20-28; 5:1,19, 21; 8:1, 30, 33-34; 10:4, 9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:8-9; Titus 3:5-7

B. Headship of Christ

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Colossians 1:18; 2:19
- United by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ - What are the implications of being united in the body of Christ?
- Christ is the Head. The Church belongs to Jesus. It is not owned by a denomination, by clergy or by a religious organization. Those in pastoral roles are “under-shepherds” who are accountable to Jesus for how they shepherd the flock (I Peter 5:1-4)

C. Local Church

1. A visible Community Manifesting the True Church in the World.
 - Members of the “universal church” have always met locally to worship, learn, fellowship and encourage each other.
 - Ephesians 3:4-12: How does this passage speak to the reality of the Universal Church?
 - Acts 9:31; 20:28-30; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; 12:27; 16:19; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1-2
2. Local Church Membership Should be Composed only of Believers.
 - Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 2:41, 46-47; 14:23; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 14:39-40; 16:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 10:24-25
 - The early Free Church Fathers proclaimed “believers only, but all believers”. This means that local churches should be fellowships of those who have come to faith in Christ, and that those who may disagree over minor issues of faith should not be excluded from fellowship.
 - The EFCC highlights the “priesthood of all believers”. All believers - clergy and laity - are called by God to salvation, obedience and service. One implication of this doctrine is manifested in local church government: The EFCC holds to a congregational form of local church government. The

believers who make up the congregation elect leaders (a church “board”) and the leaders take responsibility to lead the church in following Jesus Christ the Head.

- Thus, in EFCC churches the congregation is the highest authority, not a bishop, board of elders, nor regional presbytery (or classis). In congregationalism all members actively participate in the directing of the church under the Word of God and in obedience to Christ. The EFCC founders intended this to specifically mean that no level of civil government would direct the affairs of the local church. Congregationalism ennobles the local church to be the Temple of the Spirit, the Bride of Christ and the Body of Christ. Congregationalism in any church will defer and entrust leadership and decision making to those among themselves they deem to be trustworthy and accountable to the will and leading of the congregation. Individual churches will differ in the degree of trust that is placed in the stewardship of elders, staff, pastors and boards who serve the congregation.

II. The Ordinances of the Church

The Lord’s Supper and Baptism.

A. *Nature of the Ordinances*

1. Their Source: The Ordinances are Mandated by the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Matthew 26:26-29; 28:18-20; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-19
2. Their Purpose: The Ordinances Visibly and Tangibly Express the Gospel
 - Both ordinances proclaim the Good News of Jesus death and resurrection.
 - Water baptism declares the reality of a believer dying with Christ and raising to new life. The Lord’s Supper symbolizes the body and blood of Christ given to us to save us from our sins.
 - They are also experienced physically (tangibly) – we “eat and drink” and are “washed”
 - a. The Ordinances are not the means of Salvation
 - Both baptism and the Lord’s Supper are signs, pointing us to the reality of Jesus’ saving work in His death and resurrection. They do not save those participants. We are saved by God’s grace through faith alone in Christ.
 - Hence, the EFCC does not hold to a sacramental view of the Lord’s Supper that promotes theologies of transubstantiation (the bread and wine become the literal body and blood of Christ and eating them imparts grace) or consubstantiation (the bread and wine contain the spiritual presence of Christ and impart grace).
 - b. When celebrated by the Church in genuine faith, the ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.
 - These are practices that only believers should participate in.
 - While we do not hold to a “sacramental” understanding of the ordinances, we do believe that they were given as a God-ordained means of spiritual growth and edification.
 - John 6:55-56; Acts 2:38; 8:39; 1 Corinthians 10:16; Colossians 2:11-12

B. Description of the Ordinances

1. Baptism

- a. Baptism as a Believer's profession
 - Baptism is a public declaration of a believer's commitment to Christ.
 - Acts 2:38-41; Romans 6:3-4
 - Acts 2:36-47: How are baptism and faith in Christ linked in this passage?
- b. Baptism as the Church's affirmation
 - The church hears and affirms the believer's profession and publicly recognizes the one being baptized as a Christian brother or sister
 - Being adopted as a child of God means being a part of a family, embodied in a local church
 - Galatians 3:26-29
- c. Baptism as God's Promise
 - Baptism proclaims God's promise that Christ's death has become our own and that he has borne our judgment.
 - Baptism is the visible sign of an invisible grace – God uniting us to Christ in His death and resurrection, washing our sins away and clothing us with new garments of righteousness.
 - Acts 22:14-16; Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:18-21
- d. Baptism and the Holy Spirit
 - How are Baptism and the Holy Spirit related?
 - Acts 2:38; 8:14-17; 10:47-48; 19:5-6; I Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13
- e. What about Infant Baptism?
 - Though most churches in the Evangelical Free Church of Canada practice only believer's baptism, our Statement does allow for infant baptism
 - Our Statement of Faith is silent on both the time and mode of baptism as our forebears determined that it would not be an essential point of doctrine over which they would separate from other Christians
 - Acts 16:15,33; 1 Corinthians 1:16-17; 7:14

2. The Lord's Supper

- The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of Christ's death, practiced in the fellowship of the Body.
- Jesus told his followers to celebrate the Lord's Supper until His return as a symbolic picture (memento of Himself) that would help us keep in mind what he has done for us.
- Matthew 26:28-29; 1 Corinthians 11:22-26; Acts 2:42

Questions for Further Discussion

1. Who makes up the "true church"? What does it mean to be "justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone"? Is it important to emphasize the "alone"? Do you think the Reformers had it right when they stated that justification is the doctrine by which the church stands or falls?

