

Doctrinal Statement Of Faith (NIV based)

Article 1: THE SCRIPTURES

I believe "the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life." (*E.F.C.A.*)

The SCRIPTURES as contained in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible are a REVELATION from God, which refers to the act or divine disclosure and the content of divinely communicated or disclosed truth (2 Timothy 3:16; Acts 1:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Mark 12:36; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; Luke 24:25-27). The APOCRYPHA books, however, are not acceptable as part of the canon of Scriptures for several reasons: they lack the divine quality that legitimizes their place in the collection of sacred books of the Bible; Jesus and his apostles obviously did not accept them as Scripture; no Protestant bodies accepted them as Scripture; and they were never part of the Hebrew canon.

The Scriptures are INSPIRED by God, which is defined as the process and product of speaking and writing the exact words which God intended, caused by such divine control upon the minds of the human authors as usually permitted their natural expression, yet always excluded teaching of error (1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Romans 3:2; 2 Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 36:4-6). While reflecting the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors, the Bible speaks with the authority of God. The Scriptures are VERBAL, meaning they contain God's thought in God's words and man's words equally (i.e. dual authorship). The minds of the human authors were Spirit-guided even to the extent of selecting the words used to convey the message, yet free (1 Corinthians 2:13). Also, the Scriptures are PLENARY, meaning they are full or complete in every respect and are equally inspired (Jeremiah 26:2; Revelation 22:18-19).

The Bible in its original manuscripts is FULLY INERRANT, even to the smallest parts of the letters (Matthew 5:17-18). This means the Bible teaches no error of any kind, whether doctrinal, ethical, historical, or scientific when correctly interpreted in light of the level to which culture and the means of communication had developed at the time it was written, and in view of the purposes for which it was given, is fully truthful in all that it affirms (Proverbs 30:5; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; John 10:35; Matthew 5:18). Inerrancy goes well beyond INFALLIBILITY - which some define as being generally reliable or trustworthy. Considering the CREATION account in Genesis 1, 2 for example, the stated Biblical account is a fully inerrant and truthful account of God's creative activities in its context yet it is not a detailed, technical, scientific log or journal (2 Peter 3:4-8, Psalms 90:4).

Because Scriptures are entirely inspired by God and are therefore vested with His divine authority, the Bible is the FINAL AUTHORITY for faith and practice, meaning that the Bible possesses the right supremely to define what we are to believe and how we are to conduct ourselves (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12-13; Deuteronomy 8:3; 1 Corinthians 14:37). Thus, the Bible is the complete revelation of God's will for salvation and righteous living (Romans 1:16; Psalms 119:11; Titus 1:9). The Holy Spirit

ILLUMINATES or enlightens the unbeliever's mind to understand the gospel, and to assist him in understanding the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3).

Article 2: GOD THE FATHER AND THE TRINITY

I believe "in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit". (*E.F.C.A.*)

God is Spirit (John 4:24; 1 Timothy 6:15-16). He exists and is living (Hebrews 11:6; Exodus 3:14). God has PERSONALITY, meaning that He has intellect (Job 38:1-3; 42:3-4), emotions (John 3:16; 1 John 4:16), and will (Daniel 4:35; Isaiah 46:10). God is INFINITELY PERFECT, denoting that He possesses every virtue to an infinite degree and that He has no weaknesses of character (Matthew 5:48; Leviticus 11:44-45). God has ETERNAL EXISTENCE, which means that God is not limited by time and that He has duration without beginning or ending (Revelation 1:8; Psalms 90:1-2; Jude 25).

God, who is infinite, has revealed to us finite humans many ATTRIBUTES about Himself, some of which are: omnipotence (Job 42:2; Matthew 19:26); omniscience (1 John 3:20; Psalms 139:1-6; Hebrews 4:13); righteousness or justice (Genesis 18:25; 2 Timothy 4:8); holiness (Leviticus 11:44; Acts 3:14; Isaiah 6); love and compassion (Psalms 118:1-4; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8); immutability (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:12; James 1:17); wisdom (Daniel 2:20-23); patience (Romans 2:4); goodness (Psalms 107); mercy (Psalms 103; Nehemiah 9); grace (Romans 5:6-8); truth: reality (John 17:3), reliability (Numbers 23:19), and faithfulness (Lamentations 3:23); sovereignty (Romans 9); independence: self-existence (Exodus 3:14), and self-sufficiency (Acts 17:25); and infinity: eternity (Revelation 1:8) and omnipresence or immensity (Psalms 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:23-24).

There is only one true God (Deuteronomy 6:4, 4:35; Mark 12:29; Ephesians 4:5). While God is one in essence, He eternally exists in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although the word `trinity' does not occur in Scriptures, this doctrine of the `TRINITY' holds that God has simultaneous threeness and oneness with no confounding of the persons nor dividing of the substance (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Timothy 2:5). The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one identical substance; this substance has been extended into three manifestations, but not divided (Matthew 28:19; John 1:1; 10:30; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Acts 5:3-4). Throughout the Bible, God reveals Himself as three persons (Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 48:16-17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14) whom all possess the attributes of deity and are called deity (Philippians 2:11; John 1:1; Acts 5:3-4). But, they are also clearly distinguished from one another - they are not just different names or manifestations of the same person (Matthew 3:16-17; John 14:16-17). The eternal relationship of the three persons to one another is EQUALITY. However, for the purpose of order and to accomplish a specific end, the persons of the triune God do function in SUBORDINATION to one another. The Son subordinates Himself to the Father and the Spirit subordinates Himself to the Father and the Son. This is a subordination of role but not essential being (Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Corinthians 11:3; John 14-16).

