



Unity in Essentials, Liberty in Non-Essentials, Love in All Things.

CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

CHRIST'S MISSION...TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST.

Jesus was sent into the world by the Father (John 3:16; 5:23-27; 17:21-25) to seek and to save the Lost (Luke 19:10). It is a statement worthy of acceptance that "Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15).

This is the Good News, the Gospel (the Evangel) we proclaim.

CHRIST'S COMMISSION... MAKE DISCIPLES

Jesus' last word to the Church before His Ascension was "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19).

A disciple is someone who...

- follows Jesus.
- learns of Jesus.
- willingly submits to and obeys Jesus' perfect will.
- has a living relationship with Jesus.
- commits oneself to Jesus as He is, Son of God, the only Saviour, Lord of All. Who is "in love with Jesus."
- introduces others to this love relationship with Jesus.
- carries on the Mission of Jesus.

CHRIST'S CROSS...THE POWER OF GOD

The Cross of Christ is the epicentre of Christian faith and self-understanding (1 Cor 2:2), the core of Christian theology, its key and its foundation, the content of Christian preaching. In history the cross was an instrument of Roman torture, humiliation, death, and terror; Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Paradoxically, the Cross is the very epitome of His self-revelation, God not revealed in divine power and glory, but in human disgrace, poverty, suffering and death.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION...THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE OVER DEATH

If the Cross is the 'eye-piece,' the Resurrection is the telescopic lens. We cannot understand the Cross without the Resurrection and the Resurrection presupposes the Cross. The tomb is empty! Jesus has been raised bodily! "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." (1 Cor 15:17). It is central and essential to our confession (Rom 10:9).

CHRIST'S SPIRIT...MEDIATES THE PERSONAL PRESENCE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

The same Spirit, who raised Jesus from the dead, is the Helper sent by Jesus, whose essential work is to mediate the personal presence and ministry of Jesus. He does so in order that our Lord may be known, loved, trusted, honoured, and praised (John 14:16; Rom 1:4; 8:11).

The Spirit of Christ, also called the Spirit of God (Rev 2:1, 7,8, etc.), in the words of Jesus, "will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you" (John 16:14). This is His fundamental and unchanging task.

The Spirit is more than a power who gives coping ability for living, or enables performance in service, or moves people to speak, or brings about emotional response, or endows with knowledge or insight. Rather He is the third Person of the Trinity and very God (Gen 1:26; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).

Jesus is our example of 'life in the Spirit' (Matt 3:17; 4:1). His life characterized by love for God and love for others was well pleasing to His Father and commended as our example (Phil 2:5; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:21).

The same Spirit is the deposit guaranteeing our complete redemption (2 Cor 5:5; Eph 1:13). The Holy Spirit empowers us to love like Jesus in victory over the world, the sinful nature (flesh) and the devil and causes us to be partakers of God's nature through union with Christ and to be His witnesses, sharing our faith with others (1 John 2:15-17; 4:12-13; 5:1-5; 2 Pet 1:4; Acts 1:8).

The fruit of the Spirit is demonstrated in Christlike character in a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-25).

CHRIST'S GIFTS...GIVEN FOR SERVICE TO OTHERS AND FOR THE COMMON GOOD

God sovereignly and freely distributes to each of His children His gifting and gifts as He sees fit (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:4). He does so for the purpose of service to others (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10; Eph 3:7), for the common good and for the building up of the body (1 Cor 14:12; Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:7).

God has given many and diverse gifts (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:4), the most wonderful is the gift of His Son (2 Cor 9:5; Rom 5:15, 16) and saving faith (Eph 2:8) unto eternal life (Rom 6:23). The gift of His Son is given by the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 10:45; 11:17) and is also called the gift of God (John 4:10).

The grace gifts of Christ (1 Cor 1:4-7; 4:8) are one and the same as the gifts of the Spirit and are also called the gifts of the Father (2 Tim 1:6; Heb 2:4).

The gifts given for communication of God's message (Eph 4:8, 11-12; 1 Cor 14:1, 12; 1 Cor 12:28) are central to God's equipping of all believers for service.

