



Evangelical Friends Church

— EASTERN REGION —

Faith and Practice

2018 Edition

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Notes:

* No changes made at Yearly Meeting 2018.

Wherever the term “Yearly Meeting” appears related to the organization of the Church, it refers to the annual business sessions of the delegates of EFC-ER.¹

All Scripture references are King James Version (KJV) or New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.

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¹ #420

SECTION ONE

FAITH

The expression of the Faith upon which Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region is based is presented in this section of the Faith and Practice. It includes a brief historical background, a statement of doctrine, and a statement of testimonies.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

SECTION 100 DOCTRINE

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In seventeenth-century England, there arose many groups of seekers who were dissatisfied with the rigid forms of the Church of England and were searching for a more inwardly satisfying way of worship and life. George Fox (1624-1691) went, as a young man, to many priests seeking inner peace and received only irrelevant answers. One day he heard a Voice saying, "There is One, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." Joy filled his heart, and from this experience the central conviction of Friends was born – that the living Christ can speak directly to the need of every seeking soul.

In 1652 George Fox climbed Pendle Hill and was deeply moved by what he saw. Later he wrote in his Journal: "The Lord let me see a-top of the hill in what places He had a great people to be gathered." At Firbank Fell he preached for over three hours to a thousand people, and out of that gathering the Valiant Sixty arose to work with Fox in evangelizing all of England. In spite of severe persecution, Fox went about speaking in churches, homes, and fields with multitudes of people attracted to hear his message. Since religious freedom was as yet unknown in England, these early Quakers were imprisoned in great numbers under the foulest conditions. In spite of these sufferings, the number of Quakers multiplied greatly, and eventually they won – not only for themselves – but also for all, the Act of Tolerance which guaranteed religious freedom (1689).

From 1650 to 1690 Quakerism spread rapidly throughout the British Isles and to other parts of the world, including the English colonies on the western shore of the Atlantic Ocean. Historians have labeled the Quaker Movement during those forty years as the fastest growing movement of the Western world.

At that time no church was permitted to exist except the Church of England; hence the followers of Fox called themselves "Publishers of Truth", "Children of Light", "Friends of Jesus", and later "Religious Society of Friends." The origin of the word "Friends" is from John 15:14 when Jesus said: "You are my friends if you do what I command." The nickname "Quaker" was originally a term of derision and insult, but through the years has become a symbol of integrity. In more recent times, Friends of evangelical persuasion have used the term Evangelical Friends Church.

Restoring primitive Christianity was the goal of early Friends. They defined it as authentic, apostolic Christianity based on New Testament teaching with no frills. In other words, preaching the essentials and omitting the non-essentials. They were a people gathered as followers of Christ, baptized with the Holy Spirit, and communing with God (often in silence) as they waited for guidance of the Holy Spirit to share, whether in prayer, message, or exhortation based on a deep concern.

In the 18th century, Friends seemed almost to forget the Biblical basis for their faith, putting a premium on silence as a way of worship. Speaking, reading Scriptures, and praying were considered intrusion. Called the Age of Quietism, unprogrammed meetings declined as they became active in social issues, such as fair treatment for Indians, refusing to participate in war, and responding to John Woolman's call to simplicity, frugality, and tolerance. As an itinerant preacher bent on abolishing slavery, Woolman carried his message to plantations of the South, boldly preaching equality for all. It is

noteworthy that prior to 1800 – more than 60 years before the Emancipation Proclamation – Quakers in North Carolina had liberated their slaves. During the Civil War, Friends assisted runaway slaves as part of the establishment of the “underground railroad,” a secret route to freedom in the North.

As the American West opened up after the Civil War, Friends migrated in great numbers. In the latter part of the 1800s, revivals and camp meetings throughout the Midwest were part of what has been called the “Great Revival.” Thousands were converted, and churches, including Friends churches, were crowded with new converts. It was at this time that pastored meetings came into vogue in order to disciple new believers. An emphasis was placed on ministering to children and youth in Sunday Schools and included music in a programmed worship format.

While the majority of Friends were simple, God-fearing people, there were some who became widely known. These include William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and peaceful negotiator with the Indians; Robert Barclay, Scottish gentleman, scholar, and theologian; John Woolman, best known for his anti-slavery work; John Greenleaf Whittier, poet; Stephen Grellet, French nobleman, who, escaping from the guillotine, became a vibrant Quaker evangelist in the remote parts of the United States; Elizabeth Fry, noted for prison reform in different parts of the world; and Joseph John Gurney, banker, scholar, theologian, and preacher who called the Society back from quietism to an evangelical position.

London Yearly Meeting, founded by George Fox, is the original organization from which all others have developed. Although boasting of never having had an official division, London Yearly Meeting has nevertheless changed over the years, reflecting some of the tensions which led to divisions in other parts of the Society of Friends. In the 19th century it was strongly evangelical, but in the 20th century it followed the trend of modern liberalism and became closely akin to the General Conference of Friends.

Currently there are five major groups of Friends: Hicksite, Orthodox, Conservative, Independent, and Evangelical Yearly Meetings. In their character they reflect major divisions which have occurred among Friends.

Friends General Conference (Hicksite) is a combination of Yearly Meetings which have their origins in the separation of 1828-29. The followers of Elias Hicks, who had been influenced by rationalism and unitarianism, separated from the Orthodox Friends. Today their meetings are united in keeping the tradition of unprogrammed meetings but are in serious tension between those with a humanistic philosophy and those who are Christocentric.

Friends United Meeting (Orthodox) came into being at the turn of the 20th century as the Five Years Meeting. With a more appropriate name-change, since they meet every three years, it is currently a federation of Yearly Meetings of diverse character. The majority are predominantly evangelical, but there are a few Yearly Meetings whose liberalism has made them very comfortable in joining both the Hicksite and Orthodox branches of the Church.

Conservative Friends is a term applied to a group which has great cohesion without having a formal organization combining their Yearly Meetings. These have their roots in the teaching of John Wilbur, whose opposition to Joseph John Gurney led to separation in 1854. The difference was not so much doctrinal as it was a matter of older traditions concerning manner of worship in silence, Quaker garb, and other practices. Wilbur so emphasized the "Inner Light" that it sounded almost like infallibility. Gurney, on the other hand, laid great emphasis on the Scriptures as the guide for salvation.

There are several Independent Yearly Meetings which are not affiliated with any larger grouping of Friends. However, they honor their Quaker roots and basically seek to share the message of Friends as they interpret it.

Evangelical Friends believe in the Biblical teaching of entire sanctification² as a second work of grace. This is the position of George Fox, Robert Barclay, and Joseph John Gurney. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit, always characteristic of Friends, made the Wesleyan-Arminian teaching on holiness congenial to these Friends also. The baptism with the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the way God cleanses from the sinful nature and makes believers holy.³ George Fox said, "and Christ did baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire and did thoroughly purge his floor and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Holiness is deliverance from the pollution, nature, and love of sin. The experience is called "perfect love."⁴ John tells us, "because as He is so are we in the world."⁵

In 1965, the Evangelical Friends Alliance brought together four independent, distinctly Evangelical Yearly Meetings – Ohio (Damascus), Kansas, Rocky Mountain, and Oregon. The roots of this group (as is true of many Yearly Meetings in the Friends United Meeting) are in the Orthodox, Gurneyite trend. In 1987 the International Friends Conference on Evangelism was held in Guatemala with over 250 Friends in attendance from 25 countries. It was decided to internationalize the organization and so the Evangelical Friends International (EFI)⁶ was formed. In 2008, the name was changed to Evangelical Friends Church International (EFCI).

EFCI is composed of five geographical regions for member Yearly Meetings and countries of mission endeavors: EFC-North America, EFC-Latin America, EFC-Asia, EFC-Africa, and EFC-Europe.

Currently the North America Region includes:

Alaska Yearly Meeting

Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region

Evangelical Friends Church – Mid-America Yearly Meeting

² 1 Thessalonians 5:23

³ Matthew 3:11-12

⁴ 1 John 4:14-18

⁵ 1 John 4:14-18

⁶ Appendix D

Evangelical Friends Church – Southwest

Northwest Yearly Meeting

Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting

Additionally, mission endeavors are going on in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and the Navajo Nation.

EFC-Latin America: Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru.

EFC-Asia: Bhutan, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Taiwan, and Teachers in China.

EFC-Africa: Burundi, Congo, and Rwanda.

EFC-Europe: Albania, Croatia, Ireland, Hungary, Romania, and Serbia.

Because of the strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit and the teaching on holiness, EFC-North America is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals.⁷

⁷ Appendix F

DOCTRINE

The Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region presents its Statement of Doctrine in the following Statement of Faith.

100 GOD

- a. We believe in one⁸ eternal,⁹ omnipresent,¹⁰ unchanging,¹¹ personal¹² God; perfect in holiness,¹³ wisdom,¹⁴ love,¹⁵ power,¹⁶ and justice¹⁷ without preceding cause or beginning;¹⁸ creator¹⁹ and preserver²⁰ of all things, visible and invisible.
- b. He exists as one divine being and yet as a trinity of three distinct persons, identical, inseparable, and equal in divinity, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.²¹
- c. God revealed Himself in the past in many and various ways, though supremely in the person of Jesus Christ.²² He continues to reveal Himself today through His creation,²³ the Holy Scriptures,²⁴ and the workings of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people.²⁵
- d. He alone is worthy of our worship, honor, praise and thanksgiving, now and forevermore.²⁶

110 JESUS CHRIST

- a. We believe that Jesus Christ, the Word who was with God and was God,²⁷ is the only begotten Son of God.²⁸ He was conceived by the Holy Spirit²⁹ and born of the Virgin Mary³⁰ and is the express image of the invisible God.³¹ He

⁸ Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29

⁹ Psalm 90:1-2; Romans 1:20

¹⁰ Psalm 139:7-12

¹¹ James 1:17; Malachi 3:6

¹² John 14:9

¹³ Isaiah 6:3; I Peter 1:15-16

¹⁴ Romans 11:33

¹⁵ I John 4:8

¹⁶ I Chronicles 29:11-12; Isaiah 40:26-28; Ephesians 1:18-20

¹⁷ Psalm 89:14; Romans 3:26

¹⁸ Psalm 93:2

¹⁹ Genesis 1:1; Romans 11:36

²⁰ Psalm 104:27-30; Colossians 1:16-17

²¹ Matthew 28:19; John 14:16, 18, 23; II Corinthians 13:14

²² Hebrews 1:2; John 1:18

²³ Romans 1:19-20

²⁴ II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21

²⁵ Acts 8:29; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6-10

²⁶ Galatians 1:5

²⁷ John 1:1-2; Colossians 1:16-17

²⁸ John 1:18; I John 4:9

²⁹ Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35

³⁰ Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:34

³¹ Colossians 1:15

combines within Himself both the divine nature of God and human nature in one perfect indivisible personality, the God-man.³²