2. Regarding the true church, what is the ministry of the Holy Spirit? What is the ministry of Christ? With Christ as Head, why is it more accurate to refer to this ministry as a Christocracy rather than a democracy?
3. Why is it important for the “true church” to be “manifest in local churches”? Is there such a thing as a churchless Christian?
4. Because we are a believers’ church movement, “membership should be composed only of believers”. Upon first reading, why do you think it should read “membership must be composed”? Upon further reflection, why is it appropriate to use “should”? Does the “true church” find an exact parallel in the “local church”? Does the “local church” consist of both wheat and tares?
5. What is the meaning of an ordinance? What is the difference between an ordinance and a sacrament?
6. Though the ordinances are clearly “not the means of salvation,” could they be a means of spiritual growth or sanctification? If so, how? What is the important connection between “genuine faith” and the fact that the “ordinances confirm and nourish the believer”?
7. Often the ordinances have been relegated to the place of unimportance or indifference in the life of the local church. What do the terms “mandated” and “celebrated” have to say to this trend?

“God’s gospel compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world.”

Article 8

Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

I. Grace and Godliness: God's Justifying Grace and His Sanctifying Power and Purpose

- We believe that salvation is a gift from God through faith in Christ. However, believers are called to obedience to Christ; hence, salvation is always followed by sanctification (I John 2:1-6). God's grace in the gospel compels us to seek godliness (Titus 2:11-12, 14)
- Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God in our lives to make us like Jesus in character and living.
- Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13; Colossians 3:17, 23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 5:23; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 11:6; 12:1, 14; James 2:15-17; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 5:18

II. The Great Commandment

A. We are to Love God Supremely

- ...with all our heart, soul and mind.
- Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37-38; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:27; John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:9-10; 1 John 4:8-16

B. We are to Love Others Sacrificially

- ...love your neighbor as yourself
- Matthew 5:44-48; 12:38-39; John 13:34; Ephesians 5:25; 1 John 3:16; 4:20

1. Caring for One Another

- John 13:35; Acts 4:32, 34-35
- The New Testament includes a number of “one another” passages that outline how believers are to treat each other:
Romans 12:1; Romans 12:16/1 Peter 3:8; Romans 14:13; Romans 15:7, Romans 15:14; 2 Corinthians 13:12; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:32; 5:19, 21; Colossians 3:13/Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Peter 4:9; 1 Peter 5:5

2. Acting with compassion Toward the Poor

- We take this to include any who are needy, powerless and vulnerable, such as widows and orphans, the elderly, the disabled, the unborn, the immigrant, the minority or the mistreated (Zechariah 7:10; Luke 14:13)
- Deuteronomy 15:11; Psalm 82:3-4; Psalm 140:12; Proverbs 14:21, 31; 19:17; 22:9; 28:27; 29:7; 31:8-9; Galatians 2:10; Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 14:12-14; James 1:27
- Why does “pure and undefiled religion” include compassion for the poor?

3. Seeking Justice for the Oppressed
 - Why should we be concerned about justice?
 - Exodus 23:6; Leviticus 19:15; Psalm 68:5; 82:3-4; 140:12; Proverbs 21:3; 22:22-23; 23:10-11; 29:7; 31:8-9; Isaiah 1:16-17; Jeremiah 9:24; 22:16; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:9-10; Matthew 23:23; Luke 4:18

III. The Spiritual Battle

A. *Our Duty: To Combat the Spiritual forces of Evil*

- Being a follower of Jesus means that we will be engaged in a struggle, a fight, a battle. Our battle is a spiritual battle for the heart and mind (Ephesians 6:1-18), but we have spiritual resources at our disposal.
- John 16:33; Ephesians 6:12; Philippians 1:29-30; 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 5:19

B. *Our Means*

- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- 1. God's Word
 - Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:11,12,17; 1 John 5:3-4
- 2. The Spirit's Power
 - Luke 10:17-19; Acts 2:14-21,38; 9:17-18; Romans 8:26; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 4:4; 5:18; Revelation 12:10-11
- 3. Fervent Prayer in Christ's Name
 - John 14:14;16:24; Romans 8:34; 15:30; Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:12; Hebrews 7:23-25

C. *Our Confidence: In Jesus Christ Our Victory is Assured*

- John 16:33; Romans 8:1; Colossians 2:13-15; 1 John 4:4; Revelation 12:10-11

IV. The Great Commission: We are to Make Disciples

- The "Great Commission" was Jesus' call to make disciples. It includes a promise that Jesus will be with us as we obey.
- Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:21
- A. *Among All People*
 - Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; Revelation 7:9-10
 - How did the early church fulfill this calling?
- B. *By Bearing Witness to the Gospel in Word and Deed*
 - Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:12
 - How are we "always" a witness to the gospel?