The gifts are to be eagerly desired by the Body - not sought after as an individual bestowal - for the building up of the body (1 Cor 12:31; 14:12) and to be treasured and developed (1 Tim 4:13-14; 2 Tim 1:6).

The exercise of gifts are not the evidence of true spirituality. They do not protect from sin, nor

do they transform character but reside in the believer or appear as transitory operations of extraordinary power from God, given when and as God sees fit (1 Cor 12).

The fruit of the Spirit, pre-eminently expressed in love, is the prime evidence of true spirituality (1 Cor 13:2).

Anything that God has ever done anywhere, He can do here; anything that God has ever done any time, He can do now; anything that God has ever done for anyone, He can do for you (Tozer).

CHRIST'S WORD...MAKES US WISE FOR SALVATION, GUIDES THE BELIEVER'S CONDUCT AND EQUIPS FOR EVERY GOOD WORK

"The holy Scriptures are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:15-17).

UNITY IN ESSENTIALS

We are called to Unity in Essentials...There are essentials in doctrine (the things we believe); in practice (the things we do) and in conduct (the way we live).

ESSENTIALS OF DOCTRINE: STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Articles of Faith of our EMCC Constitution can be distilled in the following way:

1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. ONE GOD, eternally existent in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, Our Saviour, God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work and substitutionary death, and His personal return in power and glory.
4. THE SALVATION of lost and sinful people through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith apart from works, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
5. THE HOLY SPIRIT by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. THE UNITY in the Spirit of all true believers, the Body of Christ; visible in gathered communities and in co-operative mission.
7. THE RESURRECTION of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

These articles are the non-negotiable Essentials of the Christian faith. The statement is Orthodox and Evangelical. Orthodox means in agreement with the historic teaching of the Christian faith as expressed in the historic creeds. Evangelical means an emphasis on the biblical gospel about salvation by faith in Christ and new life (regeneration) by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. This new life is essential to the Christian walk.

ESSENTIALS IN PRACTICE: THE ORDINANCES

We teach and practice two ordinances as commanded by Christ: Believer's Baptism and Lord's Supper, both intended as expressions of faith and obedience on the part of the believer.

We are immovable in our stand that the new birth is essential, and we are convinced that the Biblical teaching is believer's baptism by immersion upon profession of faith.

We also recognize that some godly, passionate Christians have roots in other traditions where baptismal practice differs.

We are, therefore, persuaded that the timing and mode of water baptism ought not to prevent born again believers from being accepted into membership of our churches and our denomination. We want to receive all whom Christ receives.

We welcome all who love Jesus to join us in the memorial feast at the Lord's Table, recognizing the body and blood of our Lord.

ESSENTIALS OF CONDUCT: STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

The Christian's conduct is modeled on the example of Jesus.

Out of gratitude to God for His Covenant love, empowered by the Spirit of Holiness, informed and shaped by the instruction of the Word of God, the Christian walks in the steps of Jesus, obedient to the teaching of Jesus.

The Scriptures teach that the divine pattern for sexual relationships is the marital union of one man and one woman in a lifelong covenant relationship in mutual submission to Christ where care and respect for each other are practiced.

The Scriptures teach that the believer is to be unfettered by anything that attains an addictive, compulsive or idolatrous dominance or control in one's life and conduct.

LIBERTY IN NON-ESSENTIALS

We proclaim passionately the Gospel of Jesus. We uncompromisingly defend the Essentials. We gladly celebrate our liberty in non-essentials. We warmly commend love in all things.

We accept that the Scriptures teach many other things of importance and substance beyond the Unifying Essentials. However, we are persuaded that these other matters must not displace our unity based on essentials. We will be careful that our studious attention to these matters, albeit worthy, not distract us from our high calling to make His Mission, Our Mission.

We can and will engage in teaching and dialogue in areas beyond our unifying base with 'warm hearts and cool heads' rather than 'hot heads and cold hearts.' We intend to generate light rather than heat. We will be careful that our passionate engagements on points of practice or teaching not bring disrepute to our Saviour by doing so in a way unbecoming.

We will represent the views of others fairly, accurately and peacefully. Love will guide our forms

of expression and we agree that fair dealing concerning issues of known sensitivity is important to our unity.