- b. He lived and suffered in the world to show the Way of Life.³³ He was crucified and died as the atonement for the sins of the whole world,³⁴ making the only provision whereby people can find forgiveness of sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness.³⁵
- c. He died in our place³⁶ and was raised the third day for our justification;³⁷ He ascended into heaven³⁸ and sits at the right hand of God, ever living as our only Mediator and High Priest making intercession for us,³⁹ and from there will return again to receive His church unto Himself⁴⁰ and to judge the world in righteousness.⁴¹

120 THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. We believe in the Holy Spirit, not as an impersonal principle or influence, but as a divine person,⁴² and though distinct from the Father and Son, proceeding from both,⁴³ with whom He is equal in authority, power, glory, and titles.⁴⁴
- b. He is the divine agent in conviction of sin,⁴⁵ regeneration,⁴⁶ sanctification,⁴⁷ and the believers' assurance.⁴⁸
- c. He is given as an indwelling Presence to every believer to be a teacher,⁴⁹ guide,⁵⁰ and source of comfort.⁵¹ He purifies the heart of the believer⁵² and imparts at His own choosing spiritual gifts for service and the building up of the body of Christ.⁵³ He produces in believers the fruit of the Spirit⁵⁴ so that they may conform to the image of Christ.

³² John 1:14; Colossians 2:9

³³ John 14:6; Romans 5:10; Ephesians 5:2; I Peter 2:21

³⁴ Romans 3:23-25; I John 2:2

³⁵ Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14; Titus 2:14

³⁶ I Corinthians 15:4; I John 4:10

³⁷ Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:4

³⁸ Acts 1:9; Ephesians 4:8

³⁹ Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24

⁴⁰ I Thessalonians 4:15-17

⁴¹ Romans 2:16; II Timothy 4:1

⁴² John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13-14

⁴³ John 15:26; 16:7

⁴⁴ Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14

⁴⁵ John 16:8

⁴⁶ John 3:5

⁴⁷ I Corinthians 6:11

⁴⁸ Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6

⁴⁹ John 14:26

⁵⁰ John 16:13

⁵¹ Acts 9:31

⁵² Acts 15:9; I John 1:9

⁵³ I Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-13

⁵⁴ Galatians 5:22-23

130 HOLY SCRIPTURE

- a. As with early Friends, we believe that all Scripture,⁵⁵ both of the Old and New Testaments, is given by inspiration of God, without error in all that it affirms,⁵⁶ and is the only infallible rule of faith and practice.⁵⁷ It is fully authoritative and trustworthy, fully sufficient for all believers now and always,⁵⁸ and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.⁵⁹
- b. Thus, the declarations contained in it rest on the authority of God Himself,⁶⁰ and there can be no appeal from them to any other authority whatever. They are the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines which we are bound as Christians to believe,⁶¹ and of the moral principles which are to regulate our behavior.⁶² Only such doctrines as are contained in the Scripture can be regarded as Articles of Faith.⁶³ The Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scripture, must ever be its true interpreter.⁶⁴ Whatever any person says or does which is contrary to the Scripture, though under profession of the guidance of the Spirit, must be reckoned and accounted a delusion.⁶⁵
- c. The Scripture demands of believers complete obedience⁶⁶ and is made increasingly open to those who study and obey it.⁶⁷

140 CREATION

- a. We believe creation to be that free act of the triune God,⁶⁸ the Father,⁶⁹ Son,⁷⁰ and Holy Spirit,⁷¹ by which in the beginning and for His own glory⁷² God made, without use of pre-existing material,⁷³ the whole visible and invisible universe.⁷⁴

⁵⁵ II Timothy 3:16

⁵⁶ Psalm 19:7-11

⁵⁷ Psalm 119:4, 105

⁵⁸ Psalm 119:89; I Peter 1:25

⁵⁹ II Timothy 3:16-17

⁶⁰ I Thessalonians 2:13

⁶¹ Romans 1:16-17

⁶² Psalm 119:9

⁶³ John 17:17

⁶⁴ John 14:26; 16:13; II Peter 1:21

⁶⁵ II Peter 1:20; I John 4:1

⁶⁶ Psalm 119:4; I Corinthians 4:2

⁶⁷ I Corinthians 2:4-5, 12

⁶⁸ Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:26-27

⁶⁹ Hebrews 1:2

⁷⁰ Colossians 1:16

⁷¹ Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30

⁷² Psalm 19:1; Colossians 1:16

⁷³ Hebrews 11:3

⁷⁴ Nehemiah 9:6; John 1:3

150 SATAN

- a. We believe in the existence of the Evil One, "that old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan,"⁷⁵ the old deceiver who by his own choice rebelled against God⁷⁶ and became evil, who tempted our first parents to sin,⁷⁷ and who through their disobedience brought about the fall of the human race,⁷⁸ with all its attendant degeneracy, unhappiness, and misery.⁷⁹
- b. Satan demonstrated his evil character and purpose in his perpetual opposition to Christ by the temptations in the wilderness,⁸⁰ and to His people and to His kingdom.⁸¹ But Satan's power is limited,⁸² and in God's own time he will be chained and finally cast into the lake of fire.⁸³
- c. While Satan is active in this world, Christians through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them are able to resist Satan's temptations and have victory over him.⁸⁴

160 HUMANITY

- a. The Creation: We believe that by a definite act God created man and woman in His own image, holy and capable of knowing and obeying God's will, in order to glorify God and enjoy His fellowship forever.⁸⁵
- b. The Fall: We believe that Adam and Eve fell from this original state by a voluntary act of disobedience,⁸⁶ thus suffering the immediate loss of a perfect relationship with God⁸⁷ and making self the center of their lives. By this act, they suffered spiritual death, and sin entered the world and death by sin, so that death passed upon all.⁸⁸
- c. We further believe that as a consequence of the Fall, all people are born with a nature which is thoroughly sinful⁸⁹ and not subject to the law of God, so that only through the operation of the grace of God can they repent and call upon

⁷⁵ Revelation 20:2

⁷⁶ Revelation 12:7-9

⁷⁷ Genesis 3:1-6; II Corinthians 11:3

⁷⁸ Romans 5:12, 15-19

⁷⁹ Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:18-22

⁸⁰ Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-15

⁸¹ II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2

⁸² Job 1:12; 2:6; I Corinthians 10:13

⁸³ Revelation 20:1-3, 10

⁸⁴ I Corinthians 10:13; I Peter 5:8-11; I John 4:4

⁸⁵ Genesis 1:26-27, 31; 2:7; James 3:9b

⁸⁶ Genesis 3:6-24

⁸⁷ Genesis 2:17

⁸⁸ Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 5:12-14, 17-19; 6:23a; Psalm 51:5; 58:3

⁸⁹ Isaiah 53:6

Him. However, by God's grace infants are not under condemnation but are heirs of salvation.⁹⁰

170 SALVATION

- a. We affirm the truth that salvation can only be found through faith in Jesus Christ.⁹¹ We believe that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,⁹² through the direct and immediate agency of the Holy Spirit,⁹³ persons may be reconciled to God and recovered from their fallen state through justification,⁹⁴ regeneration,⁹⁵ sanctification,⁹⁶ and ultimately the resurrection of the body.⁹⁷
- b. Justification: In response to sinners' repentance, surrender of themselves, and sincere faith in the power and sufficiency of Jesus' atoning death and shed blood,⁹⁸ God pardons them from past sins and declares them righteous, not for anything they have done but because of the obedience and atoning death of Christ.⁹⁹
- c. Regeneration: In response to sinners' repentance, surrender of themselves, and sincere faith in the power and sufficiency of Jesus' atoning death and shed blood, God also by His gracious power makes them new creatures.¹⁰⁰ By the Holy Spirit they are born again into the family of God¹⁰¹ to a new life of love to God and to people.¹⁰² Their minds are enlightened to understand His truth,¹⁰³ and their wills are renewed to do His will,¹⁰⁴ as He begins to conform them to His image. The evidence of this regeneration of the believer is the fruit of the Spirit.¹⁰⁵
- d. Sanctification: We believe that children of God at the moment of their conversion do receive the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁶ As they trust in Him and obey His will, they manifest more and more of the fruit of the Spirit, conform more and more to the likeness of God, and thus are being continuously sanctified.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁰ Matthew 18:3

⁹¹ John 14:6

⁹² Galatians 1:3-5; Ephesians 2:8-9

⁹³ John 3:5; Romans 5:5

⁹⁴ Romans 4:25; 5:1; Titus 3:7

⁹⁵ Colossians 3:9-11; Titus 3:5

⁹⁶ II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2

⁹⁷ I Corinthians 15:20-22

⁹⁸ Ephesians 1:7; I John 1:8-2:2

⁹⁹ Romans 3:23-26; II Corinthians 5:20-21

¹⁰⁰ II Corinthians 5:17

¹⁰¹ Romans 8:14-16

¹⁰² John 3:3; I John 4:7-21

¹⁰³ John 16:12-15; Romans 12:1-2

¹⁰⁴ I John 2:17

¹⁰⁵ Galatians 5:22-23

¹⁰⁶ John 3:5-8; Romans 8:14-17; I Corinthians 12:13

¹⁰⁷ Galatians 5:22-25

- e. It is also the will of God that believers receive the fullness of the Spirit,¹⁰⁸ which He will graciously grant in response to their full consecration to His will and their faith in Christ's promises and in His atoning death.¹⁰⁹ Sanctification is thus a process in which the Holy Spirit continuously disciplines the believer into paths of holiness and an act in which He cleanses the heart from an imperfect relationship and state.¹¹⁰
- f. We further believe that the fullness of the Holy Spirit does not make believers incapable of choosing to sin, nor even from completely falling away from God, yet it so cleanses and empowers them as to enable them to have victory over sin, to endeavor fully to love God and people, and to witness to the living Christ.¹¹¹