Additional Study

- Ephesians 6:10-18: What does this passage teach us about our spiritual walk?
- 1 Peter 1:3-11: How does this passage link our faith, trials, the Spirit and inheritance?

Questions for Further Discussion

1. Statements of Faith are written in a specific historical context. Why is it important to include this article?
2. How do “God’s justifying grace” and “His sanctifying power and purpose” relate? How are they different? What does the expression “must not be separated” mean? What are ways they are wrongly separated?
3. “God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially.” Is this a command we either embrace abstractly as true, or does it also have practical implications to our lives? Or is it both?
4. We are justified by “God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone.” This faith is an active, living faith. Saving faith is the root while living faith is the flower. This living faith takes expression as we “care for one another” in the body of Christ, show “compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed.” What does this mean today? How will this bear out in our lives, in the life of the church? What is the weakness in the liberal church? What has been the weakness in the evangelical church?
5. Right living follows right belief. How does the principle of “fruit” fit into these passages? Compare with Jesus’ words in Matthew 5-7.
6. How does Jesus reflect the importance of God’s Word, the Spirit’s power, and fervent prayer in His life? See Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 6:12-16; John 16:5-15.
7. The “spiritual forces of evil” are acknowledged as real, and as believers we are to combat them. What are the means with which we are to engage in this combat? Why is the plural “we” important to remember? Please note the spiritual disciplines used and the Trinitarian reference: God’s Word, the Spirit’s power, and fervent prayer in Christ’s name. In addition, what does the reference to Christ’s “victorious resurrection” (article 5) add?
8. In Christ’s Great Commission, He exhorts us “to make disciples among all people.” Why is this underlying truth important to remember in this article? What does it mean if we are obeying this command, especially the “all people” part?
9. What is a disciple? How is it similar to or different from apprentice?
10. As we “make disciples” we are always to bear “witness to the gospel.” Why is it that this command never grows old? How does this relate to Jesus’ ministry and the ministry of the early church?
11. Today, some people downplay the need for gospel proclamation, but rather emphasize living out the gospel. Why is it essential to bear “witness to the gospel in word and deed?” With the emphasis on “always,” why is “the gospel” the critical thing to remember?

**“God’s gospel will be brought to fulfillment by the Lord Himself
at the end of this age.”**

Article 9

Christ’s Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ with His holy angels when he will bring His kingdom to fulfillment and exercise His role of Judge of all. This coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

I. The Nature of Christ’s Return

A. A Personal Return

- There will be no mistaking that Jesus Himself will return, not a spiritual force, or an idea or a new form of government. Every knee will bow and every tongue will proclaim Him as Lord.
- Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:4-7

B. A Bodily Return

- Matthew 24:27, 30; 26:63-64; I Thessalonians 4:15-17

C. A Glorious Return

1. Christ Will Come with His Holy Angels

- He will bring His kingdom to fulfillment. Jesus’ invisible kingdom and angels will become visible with power.
- Matthew 24:30-31; 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; II Thessalonians 1:6-10

2. Christ will Come as King

- Jesus comes as the legitimate King (Matthew 1:1; 22:41-46; Luke 1: 31-33; Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8; Revelation 5:5) and as a fulfillment of God’s promise to King David
- Matt 25:32; 1 Corinthians 15:22-25; Revelation 19:16

3. Christ Will Come as Judge

- Jesus will judge sin, evil and injustice as well as their perpetrators.
- Matthew 3:12; 13:24-30, 40-43; 25:31-47; Acts 17:30-31; 10:39-42; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 19:11-21

II. The Time of Christ’s Return

A. Is Known Only to God

- Matthew 24:30-36, 42; Mark 13:26-32; 1 Timothy 6:13-15

1. There are a number of key views regarding the return of Christ.

a. **Premillennialism**

- Premillennialists hold that Jesus returns and institutes a literal one thousand year reign. Some premillennialists believe that Jesus gathers the church before the tribulation (pre-tribulational rapture) while others hold that Jesus gathers the church mid-way through the tribulation (mid-tribulational rapture) and still others that He gathers the church at the end of the tribulation (post-tribulational rapture).

- b. **Amillennialism**
 - Amillennialists believe that there is no literal thousand year reign of Jesus on earth and that Christ's kingdom is a present, spiritual rule already established in the hearts and minds of believers.
 - c. **Postmillennialism**
 - Postmillennialists hold that the millennial state is inaugurated through the triumph of the gospel in the world and that Jesus returns at the end of this triumph of Christianity to usher in the eternal state.
2. While early EFCC founders were premillennialists and most held to a pre-tribulational rapture, the EFCC stand, given that only the Father knows the exact sequence of events and timing of Jesus' return, is such that we will not disassociate from any Christian based on his or her differing belief on the timing of Jesus' return

B. Demands Constant Expectancy

- While we are not sure of the exact time of Jesus' return, we do hold that He could return at any moment. This sense of immanency ought to encourage the believer in life and faith.
- Matthew 24:37-51; Luke 12:40; Romans 13:11-14; I Thessalonians 5:1-11; James 5:8-9; 1 Peter 1:13; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 3:3;

IV. The Effect of Christ's Return

A. Our Blessed Hope

- Philippians 3:20; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 4:13; 5:4; 1 John 3:2
- Why is this a hope to believers?