In His acts of CREATION, the triune God, for His glory and without the use of preexisting materials, brought into existence the whole universe - both visible and

invisible (i.e. 'ex nihilo') (Hebrews 11:3; Psalms 19:1; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:1).

Article 3: JESUS CHRIST

I believe "that Jesus Christ is true God and true man having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate." (E.F.C.A.)

Jesus Christ has UNDIMINISHED DEITY and is true God. He has ETERNALITY, meaning He is forever with no beginning or ending (John 1:1; 8:58; Colossians 1:16-17; Revelation 1:8). Related to His eternality, Christ has pre-existence, meaning that He existed before He was born (John 8:58; 1:1-4; 6:33,38,41; 17:5). Jesus Christ has the titles of God or is called God (John 1:1,18; 20:28). He has the attributes of God, with every attribute related to Deity or ascribed to the Father or the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 2:9). Jesus Christ does the works of God, such as forgives sins, raises from the dead, creates, sustains, and receives worship (Colossians 1:16-18; Matthew 9:6; John 20:28). Also, He has association with other members of the Godhead (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). The resurrection of Jesus Christ serves as a proof of His deity (Romans 1:4).

Jesus Christ has PERFECT HUMANITY and is true man (Hebrews 2:10). He is called man (John 8:40; Acts 2:22; 1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus Christ possessed essential elements of humanity: body and spirit (John 19:28,30); human emotions (Matthew 4:2; 9:36; Luke 2:40); normal human development (Hebrews 2:18; 5:8; Matthew 4:2); and suffering/death (John 19:1-3,30).

Christ's undiminished deity and perfect humanity are UNITED IN ONE PERSON FOREVER. Jesus Christ, the God-man, is one person with two NATURES (theanthropic) (Philippians 2:6-11). His two natures (that which underlies attributes) are united without mixture, united without transfer, and united in one person forever (i.e. hypostatic union of the human and divine natures in Christ).

Concerning the INCARNATION of Jesus Christ when He came to earth, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, a virgin (Matthew 1:18). He lived a perfectly sinless life (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22), died, was buried, and was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Proofs of His RESURRECTION are the empty tomb (John 20:1-9) and the subsequent appearances of Jesus (John 20:11-18,26-29; 1 Corinthians 15:6). The NATURE OF HIS RESURRECTION is that His resurrection body is the old crucified body transformed (continuity) rather than the creation of a new, entirely different body. The nail-prints in Christ's hands/feet and the wound in His side were retained, He was readily recognized by His disciples as the same Person who died, and His resurrection body had a material nature which could be felt (John 20: 25-29; Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:39-40).

The death of Jesus Christ as ATONEMENT accomplished many things. Satan was judged at the death of Christ (John 16:11; Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14). Jesus Christ died in our place and bore judgment and penalty for our sin - a SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH (Matthew 20:28). God imputed or laid upon Him our sins

so that His death paid the penalty we deserve (Isaiah 53:4,6,10; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 10:4-13). Jesus Christ REDEEMED or paid the price of our sin to ransom, remove, and release us from the power of sin (Ephesians 1:7; Galatians 3:13). His death functioned as a PROPITIATION toward God, meaning that God's holiness is satisfied with the death of Christ (1 John 2:2; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17). Through Christ's death, RECONCILIATION has occurred in that sinful man is brought back into spiritual fellowship and moral harmony with God (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Thus, SALVATION is provided for and available to all humans by God in His love for the world. However, it is applied **only** in the individual who believes when he believes (John 3:16-17). For those who do believe, the power of their sin nature was judged (Romans 6:6-7) and they receive present cleansing from sin through the atoning death of Christ (1 John 1:5-2:2).

After His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:9-11), Jesus Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:3), where He continues to perform the tasks of His PRESENT MINISTRY. His ministry includes being: the Lord of all creation (Colossians 1:15-17); the head of the church (Colossians 1:18); the great High Priest (Hebrews 7:24-26); the bestower of eternal life (John 11:25); the Coming King (Matthew 25:31); and the ADVOCATE of those who believe (1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1). As the only mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ continually makes intercession for those who trust in Him for salvation (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:24-25).

Article 4: THE HOLY SPIRIT

I believe "that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service." (*E.F.C.A.*)

The Holy Spirit is the THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY. He has the attributes of personality, such as: intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), emotions (Ephesians 4:30; Romans 15:30), and will (1 Corinthians 12:11). The Holy Spirit performs the actions of personality, such as: teaches (John 14:26), testifies or witnesses (John 15:26), guides (Romans 8:14), convinces (John 16:8), restrains evil (Genesis 6:3), commands/directs (Acts 8:29), and sets aside for tasks (Acts 13:2). He receives actions associated with a person, such as: obeying (Acts 10:19-21), being lied to (Acts 5:3), resisted (Acts 7:51), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), blasphemed (Matthew 12:31), and called upon (Ezekiel 37:9). Also noteworthy, the pronouns associated with Him are masculine - not neuter (John 16:13-14).

The Holy Spirit has names attributed to DEITY: "Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11) and "Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7). He has attributes of deity: omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:11), "Holy" (Luke 11:13), eternality (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalms 139:7-10), foreknowledge (Acts 1:16), and omnipotence (Job 33:4). The Holy Spirit's actions indicate His deity: inspiration (2 Peter 1:21), regenerating (John 3:6), begetting Christ (Luke 1:35), giving new life (John 3:8), raising Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11), and involvement with the Father and Son in creation (Genesis 1:2). His associations indicated His deity: with Jehovah (Acts 28:25; Isaiah 6:1-10), with God (Matthew 12:31, Acts 5:3), and with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19).