We will treat sensitively the heritage positions of our movement and the traditions specific to each congregational culture.

We will express our well considered views and will plead for a particular understanding but not impugn the spirituality, character or intelligence of those who differ. We will speak of our fellows with respect and avoid the tendency to demonize others who hold differing views. When others are speaking we will accord them a courteous hearing, although we may hold differing views. We will cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and kindness in speech and be slow to take offense and always ready for reconciliation.

We will foster an atmosphere where careful study of the Scriptures is preeminent, reasoned decision making is encouraged, passionate love for God is approved and active service is the result.

We will also seek to develop consensus on various issues and to develop mediating positions that build bridges rather than walls appreciating those points held in common. Position papers concerning such issues will be published from time to time.

We will guard against the tendency to make agreement on secondary issues tests of fellowship or service.

We intend to be a movement characterized by Unity in Essentials, Liberty in Non-Essentials and Love in All Things.

LOVE IN ALL THINGS

CHRIST'S COMMANDMENT..."LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

A disciple is someone who is in love with Jesus, and who out of love follows Him, and who becomes an agent of that same love, imparting it to others compassionately, giving freely of one's substance and self and pointing lost people to the love of Jesus who saves and transforms.

A disciple responds compassionately to the needs of others:

- grounded in the love of Christ, demonstrated at the cross - Grace
- experiencing the love of Christ, received through faith - Conversion
- expressing the love of Christ within the Body - Unity
- expressing the love of Christ in action - compassionate and practical love
- expressing the love of Christ in word - sharing the message of God's love to a lost and dying world, one person at a time.

CHRIST'S CHURCH

CHRIST'S CHURCH...THE BODY OF CHRIST MANIFEST IN GATHERED ASSEMBLIES OF BELIEVERS

"The local church is an organized body of believers in Christ [which is] voluntarily joined together for public worship and evangelism, teaching the Word, fellowship with the saints, observance of the ordinances, exercise in prayer, and who are commissioned with the responsibility to administer discipline." [former EMCC Constitution 2003]

"The characteristic marks of the members of the true church are faith in Jesus as the Son of God, love for God and for those of like faith, obedience to God's commandments and victory over the world" (1 John 3:21-24; 1 John 5:1-5). [former EMCC Constitution 2003]

CHRIST'S CHURCH...THE BODY OF CHRIST MANIFEST IN COOPERATIVE MISSION

Christ's Church in all times and all places, mystical and invisible is manifest in a dynamic missional 'ecosystem' of disciples, gathered communities, networks and institutions through which the presence of Christ is mediated to the watching world. Christ has given gifts to the Church that unify and mobilize believers for mission that transcends and extends the bounds of localized ministry (Eph 4:11; Acts 13:1-4; 1 Cor 12:28;). It is biblical to set apart leaders who serve and have standing in the larger church. The Spirit of unity and mission implants the impulse of cooperation and connection that prompts churches of like faith to make common cause for the Great Commission, to organize and support one another and to hold one another to account. It is right for there to be a mutual accountability in matters of faith, practice and conduct where the guiding principles are "Unity in Essentials, Liberty in Non-Essentials and Love in All Things" with Christ at the Centre.

CHRIST AND THE EMCC

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE AND MISSION

Born in revival fires and burning with missionary activism, our movement has been characterized by a willingness to embrace successive waves of spiritual renewal in order to refurbish its Great Commission fervour. From the initial impact of Wesleyan spirituality in the late 19th century upon Anabaptists and Pietists that forged them into a new force for evangelism at home and abroad to the late 20th century mergers and assimilations of other evangelicals the story of the denomination is one of merging streams.

All allegiances to Christ are embedded in culture. We appreciate and honour our cultural heritage but acknowledge that traditions that concretize and stabilize our life of faith can also trap us and stifle our ability to engage our world. As such we celebrate our ability to examine ourselves afresh in the light of our Great Commission mandate and Great Commandment priorities.

Each local church, (affiliate, associate or full member of the EMCC) is called upon to willingly and intentionally covenant, that to the best of her ability, she will promote the values, advance the purpose and support the ministries of EMCC in keeping with the Great Commandment and in pursuit of the Great Commission with Christ at the Centre!