180 THE CHURCH

- a. We believe that the Church is made up of all those from the apostles until now,¹¹² both the triumphant dead and the living,¹¹³ who through response to God's gracious offer of salvation¹¹⁴ by repentance of their sins¹¹⁵ and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior¹¹⁶ have been born again¹¹⁷ as new creatures in Christ.¹¹⁸ This Church is spiritual in nature,¹¹⁹ universal in scope,¹²⁰ holy in character,¹²¹ and redemptive in its life and purpose.¹²²
- b. Its purposes are to make disciples of all nations by its witness to the grace and love of God¹²³ and to live as a loving fellowship, which builds up one another in the grace and knowledge of God.¹²⁴
- c. The Church accomplishes these purposes by its existence as particular local congregations gathered out of the world¹²⁵ and as associations of congregations in larger organizations¹²⁶ under the leadership and service of those called and gifted to such service.¹²⁷ It worships in prayer,¹²⁸

¹⁰⁸ Acts 2:38-39; Ephesians 3:14-19; 5:18; I Thessalonians 5:23-24

¹⁰⁹ Romans 8:5; 12:1-2

¹¹⁰ John 17:17; Romans 6:1-2, 22-23; Acts 15:8-9

¹¹¹ II Corinthians 7:1; II Peter 2:20-22; Acts 1:8

¹¹² Matthew 16:18

¹¹³ I Thessalonians 4:14-17

¹¹⁴ Ephesians 2:8-9

¹¹⁵ II Chronicles 7:14; Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:38

¹¹⁶ John 1:12; Romans 5:1

¹¹⁷ John 3:3

¹¹⁸ II Corinthians 5:17

¹¹⁹ John 4:23-24; I Peter 2:5

¹²⁰ I Corinthians 12:12-27; Hebrews 12:22-24

¹²¹ Psalm 24:3-4; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7-8

¹²² Luke 24:46-48

¹²³ Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

¹²⁴ Acts 2:41-47; Ephesians 4:11-16

¹²⁵ I Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:22; I Thessalonians 1:1

¹²⁶ Romans 16:4, 16; I Corinthians 16:19; II Corinthians 8:1; Galatians 1:2, 22-23

¹²⁷ Ephesians 4:11-13; Hebrews 13:17

¹²⁸ Isaiah 56:7; Luke 19:45-46; I Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:13-16

thanksgiving,¹²⁹ and song;¹³⁰ diligently studies the Word of God;¹³¹ witnesses to and proclaims the gospel of God's Son;¹³² exercises the gifts of the Spirit;¹³³ administers discipline;¹³⁴ and performs works of blessing and service both physical and spiritual to its members and to all in need.¹³⁵

190 LAST THINGS

- a. We believe that upon death the mortal body returns to the dust from which it came.¹³⁶ The spirits of the righteous will experience joy and life in the presence of God, but the unrighteous will be separated from His presence in the darkness and torment of their evil.¹³⁷
- b. We believe in the literal and personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth at a time not revealed.¹³⁸ At His return the righteous dead will be raised and the righteous living will be changed to their glorification in bodies like their Lord's glorious resurrected body – bodies which they possessed in earthly life but now with glorified, heavenly qualities. The unrighteous will also be resurrected for the final judgment.¹³⁹
- c. We believe that Christ will consummate His kingdom over all people and nations by His final triumph over Satan.¹⁴⁰
- d. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will finally judge all persons of their belief in Him as demonstrated by commitment of their lives to the way of the cross; the lost to everlasting punishment and the redeemed to eternal blessing and life.¹⁴¹

¹²⁹ Psalm 100:1-4; Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:18

¹³⁰ Psalm 100:2; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

¹³¹ Acts 17:10-11; Colossians 3:16; I Peter 2:2-3

¹³² Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8

¹³³ I Corinthians 12:7-11; Ephesians 4:11-13; II Timothy 1:6

¹³⁴ Matthew 18:15-17; II Corinthians 2:5-8; Galatians 6:1

¹³⁵ Matthew 25:34-40; John 13:12-17

¹³⁶ Genesis 3:19; Psalm 103:14-16; Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

¹³⁷ Luke 16:19-31; 23:39-43

¹³⁸ Matthew 24:42-44; John 14:3; I Thessalonians 4:15-18

¹³⁹ Romans 6:5; Philippians 3:21; John 5:28-29; Revelation 21:1-8

¹⁴⁰ I Corinthians 15:20-26; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 20:10-15

¹⁴¹ Matthew 25:31-46; II Corinthians 5:10

TESTIMONIES

Along with the statement of basic doctrines, Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region presents this statement of testimonies as to its understanding of daily Christian life as taught in the Scriptures. They are arranged in six sections: Sacred Worship, Christian Living, The Christian Family, Christian Service, The Christian Relationship to Government and Society, and Certain Current Issues.

200 SACRED WORSHIP

201 Prayer and Praise

- a. No practice in Christian living is more often spoken of in the Scripture than prayer and praise both as duty and as privilege.¹⁴² The Bible gives examples of and instruction in these practices. In the Old Testament, Daniel is an outstanding example in that, despite the king's decree to the contrary, he faithfully and openly prayed to God three times a day.¹⁴³ The Psalms are filled with prayer and praise to God.¹⁴⁴ Reading them, the Christian learns of the rich rewards from such practices. Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, as our sure example in holy living, often gave Himself to prayer and praise.¹⁴⁵ He also often instructed His disciples, and thus Christians of all generations, to pray faithfully and to expect God's answer.¹⁴⁶
- b. A sense of need is a sufficient call to prayer.¹⁴⁷ Burdened sinners may come boldly to the throne of grace and find a welcoming Father from whom they can obtain forgiveness.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, burdened Christians can find in prayer the assurance of God's love and relief from their burdens as they cast all their cares on the Lord.¹⁴⁹
- c. Prayer is the life-breath of Christian living and gives the Christian unbroken access to the Heavenly Father.¹⁵⁰ It is thus essential for the maintenance and development of the Christian life. We believe that families within our fellowship should set apart a time for collective prayer each day, Bible reading and praise;¹⁵¹ and that in our public services of worship, we should give importance to prayer and praise.¹⁵²

¹⁴² Psalm 122:1; I Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 5:18-19; I Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁴³ Daniel 6:10b

¹⁴⁴ Psalm 95:1-3

¹⁴⁵ Mark 1:35; 6:46; 14:26; Luke 4:16; 5:16; 6:12

¹⁴⁶ Matthew 7:7-8; John 16:23-24; James 5:16b

¹⁴⁷ Psalm 4:1; 32:6-7; 54:1-4

¹⁴⁸ Hebrews 4:16

¹⁴⁹ I Peter 5:7

¹⁵⁰ Hebrews 4:16

¹⁵¹ Deuteronomy 6:4-9

¹⁵² I Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 5:19-20; Hebrews 13:15

202 Christian Worship

- a. Worship is a privilege of the Christian. It is a spiritual experience in which believers give themselves to communion and fellowship with the Heavenly Father, a time when they consciously feel and give adoration, love, and gratitude to God. It is a time of reverent coming before the Almighty God as children of His by grace.¹⁵³
- b. The first preparation for profitable worship is a humble spirit, which recognizes the grace of God in giving us this privilege. Equally important is a contrite spirit, which is submissive to His lordship, and superior will for our daily living. When these attitudes prevail, worship is full of meaning and reward.¹⁵⁴
- c. The service of worship will usually include times of prayer, praise, and preaching. During public worship services we should also allow frequent times for reflection, meditation, and decision.¹⁵⁵
- d. Inasmuch as public worship aids Christians to grow in grace, it is the focal point of the church's local ministry. Since it is a testimony to the surrounding community of the importance of worshiping God, members should attend the services of their congregation regularly and faithfully. They should impress upon their children the same religious practice, believing that thus they will aid in leading their children to salvation and to the worship of God.¹⁵⁶
- e. From the beginning of His earthly life¹⁵⁷ and throughout the ages of time,¹⁵⁸ the Lord Jesus Christ has been, is, and will be the object of worship.¹⁵⁹ We make Him the center of our worship and delight in collectively and personally giving Him praise and adoration as God. Without His presence, through the Holy Spirit, our worship would have neither meaning nor depth.

203 The Ordinances

- a. Evangelical Friends, concerned with the abuses which had grown up about the serving of communion and the use of water in Christian baptism, and which substituted the outward for the inner spiritual reality (an abuse which persists to this day),¹⁶⁰ placed their emphasis upon the spiritual content and let the outward symbols fall into disuse. However, in 1886 Ohio Yearly Meeting (EFC-ER) felt constrained to grant liberty concerning the use or non-use of the outward elements of bread and wine in communion as well as of water in

¹⁵³ John 4:21-24; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:1

¹⁵⁴ Psalm 51:17; James 4:10

¹⁵⁵ Psalm 22:22-23; 95:6; 100:2; I Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 5:19-21

¹⁵⁶ Proverbs 22:6; Hebrews 10:23-25

¹⁵⁷ Matthew 2:1-2

¹⁵⁸ Revelation 4:10-11

¹⁵⁹ Revelation 5:9-13

¹⁶⁰ Matthew 15:8-9

Christian baptism, cautioning against any failure to achieve real spiritual sharing in the death of Christ and in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

- b. When Jesus had His last supper with His disciples, He made statements which have at times been interpreted (1) as calling for a perpetual New Testament observance or (2) as a new meaning for the Passover meal which they were partaking of together.¹⁶¹ The unleavened bread was to represent His body about to be broken for them and the wine, the blood that He was about to shed.¹⁶² The early church and most Christians to this day have taken the first interpretation. While many find that communion with cup and bread can be a very meaningful outward testimony of what God has done spiritually within, we do not believe that communion is necessary for salvation nor an absolute requirement for all Christians. It is, rather, a public witness to the saving power of Jesus and a public witness of one's faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.¹⁶³
- c. Jesus modeled participation in water baptism as a public identification with the prophetic ministry and message of His cousin, John the Baptizer.¹⁶⁴ Throughout the New Testament we see a common practice of new believers in Jesus Christ being water baptized as a testimony to their faith in Jesus as Savior. While we as Friends believe the water in Christian baptism can be a very meaningful outward testimony of what God has done spiritually within, we do not believe that water baptism is necessary for salvation nor an absolute requirement for all Christians. It is, rather, a public witness to the saving power of Jesus and a public witness of one's faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.¹⁶⁵
- d. Each of our congregations may arrange services, perhaps in special meetings rather than in the regular worship service, for baptism and communion upon the request of members, while treating tenderly the consciences of those who protest the use of outward symbols. If a pastor feels a conviction against administering the ordinances, the services of another pastor may be enlisted in the observance. In all such services it should be abundantly clear to the entire congregation that Friends have the right to abstain from as well as to participate in the observance. In these services it should also be clear that the observances are only symbols of an inward spiritual experience. Evangelical Friends caution against the too-frequent use of the symbols lest familiarity breed contempt and diminish their spiritual significance.