The primary ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT is to glorify, exalt, and testify about Christ (John 16:14; 15:26). In relation to THE WORLD, the Holy Spirit restrains evil (2

Thessalonians 2:6-7) and convicts unbelievers of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11). He convinces or persuades men that Jesus is the righteous Savior who will justify those who put their trust in Him (John 15:26). In relation to BELIEVERS, the Holy Spirit, at the moment of salvation, performs several essential works: regenerates the believer (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19), baptizes the believer into the body of Christ (Matthew 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13), indwells the believer (Romans 8:9-10), and seals the believer, guaranteeing his inheritance until Christ returns (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30). Also, He carries out several continuing ministries in the believer's life: guiding (John 16:13; Romans 8:14), teaching (1 Corinthians 2:13-15; John 16:12-15), assisting in prayer (Romans 8:26-27), empowering for service (Acts 1:8; Romans 12:1-8), filling and empowering for godly living (Galatians 5:16-22; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 8:9-11), and assuring (Romans 8:16).

BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT is the action of God whereby at the very moment a person achieves the required faith in Jesus Christ, His Spirit is placed into the spiritual heart of that person (Ephesians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 1:22). In that moment, the believing person thereupon has become a temple in which the Holy Spirit lives in and inhabits - in other words 'indwells' (1 Corinthians 3:16). The baptism of the Spirit also accomplishes the action of God whereby God takes permanent ownership of that believing person (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). In effect, His Spirit spiritually unites with the spirit of the believer, bonded in oneness (1 Corinthians 6:17). The baptism of the Spirit is the one-time experience of all genuine believers in Jesus Christ, and is regardless of their ethnicity, social status, or degree of righteous living (1 Corinthians 12:13). The baptism of the Spirit remains present in the life of the believer, without diminishing or ending (1 John 2:27).

ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT is the exerting of influence and assistance by the Spirit in the thinking, words, and actions of the believer, particularly in regard to extraordinarily empowering the believer in ministering to other people (Acts 10:38). Anointing of the Spirit is also the exerting of influence and assistance upon the thinking and understanding of the believer to extraordinarily teach the believer knowledge of the truth and knowledge about all spiritual things - in other words empowering to be spiritually enlightened (1 John 2:20,27). A direct effect and result of the Spirit's exerting influence upon the thinking of the believer to gain spiritual knowledge is that the believer is therein being assisted in standing firm in the faith (2 Corinthians 1:21).

FILLING OF THE SPIRIT is the spiritual state in which through the full, proper, and active cooperation of the believer, the Spirit has been given complete control of the thinking, words, and actions of the believer to the maximum extent the Spirit is willing to exert that control (Romans 6:11-13). As such, the 'filling of the Spirit' is manifested as the work of the Spirit in and through the ministry activities of the Spirit-filled believer with great power to the maximum extent the Spirit is willing to exert (Acts 4:31b,33). 'Filling of the Spirit' is directly contingent on the believer establishing and maintaining the proper spiritual conditions in his/her life that are conducive for the Spirit to be in full control (Ephesians 5:18). Therefore, from believer to believer, the amount or level of influence of the Spirit varies across a range from nearly-nothing to maximum-fullness, but the term 'filled with the Spirit' is always used in Scriptures to refer only to the maximum-fullness. The 'filling of the Spirit' or maximum-fullness is thereby always evidenced and quite apparent in the life of a Spirit-filled believer in the forms of both

inner and outer manifesting of all of the fruit of the Spirit, and in fullness (Galatians 5:22-23a).

In relation to THE CHURCH, the Holy Spirit graciously bestows SPIRITUAL GIFTS or extraordinary talents upon individual believers enabling and empowering them to serve and minister to the body of Christ and other people through the ministry of the church (Romans 12:4-6a; 1 Corinthians 12:7). The amount or level of influence of the Spirit, to which it is correspondingly cultivated or not in the life of each believer, has a direct effect on the quality, impact, empowering, and performing of spiritual gifts the Spirit produces through and by that believer (Ephesians 4:30).

Article 5: MAN

I believe "that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is, therefore, lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained." (E.F.C.A.)

The first human being on earth was Adam, who was directly created by God Himself (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7). Thus, mankind was CREATED OF GOD, meaning that mankind's creation was separate, direct, and rapid (Genesis 1:26-27) and that he did not evolve, but was created as an adult living creature (Genesis 2:7). Distinct from all animals (Genesis 2:20), mankind reflects the personality of God, having the IMAGE OF GOD (Colossians 3:10; James 3:9). Mankind was created with personality, morality, spirituality, dominion (Genesis 1; 3; Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:22-24) and both a body and spirit (Matthew 10:28).

Sin entered the human race when Adam and Eve deliberately disobeyed God and ate of the fruit, which He had forbidden (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12,19). Thereafter, mankind's image was marred but not destroyed when Adam and Eve fell into SIN or lack of conformity to the moral law of God (Genesis 2:15-17; 3; Ephesians 4:22-24). Consequently, mankind inherited a SINFUL NATURE, which has the characteristics of spiritual death or separation, lack of fellowship, alienation, and attendant guilt (Romans 5:12-14; Genesis 2:17; 3:8-11; Isaiah 59:2). This sinful nature is inherited TOTAL DEPRAVITY which is passed down from parents to children, has twisted and perverted all facets of man's personality, has corrupted his entire nature, and has given him a tendency to sin (Genesis 3:12-13; 6:5; Isaiah 1; Romans 1; 3; 5).