B. A Motivation for the Believer

- The return of Christ as Lord and Judge ought to move us to live differently than those without hope
- Jesus' return gives us reason to live godly lives, to serve Him and others sacrificially and to invest our lives in carrying out a mission that brings purpose
- Matthew 24:45-46; 25:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 9:28; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 3:10-14; I John 2:28; 3:2-3; Revelation 22:7, 12

Additional Study

- Matthew 24:30-44: What do we learn regarding Jesus' return in this passage?
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: How does this passage link our "blessed hope" with our walk of faith?
- 2 Peter 3:3-13: What does this passage teach us regarding Jesus return, the end times and the character of God

Questions for further Discussion

1. Why is it important to emphasize "the personal, bodily... return of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Is the specific timing of Christ's return as important as the fact of His return?
2. Why is it important to acknowledge our ignorance and the Father's knowledge of Christ's return?

3. What does Christ's certain coming "demand" of believers? What does the term "constant expectancy" mean?
4. What does it mean that Christ's coming is "our blessed hope"?
5. Not only does Christ's coming "demand" a "constant expectancy," it also "motivates" believers? How? In what ways?
6. What happens if we become complacent about Christ's return? What happens if we become overly consumed with the details and intricacies of Christ's return? How do we retain the constant expectancy, while at the same time giving ourselves faithfully to "godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission"?

“God's gospel requires a response that has eternal consequences.”

Article 10

Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

I. God's Gospel Requires a Response

A. God Commands us to Respond

- The character of God and His gospel demand a response from His creation.
- We either accept or reject the good news – we cannot simply ignore it.
- Mark 1:15; John 6:29; 8:24; 11:25-26; 14:1; 20:31, Acts 16:31; Romans 3:22; 1 John 3:23

B. The Gospel Addresses Everyone Everywhere

- Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8; 17:30; Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:28; Revelation 5:9

C. We are to Believe the Gospel

1. We are to Turn to God in Repentance

- Repentance implies turning away from sin and turning toward God, aligning oneself within the moral order which God has established
- Isaiah 55:6-7; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 13:3; 24: 46-47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 14:15; 17:30; 20:21; 26:17-18, 20; Romans 2:3-4; 9; 10:13; 2 Corinthians 7:10; I Thessalonians 1:8-10; 2 Peter 3:9

2. We are to Receive the Lord Jesus Christ

- John 1:12; 14:6; Acts 4:11-12; Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Colossians 2:6

II. Our Eternal Destiny

- The Gospel is a matter of eternal significance, for our eternal destiny hinges on our response to Jesus Christ
- Matthew 7:13-14; John 3:36; 5:24; 8:24

A. God Will Raise the Dead Bodily

- When a believer dies the body decays but the soul and spirit go immediately to be with God. The believer awaits the body's resurrection to be with the Lord forever. This resurrection is what all people of faith have looked forward to
- Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Matthew 22:23-32; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:50-52; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:13

B. God Will judge the World

- Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 10:15; 11:22-24; 12:36; 41-42; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 4:13; Revelation 20:12-15; 21:27
1. The Destiny of the Unbeliever: Condemnation and Eternal Conscious Punishment
 - At the final Great White Throne Judgment, unbelievers are judged and all evil is cast into the Lake of Fire
 - At the Great White Throne Judgment, those whose names are not found in the Book of Life (unbelievers) are condemned to the Lake of Fire
 - Unbelievers are consciously aware of their separation from God and punishment for eternity
 - Matthew 13:41-42; 23:33; John 5:25-29; Romans 2:7-8; Philippians 3:18-19; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; 2 Peter 2:1-17; Jude 6-13; Revelation 14:9-11; 21:8
 2. The Destiny of the Believer
 - a. Eternal Blessedness and Joy with the Lord
 - Believers are those who have accepted Christ by faith.
 - After the resurrection of the body, Jesus rewards believers at the judgment seat of Christ
 - Matthew 13:43; 25:34; Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 19:5-7
 - b. In the New Heaven and the New Earth
 - Heaven is an indescribable place where there are no tears and eternal joy in the presence of God
 - The new heaven and earth will finally undo the results of sin and the fall on the created realm
 - Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:22-23; Romans 8:18-23; Hebrews 12:28; 2 Peter 3:11-13; Revelation 21:1-21

II. God's Final Purpose: To the Praise of His Glorious Grace

- God is gracious and desires all to choose to join Him for eternity
- Ephesians 1:5-6, 12; 2 Peter 3:9-12; Revelation 7:10-12

III. Our Final Response: Amen!

Additional study

- Matthew 7:13-27: What warnings does Jesus give us here?
- Matthew. 25:31-46: What does this tell us about judgment and the kingdom?
- Acts 20:17-24: How did the reality of judgment motivate Paul and the early church?
- Revelation 20:11-15: What does this passage tell us regarding judgment, the Book of Life and the Lake of Fire?