204 Harmony in the Church

- a. Harmony in the church family is essential to its good witness in the community and to its worship of and service to its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁶ Watchful care should therefore be taken to maintain that harmony.¹⁶⁷ The

¹⁶¹ Luke 22:19

¹⁶² John 6:53-63

¹⁶³ Ephesians 2:8-10

¹⁶⁴ Matthew 3:1-17

¹⁶⁵ Ephesians 2:8-10

¹⁶⁶ John 17:6-26

¹⁶⁷ Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:2-3, 29-32; Colossians 3:12-17; Hebrews 12:14

congregation, and especially the lead pastor and elders, should be concerned that nothing be permitted to bring disruption to the peace and unity of their fellowship. They should be quick to discern differences of opinion so as to prevent degeneration into serious conflicts among the members of the congregation. In the event that dissension or resentment does arise, the lead pastor and elders should admonish all parties of the serious threat involved in their attitudes and make every effort, especially following the pattern laid down by our Lord Himself,¹⁶⁸ to reach a speedy reconciliation.¹⁶⁹

210 CHRISTIAN LIVING

- a. Early in their religious lives, Christians learn that it is necessary to make many decisions about their behavior. They discover some practices, which, though common to society about them, will seriously hinder their Christian growth and witness. Hence making right decisions about such matters will determine their growth in life and witness. Knowing that it is growing Christians who have the greater effectiveness in witness and service, and greater delight in their own lives, Evangelical Friends hold the following testimonies as guidelines towards Christian growth which we understand to be taught in the Bible.¹⁷⁰ It is our desire that Christians within our fellowship experience speedy and rich progress toward the attainment of fullness in Christ.¹⁷¹

211 Moderation and Modesty

- a. Because the pressures to follow a style of life like that of the non-Christian society are so great upon Christians, Evangelical Friends insist that our citizenship is not of this world.¹⁷² The New Testament command: "Be not conformed to this world,"¹⁷³ reminds us that in our living we must take care that our dress be modest and decent in every way.¹⁷⁴ We must also take care that we not be seduced by the attractions and abundance of earthly goods and thus fall into covetousness. In the furnishing of our homes, in the providing for our tables, in the accumulation of material things – in every way we should show our conviction that the fashion of life of this world is not that of the Christian.¹⁷⁵

212 Weddings, Funerals, Memorials

- a. Weddings: Since the wedding ceremony is solemn and holy, Evangelical Friends feel that it should be simple and reverent. While wishing it to be an occasion to be remembered for its beauty, we should nevertheless avoid ostentation and extravagance. We should take care to make the entire

¹⁶⁸ Matthew 18:15-20

¹⁶⁹ I Peter 1:22-23; Matthew 5:23-25; #312. c. iii

¹⁷⁰ I Thessalonians 5:22

¹⁷¹ Ephesians 4:11-13; I Peter 2:2-3; II Peter 3:18

¹⁷² Philippians 3:20-21

¹⁷³ Romans 12:2

¹⁷⁴ I Timothy 2:9a

¹⁷⁵ Philippians 3:17-19; Colossians 3:1-4; I John 2:15-16

ceremony one of Christian celebration, watching in the choice of music and all other parts of the service that it be an occasion of seeking God's blessing on the union and His guidance in the establishment of the home.

- b. Funerals: Knowing that our bodies have been made of dust¹⁷⁶ and shall return to dust, Friends ought to avoid extravagant and expensive funerals and memorial stones.
- c. Memorials: When a congregation feels that it would be a fitting tribute and possible testimony to others, Friends may prepare a memorial statement of the exemplary life of the deceased member. The statement should be forwarded to the Evangelical Friends Headquarters, which will prepare final drafts of the memorials for possible presentation at the next Yearly Meeting. These memorials shall be for pastors and their spouses, missionaries, EFC-ER clerks/board/team chairpersons, or any individual who has made a significant contribution to EFC-ER as a whole. An ongoing publication of all the memorials is kept for historical purposes in the Malone University Archives. It is the practice, however, to print in the Minutes only memorials of recorded ministers, missionaries, and recognized Friends in EFC-ER leadership positions.

213 Unwholesome Habits

- a. Evangelical Friends should be especially watchful against being involved in the unwholesome habits characteristic of this evil world.¹⁷⁷
- b. Unwholesome habits include the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs. Abundant suffering has resulted for those who have been ensnared by these practices, not to mention the tragic effect on health, mind, money, and relationships. In indulging in such habits, one's example as a Christian is also damaged. Friends are warned also to avoid gluttony in any form or practice, considering the harm done to one's self and to one's influence on others.¹⁷⁸
- c. Because of these grave considerations, Evangelical Friends should avoid such habits and refrain from assisting in the manufacture or promotion of the use of alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs. If new Christians find it difficult to break these habits,¹⁷⁹ loving care should be extended to them so that they may come to freedom from them.¹⁸⁰

214 Amusements and Recreation

- a. With the increase of leisure and the wide availability of entertainment of every kind, Evangelical Friends should consider most carefully the recreation and

¹⁷⁶ Genesis 3:19

¹⁷⁷ Galatians 5:16-21; Colossians 3:5-10; I Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20; II Corinthians 7:1

¹⁷⁸ Proverbs 23:20-21

¹⁷⁹ #214 a.

¹⁸⁰ Ephesians 5:18

amusements to which we give ourselves, our interest, our time, and our money. Amusements can and do have a large influence upon character and life.¹⁸¹

- b. Our members should avoid attending or being involved in movies, dances, and theatrical performances of a demoralizing nature, as well as in other activities that may be injurious to Christian growth. Members are not to be involved in lotteries, wagering, or any other kind of gambling. Evangelical Friends should take care to avoid publications tending to undermine their faith in the authority of the Scriptures and to hinder their Christian growth.¹⁸²
- c. Though acknowledging certain benefits and the potential for Christian ministry in radio and television, Evangelical Friends must also recognize and avoid programs that are unwholesome or demoralizing in music, language, or action portrayed.¹⁸³
- d. Evangelical Friends participating in summer and weekend camping and recreation which take them away from their congregation should remember their own spiritual needs, the concerns of the church, and their responsibilities to the church as they plan such activities.

215 Secret Societies

- a. Many organizations make attractive appeals for membership and involvement. Evangelical Friends must study carefully such organizations – the time, commitment, money required, as well as the likely influence of the organization upon them. We will especially avoid affiliation with secret societies which base their rituals on a distorted understanding of the Bible and directly or indirectly give Jesus Christ less than divine nature, even though they may appear to have spiritual value. The oath-bound character of such societies seems not only unnecessary, but also likely to prove harmful to honesty.¹⁸⁴

220 THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

221 The Family

- a. The family is the basic unit of human relationship, and as such is also the foundational unit of society and of the church. The many Biblical references to the family assure us of its divine origin and of God's concern for the family and the home.¹⁸⁵

222 Marriage and Sexual Relations

- a. A union so solemn as marriage is to be entered into only after much forethought, planning and prayer, and “in the fear of the Lord.” Evangelical

¹⁸¹ I Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; James 1:21-22

¹⁸² Ephesians 5:8, 15-16

¹⁸³ Philippians 4:8

¹⁸⁴ John 3:16-21; Romans 14:10b-12; II John 9

¹⁸⁵ Genesis 1:27-31; Psalm 68:6a; 127:3-5; II Timothy 1:5

Friends should seek earnestly the will of our Lord concerning their choice of a mate, remembering the apostolic injunction, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”¹⁸⁶ Parents should use watchful care to help their children find mates of Christian character and commitment.¹⁸⁷

- b. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman into a oneness that no other human relationship can provide. Evangelical Friends affirm that the Scriptures make abundantly clear that God’s intention is for sexual relations to occur exclusively within the marriage covenant between one man (husband) and one woman (wife), and that homosexual marriages and/or unions are contrary to Scripture.¹⁸⁸ Made before divine and human witnesses, the marriage vow unites a couple so fully that they “become one flesh.”¹⁸⁹ Marriage also, even more importantly, involves mental, emotional, and spiritual union. Evangelical Friends should therefore enter into marriage under the full persuasion that it is a lifelong commitment and union.
- c. Evangelical Friends believe that sex is a beautiful gift of God when it joins a man and a woman together in self-giving love.¹⁹⁰ We hold that this depth of relationship is appropriate only in marriage and that sexual relations should be abstained from outside the marriage bond. Evangelical Friends believe that same-sex marriages violate God’s Word. Temptation to sexual relations outside the marriage covenant of man and woman – husband and wife – may be overcome by the grace of God. Evangelical Friends cooperate with ministries and recommend resources – Biblically-based books, clinics and counselors – which offer counseling for sexual addictions and moral failures of any kind. Those who minister to individuals in the areas of heterosexual and homosexual sin¹⁹¹ are strongly encouraged by Evangelical Friends to respond to them with clarity and compassion. The basis for a good marriage is not sexual alone, but true love that is developed through communication, mutual respect, deep friendship, and a lifetime of self-giving, as the Apostle Paul admonished.¹⁹² Evangelical Friends who find severe difficulty in their marriage relationship are urged to prayerfully seek counsel from a pastor or a Christian counselor who can mediate those problems in order that the marriage be restored to the state God desires.

223 Divorce

- a. Since the only explicit Biblical allowances for divorce are adultery¹⁹³ and abandonment,¹⁹⁴ Evangelical Friends discourage seeking a divorce on any

¹⁸⁶ II Corinthians 6:14a

¹⁸⁷ II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, 10-15

¹⁸⁸ Genesis 2:18-24; Leviticus 18; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-20

¹⁸⁹ Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31

¹⁹⁰ Hebrews 13:4

¹⁹¹ #254

¹⁹² Ephesians 5:21-33

¹⁹³ Matthew 5:32

¹⁹⁴ I Corinthians 7:1-16

other grounds.¹⁹⁵ The sanctity of the marriage vows requires Friends to seek earnestly to prevent serious marital discord, perhaps through counseling, and to make every effort toward a happy, harmonious, and holy marriage.