As a result of mankind's inherent sinfulness, every human being, except Christ, is born with a sinful nature (Psalms 51:5), and is spiritually dead and separated from God (Romans 3:9-18, Ephesians 2:1-3; Isaiah 59:2). Thus, all of mankind is ETERNALLY LOST or wholly condemned before God (Romans 3:9-19, 23) and has no saving merit to offer God (Isaiah 64:6). The HEATHEN, including those who have never heard about Jesus, are also eternally lost and without excuse (Ephesians 2:3; Job 14:4; Psalms 58:3; Romans 1:20; 5:12; 3:23; Isaiah 64:6). But, by the grace of God, the divine image in man is in process of renewal or REGENERATION for the believer (2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10). Regeneration is the transforming work that the Holy Spirit performs in the soul of a believer at the moment of conversion (Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17), making the believer spiritually alive with a new beginning (Romans 8:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Article 6: BLOOD OF JESUS

I believe "that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and, thus, become children of God." (E.F.C.A.)

In order to provide a way of salvation for mankind, Jesus Christ paid the price of man's sin by SHEDDING HIS BLOOD and offering Himself as the perfect and complete sacrifice (Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19). As a result, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ provide the only basis for justification and salvation for all who believe in Him (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:10). SALVATION is the deliverance from the power and dominion of sin (Matthew 1:21). In both the Old and New Testaments, salvation comes by God's GRACE (undeserved favor) and is contingent solely on the person's FAITH, which is a channel or means (not a work) through which salvation comes (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:1-16). Faith is defined as: to lean upon or to confide in; both believing that and believing in; and to REPENT or change one's mind in turning away from sin and turning toward Christ (Romans 6:1-2; Acts 3:19), laying hold upon the promises and the work of Christ. Faith or BELIEVING IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST does not imply merely intellectual belief as much as it indicates trust and commitment - a volitional act or commitment of the will.

At the moment a person places his faith in Christ, several crucial events occur to the believer that point to his SALVATION and ETERNAL SECURITY. Firstly, the person crosses over from death to eternal life and will not be condemned (John 5:24). Secondly, God's seal of ownership in the person of the Holy Spirit is placed into the believer's life as God's pledge or guarantee of future inheritance of eternal life (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5). Thirdly, the person is JUSTIFIED or declared righteous (Romans 5:9). God forgives him of sin and imputes him with the RIGHTEOUSNESS of Christ, conforming him to God's moral standard (Romans 5:18; Philippians 3:9). Fourthly, the person is adopted by God as a child of God - never to be forsaken (John 1:12; Hebrews 13:5). Fifthly, the person is SANCTIFIED by God, which is the act of God setting apart someone for holy use. Sanctification may be: positional, referring to the Christian's position in Christ; experiential, resulting from the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian; or ultimate, speaking of the complete perfection of the believer in heaven (Romans 1:7; 8:29-30).

In regard to salvation, the OLD TESTAMENT LAW is not a means of salvation (Romans 3:20) but rather it was put in charge to lead mankind to Christ that humans might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24). While the Old Testament Law is holy, righteous, and good (Romans 7:12), believers are no longer under its supervision (Galatians 3:25) even though it makes us conscious of sin (Romans 3:19-20).

Article 7: ORDINANCES

I believe "that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as a means of salvation." (E.F.C.A.)

BAPTISM is an ordinance commanded by Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). It is an outward picture and public testimony of what happens to the believer inwardly when he

trusts Christ as Savior, and thus is a response to salvation, not a condition or means of salvation. When the believer is baptized, he is identifying with Christ, symbolizing his being buried with Christ to new life and cleansing from sin (Romans 6:1-11; Colossians 2:11-14). While being the best picture of this burial and resurrection, IMMERSION is the Scriptural mode of baptism because the Greek word for 'baptize' literally means "to dip under" or "to immerse, submerge" (Strong's #G0907).

Sincere people cite verses like Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, and 1 Peter 3:21 as support for the necessity of baptism with faith for salvation. However, close examination of their respective contexts reveals that baptism is not stated as a condition for salvation in these passages but as a consequence of salvation by faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). Equally controversial, baptism is for believers only and therefore has no value for infants or unbelievers (Acts 2:38; 3:19; Ephesians 2:8-9).

In Luke 22:14-20 and I Corinthians 11:23-26, believers are instructed to observe the LORD'S SUPPER on a regular basis as a commemorative witness. The Lord's Supper is to: remind believers of Christ's death which is the basis of their salvation through the sacrifice of His body and blood as a substitutionary atonement (1 Corinthians 11:24-25); proclaim His death until He returns (1 Corinthians 11:26); express oneness with other believers (1 Corinthians 10:17); and examine one's self while taking care to observe the Lord's Supper in an orderly and serious manner (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). The bread and the cup are merely symbols that serve to remind the believer of Christ's death and are not a means of salvation (Luke 22:19-20).

Articles 8 and 9: CHURCH AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

I believe "that the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the Body of Christ of which He is the Head. Only those who are, thus, members of the Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church." (E.F.C.A.)

The CHURCH is a group of people called out from the world and belonging to the Lord. It is called the BODY OF CHRIST and is a living organism. Although it is made up of individual parts, the church has a vital unity and a vital relationship with its Head, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:4-16). In the New Testament, believers identify themselves with and commit themselves to a particular local church body (Acts 2:42-47; Romans 16:1). Only those who have personally trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit should be eligible for MEMBERSHIP in a local church (1 Corinthians 1:2).

There are two aspects of the church in Scripture. The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is composed of all people of this present age who have been born of the Spirit of God (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). The LOCAL CHURCH is an organized assembly of professing believers in any one locality (Acts 11:26; Romans 16:5).

The PURPOSES of the church as well as the REASONS FOR BECOMING A MEMBER are: to glorify God (1 Peter 2:9); to edify believers by developing them toward spiritual maturity and equipping them for service through meeting to learn God's Word, pray, worship, fellowship, give offerings, minister to each other, and celebrate the ordinances (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 14:26; 1 Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:7-13);

to evangelize the lost and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20); and to defend the faith (Titus 1:9).