Questions for Further Discussion

1. Why is this article a fitting conclusion to the Statement of Faith? What makes the response appropriate? Please note that this is something "God commands."

2. What response is called for? To whom does this apply? Who is excluded or exempt from responding to the gospel?
3. The primary command to all is “to believe the gospel”. How is this more specifically spelled out? What is the relationship between “believe,” “repentance,” and “receiving”?
4. What is the implication of a bodily resurrection of all the dead? How does this differ from the belief that the body is a “hindrance to be sloughed off”?
5. Who is judged? What is the difference between God’s judgment of the believer and of the unbeliever?
6. The unbeliever will be “assigned to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment.” What does this mean? What impetus does this give to our proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers? How does this position differ from annihilationism?
7. What is the assignment of the believer? What is the significance of “with the Lord”? The presence of the Lord is really what makes heaven “heaven”. Where will this be? Why is it vital to state the reality of “the new heaven and the new earth”? How does this differ from those who worship creation?
8. How does this article end? Why is a doxological conclusion/crescendo appropriate? Please note that the Statement of Faith begins and ends doxologically!

Section 3

The Local Church

The Local Church

The Nature

The local church is the geographical manifestation of the universal church. It consists of those who believe in, and are committed to Jesus Christ. It is through the ministries of the local church that believers have the opportunity for worshipping God corporately, being taught the Scriptures, developing supportive and loving relationships, receiving the Lord's Supper and baptism, caring for the needs of people, and being held accountable for spiritual development.

The Purpose

The purpose of the local church is probably best stated by the phrase "to glorify God." Individual believers are to glorify God in everything they do (I Corinthians 10:31). Thus, the collective group of believers, called the church, is also to bring glory to the Lord. God is glorified or honoured by His people in many ways: through living an attitude of respect for and dependency upon Him; through worshipping personally and corporately from a grateful heart; through humbly reflecting the character of God in daily life; through trusting Him in the good and bad times of life; through helping others see how good He is; through having quality relationships with others; through having pure motives in what we do; and through being a part of the process of bringing people into the family of God and assisting in their spiritual development. As members of the Body of Christ live their lives in loving obedience to God's will, He is glorified.

The Goal

Just before His ascension to the Father, Jesus gave the "Great Commission," His final set of "goals" to those who had faithfully followed Him. These continue to be the overall goals of the local church today:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20*

From this Scripture, list the four aspects of what the local church should be doing:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

One of these aspects is the primary goal; the other three are part of the process. What is the primary goal?

In what ways is our church doing its part in fulfilling the Great Commission?

Relationships within the Church

The local church is very much like a family. In a good family, individuals learn to:

- live together peacefully
- give support and encouragement
- accept one another in failure
- give and receive correction as needed
- contribute to the common good
- respect authority
- adjust to changing needs
- practice financial stewardship
- do what needs to be done, whether they feel like it or not, and
- do it all in an atmosphere of love

While having a solid biblical basis for what we believe is the foundation for our faith, it is equally important that we be living out the truths we know. Jesus said that others would know of our commitment to Him not by our biblical knowledge or by our amount of involvement in church activities, but rather by our love for one another. This was His “Great Commandment”:

“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.” John 13: 34-35

In the same way that members in a healthy family relate well to one another, so are we to relate to each other as “family” members in the church. Romans 12:5 states that “in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Acting in a loving manner towards others in the family can take many forms. Several of these are described by the “one another” commands in the New Testament. Write out a practical illustration of each of the statements below:

1. “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.” (Romans 12:10a)
2. “Honour one another above yourselves.” (Romans 12:10b)
3. “Be of the same mind with one another.” (Philippians 2:2)
4. “Accept one another.” (Romans 15:7)
5. “Instruct [or admonish] one another.” (Romans 15:14)
6. “Greet one another.” (Romans 16:16)
7. “Serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13)
8. “Carry each other’s burdens.” (Galatians 6:2)
9. “Bear with one another in love.” (Ephesians 4:2)
10. “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other.” (James 5:16)
11. “Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21)
12. “Encourage one another and build each other up.” (Hebrews 10:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

The Importance of Membership

“Why can’t I just be an active participant in my church without becoming an official member? Why is joining the membership of a church so important?”

These are good questions and deserve a thoughtful response. But before dealing with membership, let’s consider why a Christian should at least be actively involved in a local church.