- b. The break-up of many marriages in our day lays great responsibility upon the congregation to be sensitive to the needs of those becoming involved in such crises and to be quick in showing loving concern for them.¹⁹⁶
- c. Evangelical Friends ought not to marry divorced persons, except where divorce was granted on grounds of adultery and abandonment. We ask our ministers to consider the circumstances carefully, perhaps in consultation with the leaders of their congregations, before deciding whether to perform the ceremony.¹⁹⁷

224 Parents and Children

- a. The responsibility of parenthood is given by God.¹⁹⁸ The Scriptures often speak of this responsibility and give guidance for bearing it. Parents should early and continually turn to God for wisdom and guidance in the rearing of their children.¹⁹⁹
- b. The Bible commands: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord,"²⁰⁰ and throughout its pages, examples clearly support its teaching that obedience is the right attitude of children to parents. Obedience goes hand in hand with respect, honor, and love for parents. On their part, parents should be sensitive to the concerns and needs of their children so that they can freely speak their hearts to each other.²⁰¹
- c. Parents have great spiritual, as well as physical, material, and educational responsibility for their children. Knowing that their children face the pressures of temptation from all sides, particularly in their schools, Christian parents have a great responsibility to guide them into a real understanding of what they believe and what they should do in the face of such temptation. Parents should, from the beginning, have a concern that their children come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This concern will move them to pray faithfully with and for their children, to try to build a home atmosphere that will draw them to God, to encourage them in regular attendance of services of worship and in Christian service, and to provide them with Christian instruction in the home.²⁰²

¹⁹⁵ Mark 10:2-9

¹⁹⁶ Galatians 6:1-2

¹⁹⁷ I Corinthians 7:10-11

¹⁹⁸ Psalm 127:3

¹⁹⁹ Genesis 18:18-19; I Timothy 5:8

²⁰⁰ Ephesians 6:1

²⁰¹ Ephesians 6:1-4

²⁰² Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 22:6

230 CHRISTIAN SERVICE

231 The Public Ministry

- a. Evangelical Friends believe that God provides for the Church by calling men and women to be ministers of the Gospel. For the edifying and equipping of the Church, the Holy Spirit confers on them the gifts of pastoring and evangelizing.²⁰³ This calling to the ministry will be evidenced in the life and work of the public minister. While there will be those who also have administrative ability or unusual insight into the Scriptures, it is this distinctive call of God which sets apart a person to serve in the Gospel ministry. Freely received, this call and gift should be freely and devotedly given in service to God and the Church.

232 Stewardship

- a. Evangelical Friends believe that they are required to be conscientious and wise stewards of every part of life.²⁰⁴ At least four areas of life deserve special consideration:
 - i. The Lord's Day: In celebration of our Lord's rising on the first day of the week,²⁰⁵ Sunday, the early church established it as the day for Christian worship and rest from secular activities. Evangelical Friends honor this day in accordance with the commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."²⁰⁶ Evangelical Friends should consider carefully how to make the most of the day for the Lord's service and worship and for rest of body and mind from the week's labors. On this day, Evangelical Friends should refrain from involvement in any business, in shopping, or in unnecessary supplying of temporal, secular needs.²⁰⁷
 - ii. Tithing: The practice of tithing our income to the Lord began in the Old Testament.²⁰⁸ Later our Lord Jesus Christ approved this practice, and Evangelical Friends believe it is still the minimum to be given and the best means of providing for the financial needs of the church.²⁰⁹ But Christians do well to let generosity beyond the tithe characterize all their giving to God. As this method of giving is followed, there will be no need to resort to other methods of fund-raising.
 1. Since the Bible in both precept²¹⁰ and practice²¹¹ identifies the place for the giving of tithes and offerings as the church, Evangelical Friends believe that the church is the place for one's

²⁰³ Ephesians 4:11-16

²⁰⁴ I Corinthians 4:1-2; I Peter 4:10

²⁰⁵ Matthew 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-6a; John 20:1

²⁰⁶ Exodus 20:8

²⁰⁷ Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Isaiah 58:13-14

²⁰⁸ Genesis 14:17-20; 28:20-22; Leviticus 6:20; 27:30; Deuteronomy 16:17; Malachi 3:6-12

²⁰⁹ Matthew 23:23

²¹⁰ Malachi 3:10

²¹¹ I Corinthians 16:2

giving and the church then must earnestly seek divine wisdom in its use of the gifts for the Lord's work.²¹²

- iii. Wills: Evangelical Friends should prepare legal wills and testaments while in health and judgment and thus express their wishes regarding their possessions and families. In the distribution of their estates, Evangelical Friends should consider contributions to the work of God in the local congregation and EFC-ER.
- iv. Talents: Evangelical Friends believe that all persons have natural abilities and spiritual gifts from God with which they are to make contributions to the work of God.²¹³ It is therefore our duty to use our particular gifts liberally in the ministry of the church.

233 Use of Church Buildings and Facilities

- a. Because church buildings and facilities have been dedicated to the service of God, and especially as places for His worship, Evangelical Friends believe that they should be treated with care and respect. At times parts of these buildings and facilities may be used as meeting places for fellowship, but even at these times the buildings and facilities should be remembered as dedicated to the service of God. The primary purpose of the buildings and facilities should always be the worship of God, instruction in the Christian faith, development of Christian fellowship, and Christian service to the community. We encourage Evangelical Friends to construct and maintain their worship buildings and facilities with prayerful consideration of their function, remembering the moderation and simplicity which is becoming to the testimony of Evangelical Friends and to the Church of Jesus Christ.²¹⁴

234 Business Practices

- a. Evangelical Friends should seek divine direction in all their business affairs. They should undertake endeavors only after prayer and seeking God's guidance. While it is to be hoped that we will have adequate income, we must nevertheless remember that the search for riches is a threat to the Christian life. Careful attention should be given to all our dealings in order not to bring dishonor to our testimony or to the Church. Evangelical Friends should be especially careful to pay debts and to fulfill all commitments. If business failures occur, we must do everything possible to fulfill all obligations.²¹⁵

²¹² I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:7

²¹³ Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-48; Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11-13

²¹⁴ Isaiah 56:1-8; Mark 11:17a; I Corinthians 3:10-11

²¹⁵ Proverbs 10:4; 13:4; Matthew 6:19-24, 33-34; Luke 20:21-25; Romans 13:7; I Corinthians 10:31

240 THE CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP TO GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

241 The Poor

- a. The Christian virtue of love should characterize Evangelical Friends in caring for the material needs of the poor, underprivileged, neglected, or victimized within our membership. Also, as means are available, such care should be extended to others' needs, remembering that we are admonished to do good to all, especially those of the household of faith.²¹⁶

242 Schools

- a. Evangelical Friends should take real interest in the educational programs affecting their children and all children of our communities. We should work for the election of suitable members of the boards of education, the employment of teachers of Christian character and example, and the development of educational programs while considering the influence of their contents and activities on the children involved.²¹⁷

243 Civil Government

- a. Evangelical Friends are convinced that the New Testament requires the Christian to hold the government and its leaders in respect, and that the basic principles of government can be directly traced to the Scriptures. Therefore, it is necessary that we obey the laws of the nation insofar as they are not in conflict with our obedience to God. When it becomes necessary for Evangelical Friends to disagree with the practices and requirements of government, we should do so out of concern for the promotion of righteousness and not out of delight in controversy or strife.²¹⁸
- b. Evangelical Friends should use the ballot, with prayer for guidance,²¹⁹ to vote for candidates and measures which will promote righteousness, giving much consideration to the personal and spiritual qualifications of candidates regardless of political affiliation.

244 War and Peace

- a. During the first 300 years of the Christian church its members abstained from military service as being a violation of the teachings of Christ. This attitude changed only when Constantine made Christianity the state religion and introduced the notion that it was right to fight in support of an officially-Christian government. Since that time there has been division in the practice of Christians as to the support of war.

²¹⁶ Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Proverbs 14:31; Galatians 6:10; I John 3:16-18

²¹⁷ Proverbs 16:20; Luke 6:40

²¹⁸ Matthew 22:21b; Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-2

²¹⁹ I Thessalonians 5:17; James 1:5

- b. Evangelical Friends renewed the testimony of the primitive church against war. George Fox said that he “lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion for all wars” and, with eleven other Friends in 1660, declared publicly to King Charles II that “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fighting with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatever; and this is our testimony to the whole world – that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the kingdoms of this world – therefore, we cannot learn war anymore.” Standing upon this conviction, many Friends suffered imprisonment, cruelty, and death rather than violate their conscience.
- c. In the matter of war, as in many other areas, the Christian is caught in a tension between the Scriptural command to “be subject to the governing authorities”²²⁰ on the one hand and the conviction on the other hand that “we must obey God rather than human beings.”²²¹ Even among Friends this has led to differing convictions as to how these commands shall be applied in specific situations. We respect individual conscience and surround our members with loving care whether they for Christ's sake refuse military service or feel obligated to serve in some capacity in the armed forces.
- d. This liberty is not to be interpreted as any softening of our firm conviction that war is wrong as a method of settling disputes, being unchristian, destructive of our highest values, and productive of the seeds of future wars. We therefore, as a church, unequivocally support young Evangelical Friends who choose conscientious objection to war rather than active military service. We are concerned to find alternative solutions based upon justice and righteousness for all peoples and are deeply moved to participate in the new calls to peacemaking which are being sounded in our day.²²²

245 Oaths

- a. The New Testament teaches that for Christians, there is no need to swear to tell the truth but rather that speaking the truth should be their normal, continuing practice.²²³ For this reason, Evangelical Friends have rejected the often-required swearing to tell the truth and have insisted that merely affirming the intention to tell the truth is sufficient to verify what we are about to state. We are grateful that the civil authorities have long granted us, and all others of like mind, the right to this practice.