Article 10: JESUS AS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT

I believe "that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church and that every local church has the right, under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs." (*E.F.C.A.*)

As the HEAD of the Church body, Jesus Christ is the true source of all the church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function, and motive of the body - both individually and corporately (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). God has provided His direction for the body in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

There are primarily three TYPES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT. The EPISCOPAL form is government in the church by bishops ("overseers") who exclusively have the right to consecrate other bishops and ordain priests and deacons. The PRESBYTERIAN form is government by the ruling elders who are elected by the membership as representatives of the church. The CONGREGATIONAL form is where the authority of the church rests in each local congregation as an autonomous body, with Christ as the Head. Each local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs. However, the local church should not be isolated, unaccountable, nor absolutely independent from other churches (Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Titus 1:4).

The New Testament supports the Congregational form of government. The local churches: exercised church discipline (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:5); elected their own officers, delegates, and messengers (Acts 6:3-5; 11:22; 2 Corinthians 8:19); and maintained true doctrine and practice (1 John 4:1; 2:20,27). The office of ELDER (OVERSEER or PASTOR) is primarily responsible for preaching, teaching, shepherding, and overseeing (Titus 1:5, 9; Acts 20:28-35; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17). The New Testament shows a plurality of elders in the local church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). The office of DEACON, who is to serve under the direction of the elders, is responsible for undertaking those areas of service necessary for the church's functioning that would otherwise prohibit the elders and other leaders from performing their Biblical responsibilities (Acts 6:1-6). DEMOCRACY is the basis of congregational government with all members having equal rights and responsibility. All believers comprise the priesthood of the church (1 Peter 2:5,9).

Article 11: ESCHATOLOGY

I believe "in the personal premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer." (*E.F.C.A.*)

I believe that the next event in God's prophetic calendar is the PRE-TRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE of the church - when living and dead believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and receive rewards at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). Following the rapture, there will be a seven year period of TRIBULATION at which time God's wrath will be poured out on mankind (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21-29; Revelation 3:10). I believe Christ will rapture His church before the

great tribulation for the following reasons. Firstly, God promises the church exemption from divine wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10). Secondly, Scriptures teach that Christ's coming is IMMEDIATE - He can come for the church literally at any moment (1 Corinthians 1:7; Titus 2:13; James 5:8). Thirdly, when the "RESTRAINER", which is the Holy Spirit, is removed from this world, the church must also be removed. The assurance of Christ's imminent return is to have a vital bearing upon the life of the believer who, therefore, is to watch, live, and work in anticipation of His return (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2,6).

Following the tribulation, there will be an earthly kingdom lasting for a thousand years (MILLENNIUM) unlike any other period of history (Revelation 20:1-6). This earthly millennium will be ushered in immediately by the personal, bodily, and visible RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST with great power and glory (Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:11; Luke 12:40). During the millennium of unparalleled peace, righteousness, and justice among men, Satan will be bound and the saints will reign together with Christ on the earth (Revelation 20:1-6). Although God has set a definite time for Christ's coming, the Bible makes it clear that we do not know and cannot know the exact time when Jesus will return (Mark 13:32). However, the Bible does tell of a number of events that will occur in relationship to His coming.

Article 12: RESURRECTION

I believe "in the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment." (*E.F.C.A.*)

When a person dies physically, his soul continues to exist after death (Matthew 10:28; Luke 16:23-24). The soul of the unsaved person goes to "HADES" (Strong's #G0086) or "SHEOL" (Strong's #H7585) to suffer conscious, eternal torment and agony (Luke 16:22-31). Conversely, upon death the believer's soul goes immediately to HEAVEN where he is in the presence of Christ (Acts 7:59; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23). Going to heaven or hell after death is determined on the basis of whether or not a person has received Christ as Savior during this physical life. Upon death there is no second chance and nothing can be done to change one's eternal destination (Luke 16:26; John 8:21).

The redeemed will be raised at the Second Coming of Christ, either at the Rapture or at the beginning of the millennium (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; Revelation 20:4). Although the RESURRECTION will be bodily in nature, believers' bodies will undergo a transformation (1 Corinthians 15:51-53,43-44; Philippians 3:20-21). Given glorified bodies, believers will live in an eternal state of joy and happiness in the new heaven and new earth where they will worship and serve God forever (Matthew 25:34; Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 21-22). The bodies of the unsaved dead of all the ages will be raised after the millennium, at which time they will stand at the judgment of the great white throne and will be cast into the lake of fire ("GEHENNA" (Strong's #G1067)) where they will face eternal conscious suffering (Matthew 13:50; Revelation 20:10-15).

SOCIAL AND OTHER ISSUES:

SIGN GIFTS

When the Biblical evidence is examined, the miracles of the Bible seem to be clustered around certain critical periods of history. These periods were great transition points when God's message and God's messengers needed special validation (Exodus, Prophets, Gospels, and Acts). The apostolic age was such a transition point. Scripture indicates that miraculous signs such as tongue-speaking, miracle-working, and healings accompanied the apostles in order to give special validation to them and their message while the New Testament was being produced (Acts 8:6; 1 Corinthians 14:22; Hebrews 2:3-4). Although it cannot be said that the Holy Spirit would never give these gifts today, the evidence indicates that the need for these gifts ceased with the completion of God's self-authenticating Word (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). This does not mean that God has ceased doing miracles. God saves, answers prayer, gives strength, heals, and protects. He is a miracle-working God and He does not change. However, His methods do change. Because there is no longer a need for sign-gifts (tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing), a total absence of credible evidence since the apostolic age about 2,000 years ago confirms that God in His sovereignty has chosen to no longer give these sign gifts to individuals. But the Kingdom of Darkness continues to perpetrate the counterfeiting of the sign gifts.