Reasons for Involvement in a Local Church

In general it provides opportunity to be an active participant in God’s family. To be active in the local church is a reflection of being a member of the universal Body of Christ. It is only natural that a person who is a part of God’s eternal family would also be an active part of a local church in order to associate with fellow believers and fellow-heirs of the kingdom. Here are some specific reasons to be involved locally:

1. Giving, not just receiving. It is quite easy to attend services and events at a church and just be a recipient. However, one of the greatest means of fulfillment for a believer is to be involved in some area of ministry. A local church can provide opportunity for this. Giving is imperative if life is to be a joyous adventure of following Jesus Christ as Lord. We are blessed in serving and giving to others. “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).
2. Personal spiritual growth. It is very difficult for any believer to grow spiritually without encouragement from other Christians. Personal spiritual disciplines, a deeper understanding of the Bible, worship of God, and sharing one’s faith are necessary for spiritual maturation. The assistance of other Christians helps growth take place in these necessary areas. The church is a family of God’s people helping one another become what God intended them to be.
3. Fellowship with other Christians. A meaningful relationship with other believers is a big part of the Christian experience. It certainly was for the early church believers (Acts 2:42) and is commanded for all Christians (Hebrews 10:24-25). In-depth and meaningful relationships are often achieved through active participation in a local body of believers. As a by-product, there is a sense of belonging, a sense of being on the “inside” of a very significant group of people, the Body of Christ.

Reasons for Membership in a Local Church

Membership is a public statement of one’s commitment to an organization. It is a statement of belief in what the organization stands for and indicates a desire for involvement. Specifically for a local church, there are a number of reasons why a Christian should go beyond involvement and join the membership:

1. Full identification with the church. Jesus often spoke of the importance of being identified with Him as His disciple. Church membership can be part of that process. Membership is a public statement of allegiance to a church, signifying agreement with what the church believes and values.
2. Accountability to the church. Being a member means being willing to live by the beliefs and standards of the church. It means abiding by the church’s constitution and by-laws and the leadership’s authority as well. Membership makes accountability possible and

accountability is essential for maintaining purity within the church. Without membership it is very difficult to have church discipline or to hold people accountable to the standards of the church.

3. Accountability and care within the church. Membership clarifies the primary group for whom the church is most responsible when it comes to care and concern. Those who are members are also more accountable to care for each other.
4. Responsibility for the church. A member not only enjoys the blessings and benefits of being part of church ministries, but also accepts the responsibilities for the church. When a person fulfills the requirements and is publicly accepted into membership, that new member assumes some responsibility for the ministries of the church, such as helping set direction, giving financial support, actively attending, praying, being involved in the programs, and making oneself available for leadership.
5. Selection of leadership. Because members have publicly declared allegiance to the church, it is from this membership that board members and other key leaders are chosen.
6. Fulfillment of legal requirements. To be a legally recognized organization, there must be officially elected officers and trustees who are responsible for the property and operations of the organization. It is the formal membership who elects people to these recognized leadership roles.
7. A voice in the association. It is from the membership of the local church that delegates are selected to attend district and national conferences, where decisions are made which go beyond the scope of the local church.

Perspectives on Membership

How a person functions as a member of a church is determined to a great extent by the Biblical metaphors of what the church is:

So since the church is...

then a good member...

The Household of God:
(Ephesians 2:19-2)

God's building project:
(I Corinthians 3:9, Ephesians 2:10)

The Body of Christ/Bride of Christ:
(Ephesians 1:22-23, I Corinthians 12)

Centred on Christ, the Son of God:
(Matthew 16:13-18)

God's flock:
(I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28)

A nation of Holy Priests:
(I Peter 2:9)

What are your reasons for wanting to join the membership of this church?

Procedures for Membership in this Local Church

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Responsibilities of Members

Personal spiritual development

Support of the people and ministries of the church

Attendance in worship, activities, business meetings

Service/involvement

Financial contributions

Accountable to the church for personal life-style

Church Discipline

On occasion, a member of a church may get involved in a sinful situation which requires those in spiritual leadership to take action. While all Christians are accountable to the Lord for how they live, a church member is also accountable to the church to uphold the biblical standards held by that church. Thus, when a member is involved in a continuous and unrepentant sinful condition, loving discipline is required of the church.

The Purpose of Church Discipline

- To restore a person to fellowship with God and others.
- To preserve the purity of the church, the Body of Christ.
- To preserve the integrity of the witness of the Church.

Scriptural Guidelines

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.” 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. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.” Matthew 18: 15-17

“But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you.” 1 Corinthians 5:13

The Practice of Church Discipline

- Conducted in stages – private before public (if necessary)
- Handled by those who are spiritually prepared, in humility
- Done in a spirit of deep love and concern for the individuals involved

What are the standards by which church members are to live?

What are the discipline procedures used by this church?

Financial Stewardship

Finance is one aspect of stewardship. The Bible says much about money. Because financial issues play such a major role in our lives, it is very important to have God's perspective on money. The following study is designed to assist in developing a biblical perspective.

What do the following verses tell us about our money & possessions?

- Psalm 24:1 _____
- I Corinthians 4:7 _____
- I Timothy 6: 6-12, 17
Verse 8: _____
Verse 9: _____
Verse 10: _____
Verse 17: _____
- Luke 12:13-21 _____
- Ephesians 5:5 _____
- Hebrews 13:5 _____

What do these verses tell us about how we are to use our money?