246 Equality of Persons

- a. Evangelical Friends believe that all people are equal in the sight of God and all are loved by God. All believers, regardless of their race, nationality, sex,

²²⁰ Romans 13:1

²²¹ Acts 5:29

²²² Psalm 34:14; Proverbs 12:20; Ecclesiastes 3:8

²²³ Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12

social status, or affluence, are encouraged to worship and participate in the life of Evangelical Friends Churches.²²⁴

250 CERTAIN CURRENT ISSUES

- a. Evangelical Friends desire to state their beliefs with regard to certain issues, beliefs, and practices that are currently of concern to the church.

251 Stewardship of the Earth and its Resources

- a. Evangelical Friends believe that God in the beginning gave people dominion over the Earth and expected them to be wise stewards. Wasteful and destructive use of the Earth's resources is contrary to God's purposes.²²⁵

252 Abortion

- a. Evangelical Friends believe that all life is a gift of God. We seek to recognize and preserve the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, and thus, are opposed to the use of induced abortion. We must do all we can to preserve both the mother and the child's life.²²⁶
- b. We recommend that our members become informed about the abortion issue and become actively involved in the protection of life. Therefore, we encourage participation in ministries like the promotion of adoption, involvement in care for expectant mothers, outreach to women who have had abortions – and to their families, and the support of appropriate legislation to guarantee protection of life under law to unborn children.

253 Euthanasia

- a. We also believe that Scripture maintains that we are created in God's image and likeness;²²⁷ therefore, we do not belong to ourselves but to God. God is the giver and sustainer of life.²²⁸ Evangelical Friends believe euthanasia to be in direct violation of Exodus 20:13 and therefore reject it as a means of relieving suffering. We encourage any person contemplating euthanasia to seek divine guidance²²⁹ and to consult any pro-life medical professional and/or pastor for further counsel.

254 Homosexuality

- a. Evangelical Friends believe that every person is created in the image of God and should be treated with dignity, love, and respect regardless of same-sex attraction. We adhere to an orthodox reading of Scripture and Christian

²²⁴ Genesis 1:27; I Corinthians 12:21-26; Galatians 3:26-29

²²⁵ Genesis 1:28-30

²²⁶ Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4; Psalm 139:13-16; John 15:13

²²⁷ Genesis 1:26-27

²²⁸ Job 14:5; Ecclesiastes 3:2; James 4:13-15

²²⁹ Proverbs 3:5-6

tradition that teaches that homosexual behavior is sinful and contrary to Scripture.²³⁰

- b. We believe God's grace offers both forgiveness of sin²³¹ and the power to overcome sinful temptation.²³² It is within this framework that we desire to cultivate an environment within our movement that is consistent with our commitment to fulfill the Great Commission²³³ in the spirit of the Great Commandment.²³⁴

255 Pornography

- a. Since pornographic materials promote and propagate a lifestyle that includes activities which are condemned by God's Word and tempt viewers to commit the sin of lust,²³⁵ Evangelical Friends therefore are urged to carefully avoid exposure to such materials.²³⁶
- b. Because of our responsibility as Christian citizens,²³⁷ and in view of the evil, exploitative, and destructive effects of pornography on individuals, families, and our society, Evangelical Friends are encouraged to prayerfully and boldly oppose the production and distribution of pornographic materials in their local communities, as well as at the state and national levels.²³⁸

256 Heretical Groups

- a. Evangelical Friends understand that Satan is evil in his character and purpose, and to that end seeks to dissuade people from an experience with Jesus Christ and His Church.²³⁹ Satan succeeds when people choose to follow the false teachings of cults or non-Biblical religions.
- b. We believe and affirm the truth claims which the living God has revealed about Himself. The primary source for this information is the written Scriptures, the Bible. Only because God has made Himself known, may we know anything about Him. Heretical groups are movements of a few—or many—who make claims to knowledge beyond or different from what God has given us (such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Unity, and Christian Science). Most importantly, they inevitably include claims that diminish the Person and Work of Jesus Christ through Whom God has revealed Himself supremely. "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to

²³⁰ Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 6:9-20

²³¹ Titus 3:4-7; I John 1:9

²³² I Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 2:13

²³³ Matthew 28:19-20

²³⁴ Matthew 22:36-40; Luke 10:27; John 13:34-35; #222

²³⁵ Matthew 5:27-28; Romans 13:12-14; II Peter 2:14, 18-19

²³⁶ Philippians 4:8

²³⁷ Matthew 5:13-16; Proverbs 14:34

²³⁸ Ephesians 5:1; Appendix F

²³⁹ #110 & 150

fullness. He is the head over every power and authority."²⁴⁰ Again, the Father declares, "This is My Son, Whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"²⁴¹

- c. We further believe that all access to God is through Jesus Christ²⁴² and the Holy Spirit,²⁴³ and that therefore the use of mediums, clairvoyants, fortune tellers, astrologers, and any other alleged means of extraordinary knowledge or help is contrary to the will of God.²⁴⁴
- d. According to the Beacon Dictionary of Theology²⁴⁵, there are five major characteristics of cults:
 - i. A devaluation of Jesus (p. 100-123)
 - ii. An extra scriptural source of authority (p. 130-133)
 - iii. The denial of justification by grace alone (p. 170-176)
 - iv. The group is the exclusive community of the saved (p. 180-183)
 - v. The group demands an absolutistic commitment of its members (p. 194).
- e. Church history reveals this dilemma is not new. Early church councils dealt with various heresies. The first church council was held in Jerusalem and record of its outcome is found in Acts 15. Other church councils²⁴⁶ met in subsequent years to settle the universal doctrines of the Christian Church, including the Council of Trent in the middle sixteenth century that settled the canon of inspired texts that comprise the Bible.
- f. We believe that our most effective response to the inroads of heretical groups is to soundly preach and teach the Scriptures, rather than to merely attack or teach against the other group. That is especially true as our country's pluralism expands. Our effective response lies in giving to people "the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation."²⁴⁷ Those held in the grip of a heretical group may be released and set free by the bondage-breaking power of the Holy Spirit.

²⁴⁰ Colossians 2:9-10

²⁴¹ Matthew 17:5; cf. Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35

²⁴² Romans 8:34; I Timothy 2:5

²⁴³ Romans 8:26-27

²⁴⁴ Acts 4:12

²⁴⁵ Taylor, Richard S., et al. *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983.

²⁴⁶ Appendix C

²⁴⁷ Romans 1:16

257 Doctrinal Differences with Other Christians

- a. Evangelical Friends have warm fellowship with groups of Christians with whom we must nevertheless differ in the following matters:
- i. Security of the Believer: Evangelical Friends believe that the security of the believer, even for eternity, is indicated in God's Word and witnessed to by the Holy Spirit to the individual, but we do not hold this security to be unconditional. As repentance and faith are the human conditions of acceptance of God's free offer of salvation, so faith manifested by obedience is necessary to continuance in that salvation.²⁴⁸
 - ii. Healing: Evangelical Friends believe that healing is the gracious work of God given in Christ Jesus. We also believe that, as in the past, He still hears and answers prayers of faith for healing in several ways such as: (1) He may intervene miraculously, over and beyond medical achievement; (2) He may heal through skills given to medical practitioners, who do well to recognize that our Creator God alone is the ultimate healer; or (3) He will heal eternally those who suffered in this life while still trusting in prayer and resting in the merits of Christ, assured by the same words Paul received, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness."²⁴⁹ God's substitutionary atonement in His Son assures us of immediate forgiveness of sins;²⁵⁰ it does not necessarily promise us immediate or miraculous physical healing. Healing viewed this way spares us from an extreme which demands that God must heal everyone for whom we pray, just as it keeps us from heaping unnecessary guilt upon those who are not healed. Still, we may continue with confident faith, praying over the sick according to the guidance given in James 5:14-16, believing our Lord remains as able as when He walked on earth to heal spiritually, morally, and mentally, as well as physically.²⁵¹
 - iii. Glossolalia (speaking in tongues): While there are differences of interpretation among our members of the Scriptures which speak of glossolalia, as there are among other Christians, both as to whether the term refers to actual languages or to ecstatic utterances, and as to whether this is a valid gift for our time, we are nevertheless agreed as to the following points:
 1. The will of God as revealed in the Scriptures is our conformity to His holy character as manifested in a holy life. All spiritual experiences, gifts, and fruit of the Spirit are means to that end.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Hebrews 5:9; I John 2:4

²⁴⁹ II Corinthians 12:8

²⁵⁰ I John 1:9

²⁵¹ Psalm 103:1-6; Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16-17; 14:13-14, 32-36; Mark 1:14-15, 32-33; Luke 5:17-26; 9:1-6; 10:1-20; Acts 4:29-31

²⁵² Galatians 5:22-23

2. "Speaking in tongues" should not be regarded as a necessary sign of the fullness or baptism with the Spirit.²⁵³
3. "Speaking in tongues" should not be made an occasion of division or strife among us.²⁵⁴
4. In order to maintain unity in spite of our differences, we must practice mutual submission. We must be willing to voluntarily give up certain freedoms in order to avoid becoming a stumbling block to those for whom Christ died, as the Apostle Paul demonstrated in I Corinthians 8. We therefore agree for the present for all our churches that on the one hand we should not forbid the use of tongues in private devotion, but that on the other hand we should voluntarily forego the use of tongues in our public services.
5. We are waiting in submission to the leading of the Spirit Himself and in love toward one another for that time when under His leading we can speak unitedly on this matter.

²⁵³ | Corinthians 12:7-11

²⁵⁴ | Corinthians 13; 14:6-9; Hebrews 12:14

SECTION TWO

PRACTICE

This section outlines Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region's vision for the local church, EFC-ER structure and operations, and our relationship to Malone University.

SECTION 300	THE LOCAL EFC-ER CHURCH
SECTION 400	EVANGELICAL FRIENDS CHURCH – EASTERN REGION
SECTION 500	BOARDS AND MINISTRY TEAMS OF EFC-ER
SECTION 600	MALONE UNIVERSITY

THE LOCAL EFC-ER CHURCH

300 THE LOCAL EFC-ER CHURCH

301 The Purpose of the Local Church

- a. The basic ministries of the local church grow out of Jesus' Great Commission²⁵⁵ and are summarized in four basic responsibilities:
 - i. Biblical Leadership Development
 - ii. Multiplying Disciples
 - iii. Responsible Stewardship
 - iv. Church Health
- b. Every church, regardless of size, must provide for these areas of ministry.