ANGELS, SATAN, DEMONS, AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

ANGELS are finite, living spirit beings created by God for the purposes of worshipping God, serving God, and ministering to God's redeemed in many unseen ways (Psalms 148:2,5; 103:20-21). They have personality (1 Peter 1:12; Job 38:7; Isaiah 14:12-15) and immortality (Luke 20:36). Created higher than man with superior intelligence, knowledge, and strength (Hebrews 2:5-7), angels are below Christ (Hebrews 1:4,7) and they should not be worshipped (Colossians 2:18; Revelation 22:8-9). Holy angels, those who did not fall into sin, have some of the following functions: to praise and glorify God (Job 38:7; Psalms 103:20; 148:2; Revelation 5:11-12; 7:11; 8:1-4); to reveal and communicate God's message to man (Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2); to protect and minister to believers (Acts 5:19; 12:6-11; Psalms 34:7; 91:11; 35:4-5; Hebrews 1:14); to execute judgment upon the enemies of God (2 Kings 19:35; 2 Samuel 24:16; Revelation 16:1-17); to be agents of God's government (Psalms 103:19-20); and to be involved in the second coming (Matthew 25:31; 13:39-42; 24:31).

DEMONS are angels that have sinned or fallen and became intrinsically evil (2 Peter 2:4; Matthew 12:22-29). Foremost among demons is SATAN (John 8:44; Luke 10:17-20; Isaiah 14:12-15), who leads the demons in SPIRITUAL WARFARE or active opposition to God, God's truth, God's programs, and believers (Ephesians 6:10-18; 2:2; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 11:13-15). Part of the activities of Satan and his demons include ruling over the world system (Revelation 20:3; Ephesians 6:12), deceiving men (Luke 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:1-3), and bringing death (Revelation 18:2,24).

In regard to unsaved people, spiritual warfare activities of the powers of darkness concentrate on snatching away the gospel (Luke 8:12), blinding minds to the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4), and ingraining in a false lifestyle (Ephesians 2:1-3). Whether they are aware of it or not, believers and the church are continuously in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:12) and must be prepared to stand firm against the attacks of the enemy

(Ephesians 6:13; James 4:7) by recognizing the battle (Ephesians 6:12,18), putting on the Lord's armor of protection (Ephesians 6:11,14-17), using the Word of God and prayer as weapons (Ephesians 6:17-18), and submitting to God (James 4:7).

One day in the future, Satan and the demons will be defeated, judged and sent to punishment in eternal fire (Matthew 25:41).

HOMOSEXUALITY

God's design for human sexuality is for one man and one woman to enjoy it within the life-long commitment of a marriage relationship (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:22-24). Homosexuality is a perversion of that design and contrary to God's intention for human sexual behavior (Romans 1:18-27; Jude 7). God does not approve of homosexuality, but He offers complete forgiveness for the person who turns away from the homosexual lifestyle and turns to Christ as Savior (Genesis 19:4-5; Leviticus 18:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

ABORTION, INFANTICIDE, AND EUTHANASIA

Human life is created by God in His image, giving it intrinsic and inestimable value (Genesis 1:27; 9:6). God has commanded humans not to kill nor take the life of the innocent (Exodus 20:13; 23:7). This covers all varieties of taking innocent human life - including abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia - regardless of physical or intellectual health, development, or usefulness of that person to society (Psalms 139:13-16). Believers should reject and non-violently oppose these atrocities while offering compassionate alternatives.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

God established the MARRIAGE relationship with the intention that it would be a life-long, continuously binding (Romans 7:1-3), humanly irrevocable (Mark 10:9) covenant commitment and an integration of two lives into a unique, one-flesh union of husband and wife (Genesis 2:18-24; Mark 10:7-8). God hates DIVORCE (Malachi 2:16) and considers all marriages to be PERMANENT until the death of one spouse brings termination of the marriage covenant (Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39).

God ALLOWS but does not desire for divorce and remarriage in only the special cases of: 1. when marital unfaithfulness has occurred (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:8-9); and 2. when only one spouse has become a believer with the unbelieving spouse desiring to leave (1 Corinthians 7:12-16). Before seeking a divorce, the believing spouse should make every effort to live peacefully with his/her unbelieving spouse in order to win him/her to Christ and for the benefit of the children (1 Corinthians 7:16,14; Romans 12:18). When divorce does occur, God desires that both divorcees not remarry nor develop an intimate relationship with another person in order to be available for God's purpose of RECONCILIATION with the original spouse (1 Corinthians 7:16-17,10-11; Matthew 19:8; cf. Hosea 3:1). REMARRIAGE to someone else while the original spouse is living, except in these two special cases, constitutes adultery (Matthew 19:9; Romans 7:1-3).

Based on this understanding of Scriptures, marriage counseling should not condone or approve of divorce as a solution to marital difficulty. Furthermore, a marriage ceremony for a divorced person if the original spouse is still alive should likewise not be

condoned or approved of. In addition, God does not approve of a divorced or remarried person to serve in a leadership role in the church (1 Timothy 3:2,12; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

SOCIAL DRINKING

Drunkenness is warned against throughout Scriptures (Proverbs 23:20,31-32; 20:1; Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:20; 1 Peter 4:3). However, Scriptures do not teach total abstinence as God's requirement for all His people (Luke 7:34; 1 Timothy 5:23). But yet the best and godly approach is to personally observe total abstinence, not enter bars (1 Timothy 3:7,3), avoid entering restaurants containing bars, and avoid the liquor departments in grocery stores. This is the best way to minimize the temptation of abuse or overindulgence and to effectively demonstrate a lifestyle witness.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Women are spiritually and intellectually equal to men (Galatians 3:28). However, women should not hold any leadership positions (such as pastors, shepherds, elders, or teachers), which have authority over men in the church (1 Timothy 2:11-15; 1 Corinthians 14:34-36; 11:2-16). Women are to be in SUBMISSION to men's authoritative leadership of the affairs, running, and government of the church (1 Corinthians 14:35). The issue is not the ability or the wisdom of women to speak intelligently, but how women are relating to men, in other words being in submission (1 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 Timothy 2:11-12). In regard to their functioning and activities within the church, women are not to be dishonoring or shameful to men. Yet, Acts 18:26 allows for the occasional, unofficial guidance or teaching of men by women, but presumably only when there are no other qualified men present to do the teaching.