- Luke 12:42-43 _____
- I Timothy 5:8 _____
- Ephesians 4:28 _____
- Matthew 22:21 _____
- Romans 13: 6-7 _____

What do these verses tell us about why we are to give?

- Hebrews 13:16 _____
- Proverbs 19:17 _____
- II Chronicles 29:14 _____
- Malachi 3:8-12 _____

- Proverbs 3:9-10 _____
- Luke 6:38 _____

What do these verses tell us about how we shall give?

- II Corinthians 8:5 _____
- Matthew 6:1-4 _____
- II Corinthians 9:7 _____
- I Corinthians 16:2 _____

What do these verses tell us about how much we should give?

- Deuteronomy 16:17 _____
- Ezra 2:69 _____
- I Corinthians 16:2 _____
- II Corinthians 8:2-3, 11-12 _____

Note: In Old Testament times, tithing was to be practiced along with free-will offerings (Genesis 14:19 – 20; 28:22; Leviticus 26; Malachi 3:8). Tithing was giving 10% of one’s income to the Lord. The free-will offering was a gift to the Lord above the tithe. While the concepts of tithing and freewill offerings are not taught in the New Testament, they are standards by which giving could be evaluated.

- What are the biblical principles for giving which this church emphasizes?
- What are the expectations of church members for giving to this church? Is giving to para-church organizations encouraged as well?
- What are the methods by which gifts are to be given to this church?
- How is the spending of donated money determined?
- Additional questions you would like to have answered:

Involvement in the Church

It is important that every Christian be involved in serving God in some significant manner. In order to do this, God has given each believer at least one spiritual gift. Each person also has natural abilities, personality traits and special inclinations which give focus to this gift (or gifts). In addition, serving God well includes having a proper attitude: "Everything I have has been given to me by God. It is not my own, but loaned to me for my time on this earth. I am responsible for how I use it."

With this attitude and the "assets" God has given, every believer should have a place of significant ministry within the local church. A ministry or place of service is "significant" when there is a sense of fulfillment and joy in serving God, regardless of the ministry's perceived importance in other people's estimation.

To help determine our place of service, it is important to do an inventory of our abilities, personality, inclinations etc. Considering all the elements together will assist us in finding our best areas of service.

Natural Abilities. Each individual has tendencies developed through experience and training. What are some of your natural abilities which God could use in service for Him?

Personality. Each person possesses certain personality and temperament traits which should be considered when choosing a place of ministry. What are some of your positive traits which could help you determine where to serve?

Special Inclinations. People usually have inner compulsions to do something good. What things do you naturally enjoy doing which God could use in service for Him?

Spiritual Gifts. A spiritual gift is a special ability given by the Holy Spirit to every believer for the purpose of serving God in a unique manner. Spiritual gifts are not Christ-like characteristics such as the "fruit of the Spirit": love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). All Christians should practice these qualities. Nor are spiritual gifts those necessary responsibilities we fulfill, such as helping others in need, serving on committees or a church board, giving to the church or assisting in a work project.

Rather, spiritual gifts are special God-given abilities for service. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift and should use it for the benefit of others. The gifts listed in the Bible are found in Romans 12: 6-8; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11 and I Peter 4: 10-11. A brief definition of some of the gifts is given on the following page. This list is not comprehensive. In the EFCC we acknowledge the existence of spiritual gifts such as *speaking in tongues*, *healing* and *miracles*. However, we urge wisdom and caution in the exercise of these gifts, especially in light of the fact that not all Free Churches would endorse their use.

After reading through the definitions on the next page, check the one(s) which may be the gift(s) God has given to you.

- **Service (Romans 12:7):** the special ability to identify unmet needs and be involved in meeting them.
- **Teaching (I Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11):** the special ability to explain clearly and apply effectively the Word of God.
- **Prophecy (I Corinthians 12:10; Ephesians 4:11):** the special ability to explain and apply the Scriptures for edification and correction in a public setting.
- **Leadership (Romans 12:5):** the special ability to effectively set and pursue biblical goals, motivate others to do God's work, and to coordinate and oversee a project to completion.
- **Administration (I Corinthians 12:28):** the special ability to oversee projects, understand and implement goals and execute effective plans to accomplish what needs to be done.
- **Exhortation (encouragement) (Romans 12:8):** the special ability to give words of comfort, consolation, counsel and encouragement to others in such a way that they feel helped.
- **Pastor, Pastor Teacher (Ephesians 4:11):** the special ability to assume an enduring personal shepherding ministry caring for the spiritual needs of a group of people and overseeing their growth in Christ.
- **Helps (I Corinthians 12:28):** the special ability to assist others so that their ministries and gifts will be more effective.
- **Mercy (Romans 12:5):** the unique quality of having deep empathy for individuals who are suffering and of being involved in alleviating the suffering in a spirit of compassion and love.
- **Hospitality (Romans 12:9):** the special love for people, providing an open home for those in need of food, lodging and/or fellowship.
- **Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11):** the special ability to effectively present the gospel and lead people to salvation in Christ.
- **Knowledge (I Corinthians 12:8):** the special ability to think analytically and objectively in mastering the contents of the Scriptures.
- **Discernment (I Corinthians 12:10):** the unique ability to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil, the Spirit of God and demonic influences.
- **Faith (I Corinthians 12:9):** the unusual ability to trust in the promises and the power of God and to see results in acting upon this trust.
- **Wisdom (I Corinthians 12:8):** the unusual ability to apply scriptural principles to complex issues or situations.
- **Giving (Romans 12:8):** the ability to contribute to Christ's kingdom work far more generously than most others in the body of Christ.