302 Developing Church

- a. A developing church is a group of people who gather regularly for worship who are moving toward meeting the requirements for full church status.

303 Full Church

- a. A full church is a group of people who are in a covenantal relationship with EFC-ER working together to make the greatest possible Kingdom impact.
- b. A local church may apply to the Multiplication Team for full church status when it:
 - i. Is in theological alignment with EFC-ER doctrine as outlined in the Faith and Practice;²⁵⁶
 - ii. Is financially stable and independent;
 - iii. Is practicing a system of governance in accordance with the Faith and Practice;²⁵⁷
 - iv. Is intentionally engaged in biblical discipleship;
 - v. Is fulfilling the Great Commission by participation in multiplying disciples and churches;

²⁵⁵ Matthew 28:18-20

²⁵⁶ #100-257

²⁵⁷ #320

vi. Is participating in the mission, vision, and core values of EFC-ER.²⁵⁸

304 Declining Church

- a. When a full church experiences a decline to the point of possible closure, it will be taken under the care of the Church Health Team to determine next steps. The Church Health Team, in careful consultation with the remaining church members, may seek to replant the church, in which case the church will be referred to the Multiplication Team. The Church Health Team may find it necessary to close the church. Upon closure, the assets of the church will be administered by the Finance and Administration Team. Such action is to be reported to the delegates at the next Yearly Meeting.

305 Church in Crisis

- a. A church may face a crippling crisis for any number of reasons. Among them may be the abrupt loss or departure of a lead pastor, staff misconduct, major conflict over doctrinal or moral issues, power struggles, and financial instability. At the first sign of crisis, the lead pastor or an elder should contact the Church Health Director. This process may also be initiated by the Church Health Director.
- b. In cases where a church's overall ministry is at risk, the Church Health Team will assess, advise, assist, and monitor the situation to move the church to a satisfactory resolution. In the event that differences arise in alignment between EFC-ER and the local church that appear to be irreconcilable, the local church should contact the Church Health Director for applicable procedures.
- c. The goal of the Church Health Team in these cases will be to resolve issues, reconcile people, and restore healthy functionality to the church. If progress toward church health is not made, the Church Health Team will take the control and management of the local church. In such cases, the local church is directed to turn over immediately to the Church Health Team the leadership of all business meetings, the care of its business affairs, and all records as the Church Health Team may deem necessary. The Church Health Team will determine a timeline to return the church to its regular plan of operation.

310 ORGANIZATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

- a. Although church size varies, each local church needs to ensure that four basic areas of ministry are provided:
 - i. Biblical Leadership Development
 - ii. Multiplying Disciples

²⁵⁸ #400

iii. Responsible Stewardship

iv. Church Health

- b. Each local church should develop and maintain, in written form, an organizational structure that provides for each of these minimum areas of ministry. Examples of possible organizational structures are available from the Church Health Team. While each local church has the liberty to set its own organizational structure, that structure should be submitted for review and approved by the local church's Congregational Meeting prior to implementation, with a copy of the approved structure filed with the Church Health Team.
- c. As local churches grow, the organizational structure should grow, reflecting the diversity of the congregation, ministry needs, and input from members.

311 The Local Church's Organizational Minimums

- a. Each local church's organization must include:
- i. An Elder Board consisting of at least three elders, one of whom is the lead pastor, charged with overseeing the implementation of the four basic areas of ministry;²⁵⁹
 - ii. A process for electing church officers and elders,²⁶⁰ selecting other leadership team members, and approving legal representatives of the church;
 - iii. A policy regarding terms of service for elders and officers;
 - iv. A written job description for elders and ministry leaders;
 - v. A process for scheduling regular and special Congregational Meetings;²⁶¹
 - vi. A method of proposing to the Congregational Meeting new concerns, policies, programs, and budgets;
 - vii. A method of maintaining Congregational Meeting and other meeting minutes, legal documents, bylaws and policies, and other guiding principles for the local church;
 - viii. A method of implementing and managing the concerns, policies, programs, and budgets approved in basic principle by the Congregational Meeting;

²⁵⁹ #310 a.

²⁶⁰ #330

²⁶¹ #313

- ix. A method of maintaining good order, unity, adherence to the Faith and Practice, and efficiency in the work of the church;
 - x. A method of communicating to the Congregational Meeting full and regular reports of the actions and concerns of the leadership;
 - xi. A process for receiving and removing members.
- b. Officers of the congregation will be members of the local church. The slate of officers at a minimum will include:
- i. The moderator (presiding clerk, presiding elder, or other title), who presides over the Congregational Meeting and is considered an elder by virtue of office.
 - ii. The financial secretary (who may not serve as the treasurer), who receives the offerings and enlists a process of proper safeguarding and confidentiality of funds, counting them in the presence of a nonfamily second party. The financial secretary oversees bank deposits and accounting of contributions, and makes available individual contribution statements.
 - iii. The treasurer (who may not serve as the financial secretary), who keeps accounts and makes payment of bills, working closely with the church leadership, pastoral staff, and/or other staff members where applicable. The treasurer also serves on the administrative team assigned to cover the area of church finances. The treasurer must also maintain an accurate understanding of federal and state laws pertaining to the local church. All financial records must be available for examination for proper financial accountability on an annual basis or upon request by those in financial responsibility.
 - iv. The legal trustees, who are the representatives of the local church who have the authorization to sign legal documents based on the action of the Congregational Meeting. Such items include loans, property deeds, and other legally binding documents. At a minimum each church should have three legal trustees.
 - v. Elders, who are considered officers of the congregation by virtue of office.²⁶²

312 Membership in the Local Church

- a. An individual who has experienced salvation through Christ has become a member of the body of Christ.²⁶³ Because individuals are united to Christ and the other members of the body in this way, it is a natural expression of this reality

²⁶² #331

²⁶³ 1 Corinthians 12:13

to be joined formally to a local body, the local church. To become a member of a church is to commit oneself formally to an identifiable, local body of believers. Therefore, membership is a covenant relationship. Covenantal church membership is a wise and helpful path for those who desire to walk together in obedience to the Lord and in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ.²⁶⁴

b. Requirement for Membership

- i. The basic requirement for membership in an EFC-ER local church is one's confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.²⁶⁵
- ii. The local church will provide a process for becoming a member, which will include an application to be completed by prospective members. The local church may stipulate age requirements and other indicators of spiritual readiness.
- iii. Members in the local church are also considered individual members of EFC-ER. Therefore, each church must provide prospective members a training session(s) to, at a minimum, cover the following topics:
 1. Relationship to EFC-ER;
 2. History of Evangelical Friends Church;
 3. Friends Doctrine;
 4. Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the Local Church;
 5. Local Church Structure.

c. Membership Covenant

- i. Members of an EFC-ER local church agree to a mutual covenant relationship.
- ii. Members of EFC-ER local churches make a covenant with the local church in the following ways:
 1. To bear testimony to a real conversion experience, based on the Word of God and assurance from the Holy Spirit of sins forgiven and commitment to Christian discipleship;²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Philippians 1:27

²⁶⁵ Romans 10:9

²⁶⁶ Psalm 51:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 5:11-12

2. To continuously seek spiritual growth, according to the Scriptures;²⁶⁷
 3. To attend faithfully the services of the local church and accept responsibilities in its work;²⁶⁸
 4. To give cheerfully for the financial support of the church and its approved ministries;²⁶⁹
 5. To listen to and respect the counsel of the leadership of the church;²⁷⁰
 6. To acquaint themselves with the Faith and Practice and to support its positions.²⁷¹
- iii. The relationship between the local church and its members will be guided by Biblical principles,²⁷² with the purpose of experiencing redemption and reconciliation as follows:
1. Members will make every effort to keep clear relationships between themselves and other members of the church.²⁷³
 2. When any member is guilty of conduct inconsistent with our Christian profession, has a broken relationship with another church member, or is living a life inconsistent with the Scriptures and the testimonies of the Faith and Practice, that member should be admonished in the spirit of restoring love.
 3. Should the efforts to bring reconciliation in the church family be resisted, the matter will be brought to the local church Elder Board, which may recommend that the member(s) agree to biblically based coaching/mediation and, if necessary, arbitration.²⁷⁴
 4. If further efforts toward reconciliation are deemed harmful to the church body, the local church Elder Board should contact the Church Health Director for counsel.
 5. Should the efforts at reconciliation and restoration of members still be resisted, and should the violations be of such character as to bring reproach or scandal to the name of Christ and/or the

²⁶⁷ Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18

²⁶⁸ Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Timothy 4:14-15; Hebrews 10:25

²⁶⁹ Deuteronomy 16:17; Malachi 3:10; Acts 11:29; 2 Corinthians 9:7

²⁷⁰ Ephesians 5:21; Hebrews 13:17

²⁷¹ Section One

²⁷² Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

²⁷³ Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15; Hebrews 12:14

²⁷⁴ Matthew 18:16

local church, the Elder Board may remove the member(s) from membership.²⁷⁵

d. Church Covenant

- i. An EFC-ER local church makes a covenant with its members in the following ways:
 1. To provide opportunity for and assistance in worship and in spiritual growth;²⁷⁶
 2. To provide help in discovering each member's talents and gifts, and opportunities to express these gifts in service;²⁷⁷
 3. To provide discipleship training and instruction toward maturity in Christ;²⁷⁸
 4. To provide counsel and accountability when members are neglecting faithful fulfillment of their covenant;²⁷⁹
 5. To receive and respect the input of its members;²⁸⁰
 6. To provide a system for spiritual care of its members.²⁸¹

e. Membership Transfer

- i. When a request for providing a transfer of membership is received from another church, the local church may issue a letter of transfer at the discretion of the lead pastor.
- ii. Each local church may receive letters of transfer from other EFC-ER churches when members are in good standing with their covenantal responsibilities. Such members will enjoy the full rights, responsibilities, and privileges of membership in the receiving local church.

f. Membership List Maintenance

- i. Each local church should maintain a list of its current membership. Those members who are not fulfilling their Membership Covenant may be removed from the membership list following established procedures outlined by the local church.