A seemingly reasonable approach, then, would be to not restrict women in a church setting or meeting from giving their testimonies, reading Scripture, making announcements, singing songs, teaching children, or offering a public prayer because these ministries do not express an authoritative, elder-like teaching over men (1 Corinthians 11:5; Deuteronomy 6:7; 21:18-20). In fact, older women are to train younger women (Titus 2:4).

PREFERRED WORSHIP STYLES

Worship of God should be a dynamic encounter with the living Lord in which believers, through a state of heart and a way of life, give Him the praise, honor, and glory that He alone deserves (Psalms 96:7-8; Romans 12:1f). As a priority for the local church, worship should minimally contain several components: strong expositional and life-related preaching of God's Word (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 4:13); prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-2; Colossians 4:3-4); praise and thanksgiving (Psalms 107:32; Hebrews 13:15); singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16); giving of tithes and offerings (1 Corinthians 16:2; Philippians 4:18); and the celebration of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Concerning PREFERRED WORSHIP STYLE, ideally, worship in the church should be characterized by: a variety of means (drama, music, testimonies, etc.) being utilized in creative, fresh, and CULTURALLY RELEVANT ways for inspiration and motivation; congregational involvement through testimonies, prayer, Scripture reading, communion,

drama, etc.; and an atmosphere of warmth, concern, and friendliness within and from the congregation and staff.

PERSONAL LIFESTYLE

Some main convictions to hold for personal lifestyle are summarized in 1 Timothy 1; 6:11 and Romans 12:1-2. As an ambassador for Christ, every ministry leader should actively seek to maintain personal integrity and yieldedness before God and to be above reproach before men (1 Timothy 3:2). This includes fleeing from all kinds of evil, which can entrap, and "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:11). Regarding SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES, every ministry leader should faithfully maintain a personal devotional time with the Lord every day and attend church regularly, preferably with one's family every week (1 Timothy 3:9; 4:7, 16; Psalms 1:2). In terms of PERSONAL FINANCES, again every ministry leader should strive to maintain personal integrity and honesty in all matters (1 Timothy 3:3; 6:11). Concerning MORAL PURITY, there should be a completely successful maintaining of total faithfulness to one's spouse (1 Timothy 3:2). Consequently, make it your policy never to counsel a person of the opposite sex in an isolated environment. In doing ministry work, ACCOUNTABILITY is important to keep you on an upright path. So, periodically seek the guidance, feedback, and counsel of a trusted peer or superior in your ministry field but outside of your ministry domain (Proverbs 12:15). And remain solidly committed to YOUR MARRIAGE, FAMILY, and related responsibilities (1 Timothy 3:4-5). Set aside time daily to interact with and nurture your family.

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

As a ministry leader and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, you must be diligently about the work of making disciples through active evangelism, discipleship, biblical counseling, and equipping for service (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). The ultimate goal is to train others how to do ministry who will then teach others how to do ministry (multiplication). A main motivating reason for the need of active biblical counseling is that many believers do not become "fruit-bearing" for the Lord because they are in bondages to long-established areas of sin in their lives that hinder them from fulfilling God's will for them (Romans 6:11-22; Hebrews 12:1). These bondages to sin are usually too powerful for them to humanly overcome and eliminate (Romans 6:19). But through the application of biblical truths and principles to each area of bondage, believers can be set free to bear fruit in service to the Lord and to His church (John 8:31-32; 2 Timothy 2:25-26). Persevere in much prayer and careful consideration to strive to seek the Lord's will in how He would have you continue to serve Him in this regard.

A similar STATEMENT OF DOCTRINAL BELIEFS (without accompanying Bible references):

GOD: God is the infinite, eternal, perfect spirit Being in whom all things have their source, support, and end. God has dominion over both the visible and the invisible realms. Some attributes of God are omniscience, wisdom, holiness, justice or righteousness, love, goodness, mercy, grace, truth, omnipotence, sovereignty, liberty, self-existence, infinity, oneness, and immutability. God's essence is an antinomy of being one yet comprised of three distinct Persons (triune): God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. All three Persons of the Godhead (or Trinity) have intellect, emotions, and will, are co-equal and co-eternal, and are in complete unity with no confounding of the Persons nor division of their substances.

CHRIST: Christ always has been and always will be eternally divine - being one of the Persons of the triune Godhead. He was never created but was fully God and became fully human simultaneously when He came to earth nearly 2,000 years ago, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary as Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. Having been sent by God the Father, Christ lived a sinless life and fulfilled the work of God the Father. His work includes revealing the Father and heavenly truth; ruling over the kingdom of heaven and the church; and reconciling men to God. Christ's reconciling work involved breaking the power of sin over mankind and providing a way of salvation for mankind by completely paying a ransom that is sufficient for all of the sins of every person who believes in Him. He accomplished this work of grace by dying on the cross and giving His blood as the final sin sacrifice for all humans who believe. On the third day after His death, God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus Christ is now seated on the right hand of God the Father in heaven and will return to earth at some specific time in the future.

HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is a divine Person of the triune Godhead - not some mysterious "force" of God. Some of His tasks include: to glorify Jesus Christ; to convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgment; to regenerate and give new life by indwelling believers and empowering them to love and serve God; and to convey and exercise sovereignty over gifts to the church.

BIBLE: The Bible is a collection of 66 books that is God's written special revelation to mankind. The Bible is inspired by God and is fully inerrant in the original manuscripts. The Bible discloses the content of divine truth to mankind and is to be used for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

CHURCH: The church is Christ's body of believers - the people of God who have true faith and salvation in Jesus Christ. This is not to be confused with the church building. The church body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and is the locus of Christ's activity now. It is universal in nature, yet is manifested as local congregations. Christ is the head of the church and all persons who make up the church are interconnected through Him. The church is a manifestation of the kingdom of heaven in that it is a witness to, instrument of, and custodian of that kingdom. Some important functions of the church are evangelism, edification, worship, teaching Scriptures, and social concerns.

SIN: Sin is a lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, attitude, or state. Sin has broken man's relationship with God and has corrupted his nature, giving him an inclination toward evil. Sin entered the human race through Adam (and Eve) in the Garden of Eden and since then all of mankind (except Jesus Christ) is born in a state of inherited sinfulness or depravity. The main effect or consequence of sin is that it separates mankind from God (which is death), leading to eternal punishment and separation from God. However, God does forgive sin within His process of salvation.

SALVATION: God has made a way or provision for man to escape the consequences of his sin. This way is known as salvation and is a free gift from God. Mankind can in no way earn or work for salvation because all efforts fall short of God's moral standard. Salvation comes when a human turns from sin and receives Jesus by faith. Salvation comes only by the grace of God alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ to all who believe in Him. At the moment of salvation, God justifies the believer through the blood of Jesus Christ, forgives his sin, adopts the believer as a son of God, and sends the Holy Spirit to indwell him or her as a deposit, guaranteeing the eternal life to come.

SECOND COMING: The second coming or return of Jesus Christ to this earth is an event that will definitely happen at some point in time in the future. This physical return of Jesus Christ will be unexpected, visible, triumphant, and glorious. The main purpose for His return will be to personally reign over His kingdom on earth.

FUTURE RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT: The future resurrection will be a work of the triune God in which the bodies of both the righteous and the unrighteous humans will be raised from the dead. The resurrection will restore life to the bodies and reunite the person's spirit with his/her respective body. Somehow, a transformation process of the body will also take place at the same time. After all humans have been resurrected, they (or we) will all be judged by Jesus Christ. Those humans who were true believers will be sent to eternal life with God in heaven. Those humans who were not true believers will be sent to the burning lake of fire to be eternally punished and separated from God. This judgment will be permanent and irrevocable.

SATAN: Satan is a living spirit being known as a fallen angel. Satan, along with numerous other angels, was created perfect and without sin. But, at one point in past history, Satan sinned and persuaded approximately one-third of the angels to follow him in rebellion to God. Satan rules over his army of fallen angels (known as demons) and together they are allowed by the Lord to continue their wicked activities of: opposing God, God's truth, God's programs, and believers; ruling over the world system; deceiving men; infiltrating churches and ministries, empowering humans to promote their agendas, counterfeiting charismatic spiritual gifts, corrupting non-charismatic spiritual gifts, counterfeiting activities of the Holy Spirit, and bringing enslavement and death. One day in the future, they will be defeated, judged, and sent to eternal punishment in the burning lake of fire.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: The Holy Spirit bestows certain spiritual gifts as He wills upon believers within the body of Christ. These gifts include but are not limited to: serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, mercy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, discernment, and evangelism. The Holy Spirit has ceased bestowing upon believers the spiritual gifts of prophecy, healing, working of miracles, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Nobody has all gifts, nor is any one gift bestowed on everyone, but all are important.

ETERNAL SECURITY: A believer is kept in the faith by the power of Almighty God. From the moment faith is placed in Jesus Christ, the believer can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but will persevere to the end and be eternally saved.

COOPERATION: In doing ministry, try your best to cooperate with everyone in order to achieve opportunities to share the gospel with and teach God's Word to whomever will listen - no matter who they are.

In regard to material needs, the Lord has placed the responsibility of meeting the needs of a faith ministry squarely on believers. For faith ministries, then, it is appropriate to actively seek the support of believers only, but unsolicited support from unbelievers can be received because apparently the Lord has motivated them to give.

Due to their incompatible theological doctrine, Catholics and cults or heretical religions such as Jehovah's Witnesses should be excluded from participation in leading or running aspects of your ministry.

Based on 1 Corinthians 14:34 and your personal convictions, a wise approach would be not to allow women to teach or preach to men in your ministry functions unless there are no qualified men available at all. However, women can be encouraged and utilized in publicly reading of Scripture, praying, giving testimonies, and singing in ministry to men.

Based on the biblical principles clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 and the absence of genuine and credible experiential evidence, the charismatic practicing of the gifts of prophecy, tongues, miracles, and healing should not be allowed or tolerated in your ministry functions.

GOD'S PROVISION FOR NEEDS: Through His Word and His Spirit, God makes available the information, understanding, ability, and empowering to meet all of your mental and spiritual needs. However, it is essential that you must earnestly seek Him and His will in your life through prayer, study of Scriptures, obedience, repentance, confession, and yielding to Him daily. Your responsibility is to love the Lord by keeping your life right with Him and to earnestly seek to do His will with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Ultimately, it is God's responsibility to provide for the physical needs of yourself and your family. If the Lord wants you to continue in a faith ministry, then He will somehow provide everything necessary to fulfill that task. If or when the day comes when He no longer provides for your needs, then that is the day He wants you out of that particular ministry - assuming you have faithfully attended to your responsibilities.

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