Note: There are many courses which can be taken to understand the various aspects of spiritual gifts. Your church may have a class of this nature or have "inventories" which can be taken to further assist in identifying spiritual gifts.

Membership Application

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____ City _____ PC _____

Email Address _____ Date of Birth _____

Marital Status single married divorced widowed remarried

Occupation _____

Members of immediate family (relationship and age):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

When and how did you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord?

What Scripture(s) do you use as the basis of your assurance of salvation?

Have you been baptised? When? _____

If not, do you wish to be?

List churches with which you have held membership over the past 10 years:

Name of Church _____ City/Province _____

Name of Church _____ City/Province _____

Name of Church _____ City/Province _____

Name of Church _____ City/Province _____

In what church do you presently hold membership? _____

Membership responsibilities:

1. Live daily to please the Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 6:10, 19-20; Romans 6:13; Colossians 3:1-7)
2. To study the Bible and pray faithfully and diligently (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 4:2; Psalm 119:9-11; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)
3. To be supportive of the people and ministries of the church (1 Peter 4:8; Acts 2:42-47)
4. To be faithful, insofar as possible, to attend worship and prayer services, business meetings and other ministries of the church which will aid in spiritual growth (Hebrews 10:25)
5. To share the Gospel and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-19; Acts 1:8)
6. To use the spiritual gifts and abilities God has given to serve others in the church (1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11)
7. To give regularly, proportionately, generously and cheerfully for the work of the Lord (Malachi 3:8-10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7)
8. To be accountable to the church for any sin which needs church discipline (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15-17)

I have read and understand the constitution and by-laws, including the Statement of Faith and am in full agreement with them both in word and in spirit. As a member of this church, I will abide by the constitution and by-laws, as well as by the membership responsibilities and will endeavour to fulfill my responsibilities to the Lord and to His work.

Signature of Applicant

Date of Application

Office Records	
Interview by Church Board	___/___/___
Board approval for membership	___/___/___
Voted into membership	___/___/___
Received publicly into membership	___/___/___
Signatures:	
_____ Church Chairman	_____ Date
_____ Pastor	_____ Date

Guidelines for Preparing Your Story

1. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you prepare your story (James 1:5-6) and share enthusiastically in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).
2. Break your story into approximately equal thirds:
 - Your life before your decision to receive Christ.
 - If you became a Christian as a young child, emphasize your affirmation of that decision when you became an adult (making Christ the Lord of your life)
 - The decision itself
 - What thoughts were going through your mind?
 - What were the circumstances?
 - What scripture(s) was used?
 - The practical impact the decision has had on your life, your family, your job, attitude, personality, relationship, etc.
 - Share a verse that is the greatest motivation for you now.
3. Begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence and close with a good conclusion.
4. Present your story in such a way that your listeners will empathise with your past and present experiences but avoid the tendency to dwell on the past. Express clearly your present experiences of walking with the Lord.
5. Include scriptures that have been significant in your relationship with the Lord.
6. Preparing your story could be a “practice session” for a future opportunity to share your testimony with a non-Christian. Recognition of:
 - sin and the inability to reach God by your own efforts
 - genuine repentance: true remorse; turning away from past sin
 - the fact that Jesus Christ died for your sin and thus made a way to God
 - the need for Christ to be invited to enter your life as Lord and Saviour
 - how the purpose and meaning for your life has changed
 - the difference Christ has made in your daily life
7. Use every opportunity to thank and praise God for what He has already done in your life and for what He will do in the future.

Your Story Work Sheet

Introductory Sentence:

Before I received Christ, I lived and thought this way:

How I received Christ:

After I received Christ, these changes took place:

Concluding statement:

Membership Class Evaluation

A. Class Content

Please check your response to each of the following questions.

	The Information was not very helpful	The information was okay	The information was very helpful	I need more information
History of the EFCC				
Additional information on the EFCC				
Statement of Faith				
Goals/direction of our church				
Programs/ministries of our church				
Organizational structure, leadership & pastoral staff				
Finances/stewardship issues				
Membership issues				
Involvement in our church				

B. Concerning Membership

- I have turned in my membership application and look forward to joining the church soon.
- I plan to join the church, but haven't yet turned in the application form.
- I came to the class to find out more about the church. I don't plan to join right now.
- I have some unanswered questions or hesitations about joining.
- I would like to meet with the pastor or elders for further discussion.

Signed: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone Number: _____