²⁷⁵ Matthew 18:17

²⁷⁶ Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Timothy 4:11, 13; Hebrews 10:25

²⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Timothy 4:14-15

²⁷⁸ Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 2:6-7

²⁷⁹ Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-2, 10

²⁸⁰ Ephesians 5:21

²⁸¹ Galatians 6:1; James 1:27

313 Congregational Meetings

- a. The Congregational Meeting is the members of the local church gathered in business session. As such, it is the local authoritative body, and no member, officer, or group has any authority that it does not derive from the congregation.
- b. Each local church organizational structure should provide for a minimum of one Congregational Meeting per year. Churches may find it helpful to have meetings more often. Special meetings may be called at any time by the moderator, with the concurrence of the elders, providing notice has been given in at least one Sunday morning worship service and one week in advance of the meeting. Should a situation arise that necessitates an emergency meeting that does not allow for the required time for notice, the Elder Board must give great effort to notify the entire membership of the meeting.
- c. The purpose of the Congregational Meeting is:
 - i. To have appropriate leaders report on the various areas of ministry and responsibility;
 - ii. To approve officers and elders;²⁸²
 - iii. To approve budgets;²⁸³
 - iv. To set and revise major church policies in accord with the Faith and Practice;
 - v. To call the lead pastor;²⁸⁴
 - vi. To approve capital building programs and capital debt;
 - vii. To seek prayerfully the Lord's direction and guidance for the church.
- d. Congregational Meetings will be presided over by the moderator.²⁸⁵ Business should be conducted as an exercise in corporate, worshipful seeking of God's will. Therefore, in general, by waiting on the Holy Spirit's leadership, the congregation should expect to arrive at a high degree of unity in the proceedings. Business will be conducted using a simplified form of parliamentary procedure. When necessary, voting is an acceptable method by which the moderator may most accurately determine "the sense of the meeting." Where substantial agreement is in question, the moderator may decide that further consideration is in order.

²⁸² #330

²⁸³ #320

²⁸⁴ #341

²⁸⁵ #311. b.i.

- e. Items for attention at the Congregational Meeting are to be presented to the Elder Board prior to the Congregational Meeting. Items not on the agenda should be directed to the moderator, who has the discretion to determine appropriate action.
- f. Voting in any Congregational Meeting is only by members who are present and only those members eighteen or more years of age.
- g. Criticisms of a personal nature during the Congregational Meeting are out of order and should be handled in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.

320 BUDGETING AND STEWARDSHIP GUIDELINES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

- a. The budget and stewardship guidelines should reflect the mission, vision, and core values of the local church.

321 Preparation of Budgets

- a. Those chosen to be responsible for stewardship,²⁸⁶ in conjunction with the treasurer:
 - i. Will begin by collecting funding requests from the ministry areas;
 - ii. Will give careful consideration to the funding requests of the ministry areas and compile a preliminary budget;
 - iii. Will present to the Elder Board a recommended budget that reflects the mission, vision, and core values of the local church.
- b. The Elder Board will review and finalize the budget prior to its being presented to the Congregational Meeting. The final recommended budget will be presented to the Congregational Meeting for review and affirmation. The budget presentation should be a celebration of the church's mission, vision, and core values.

322 Stewardship Guidelines

- a. Those responsible for stewardship must adopt a set of procedures to provide transparency and accountability for all ministry funds. This must include:
 - i. Giving the treasurer authorization to make regular payments for fixed expenses (salaries, utilities, mortgage payments, etc.);
 - ii. Requiring appropriate ministry leaders to approve expenditures to be paid by the treasurer;

²⁸⁶ #311 b.

- iii. Developing a policy on designated funds;
 - iv. Developing a policy for special offerings;
 - v. Establishing sound financial policies (i.e., audit/compilation/review, separation of duties, checks and balances, regular and accurate reporting).
- b. Refer to the Finance and Administration Team Handbook for support in establishing policies and procedures.

330 LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

331 Qualifications and Expectations for Elders

- a. Qualifications – Leadership in the local church is both a great privilege and responsibility. Because elders enjoy a high office and heavy responsibility, they must have both personal and spiritual qualifications²⁸⁷ to serve in these positions. Therefore, all elders who take on roles within the local church must meet the following qualifications:
- i. Be members in good standing in the local church;
 - ii. Be widely respected by the church membership body as people of integrity and service;
 - iii. Be persons of a deep, mature love of Jesus demonstrated in marriage and home life, in the church, and to the world;
 - iv. Be persons who display the fruit of the Spirit²⁸⁸ and wisdom in all areas of their lives;
 - v. Be persons who have a passion for fulfilling the Great Commission, demonstrated by being discipled and held accountable while also discipling others;
 - vi. Be persons who are rooted and grounded in the Word of God both in teaching and practice;
 - vii. Be persons who can view matters objectively;
 - viii. Be persons who can work constructively with pastors, staff, and other leaders and members of the church;
 - ix. Be persons who display a servant-leader disposition.

²⁸⁷ 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1-2

²⁸⁸ Galatians 5

- b. Expectations – All elders who take on roles within the local church lead by example and, therefore, are expected to:
 - i. Be involved in regular, consistent attendance at weekly worship gatherings;
 - ii. Prayerfully prepare for and participate in Congregational Meetings;
 - iii. Cultivate a faithful prayer life;
 - iv. Generously give tithes and offerings in support of the local church;
 - v. Maintain a supportive and encouraging relationship with the pastoral staff;
 - vi. Be competent communicators, as they will likely serve as liaisons between the lead pastor and the congregation;
 - vii. Be persons who can view the matters under their care with objectivity;
 - viii. Recuse themselves from business items in which they have a conflict of interest.

340 THE LEAD PASTOR

- a. The lead pastor is called by the congregation and works in conjunction with the Elder Board to oversee the ministries of the local church.

341 The Call of the Lead Pastor

- a. A pastoral call acknowledges the will of God and the desire of the pastor, the local church, and EFC-ER for the pastor to lead in serving the local church.
- b. The process for calling a lead pastor is:
 - i. An elder contacts the Church Health Director, who will provide guidelines to begin the process of securing a new pastor.
 - ii. A pastoral search team, composed of members in good standing, will be established by the elders to conduct the search process. Pastoral staff may not serve on the search team.
 - iii. All applicants proposed for pastoral candidacy must be vetted by the Leadership Development Team.
 - iv. The pastoral search team will recommend a pastoral candidate for approval by the congregation.
 - v. A Pastoral Call Agreement will be issued.

- vi. Once a Pastoral Call Agreement is accepted, an elder will notify the Church Health Director.

342 Renewal of the Lead Pastor Call

- a. A pastoral review is conducted two years after the initial call and every four years subsequently.
- b. Pastoral Review Process
 - i. Each member of the Elder Board, and if applicable, pastoral staff should submit a review, provided by the Church Health Team, of the pastor's performance.
 - ii. The lead pastor will complete a self-evaluation provided by the Church Health Team.
 - iii. The Church Health Team will provide a survey to the congregation for input.
 - iv. The Church Health Director will summarize and present the findings to the Elder Board and lead pastor.
 - v. When there is not consensus between the elders, lead pastor, and the Church Health Director about the continuation of the pastoral call, the Church Health Director may recommend a church assessment.
 - vi. As a result of the review process, the Elder Board, lead pastor, and Church Health Director may agree to continue or discontinue the pastoral call.
 - vii. In cases where there is not agreement, a Congregational Meeting may be held to discern the continuation of the lead pastor's call.

343 Early Termination of the Pastoral Call Agreement

- a. The Elder Board or pastor may initiate an early termination of the Pastoral Call Agreement by furnishing written notice to the other.
 - i. If the Elder Board or pastor considers termination of the Pastoral Call Agreement outside of the standard review timeline, a pastor and elder review should be completed under the guidance of the Church Health Director.
 - ii. As a result of the review process, the Elder Board, pastor, and Church Health Director may agree to continue or discontinue the pastoral call.

- iii. If a decision is made to end the pastoral call, the Elder Board in consultation with the Church Health Director will determine the details and timeline for transition.

344 Responsibilities of the Lead Pastor

a. Lead pastors will:

- i. Be disciples of Jesus Christ who pursue knowing, loving, and obeying Christ as they lead others to do the same;²⁸⁹
- ii. Be saturated with the written Word, diligent in prayer, and dynamically led by the Holy Spirit;²⁹⁰
- iii. Discern God's vision for the church;
- iv. Be responsible to establish the core values to fulfill the vision of the local church;
- v. Equip and empower people to live the mission, vision, and core values of the local church;²⁹¹
- vi. Oversee the preaching and teaching of the Word of God;
- vii. Protect the unity of the local church;²⁹²
- viii. Ensure and oversee that pastoral care is taking place among the church body;²⁹³
- ix. Serve as an elder;
- x. Be an ex officio voting member of all groups within the organizational structure of the local church;
- xi. Be responsible for keeping the history, doctrine, mission, vision, and core values of EFC-ER before the local church;
- xii. Be a supportive liaison between EFC-ER and the local church.

345 Pastor in Crisis

- a. In the case of ethical or moral crisis in the life of the pastor, the elders and/or the pastor must contact the Leadership Development Director to begin an

²⁸⁹ 2 Timothy 2:2

²⁹⁰ 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Ephesians 4:11-12

²⁹¹ Ephesians 4:12

²⁹² Ephesians 4:2-7

²⁹³ Acts 20:28

investigation and develop a plan toward a healthy resolution as outlined in the Leadership Development Team Handbook.

- b. In the case of personal crisis (health, marital, family, grief, etc.) in the life of the pastor, the pastor or the elders must contact the Leadership Development Director for assistance.

350 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH TO THE PASTOR(S)

- a. The local church recognizes the gifts and calling of its pastor(s). A pastor is most effective when the church is respectful, loyal, cooperative, and supportive. It is vital for the church to pray for its pastor(s).
- b. The local church will provide for the financial support of its pastor(s) in the following ways:
 - i. Salary: The local church sets the salary of the pastor(s). A method for determining minimum salary (including parsonage or housing allowance) will be recommended each year by the Church Health Team. Churches should strive to generously support their pastor(s) above the minimum salary. If the minimum salary is not offered by the church, the pastoral position(s) will be considered part-time and the pastor(s) given freedom to seek supplemental employment and income.
 - ii. Moving expenses on first arrival.
 - iii. A contribution equal to 12% of salary plus parsonage or housing allowance, made monthly to the EFC-ER Pension Plan on behalf of the pastor(s).
 - iv. Provision for payment of medical and dental insurance premiums for the pastor(s) and dependents.
 - v. Payment of life insurance premium for the pastor(s) as established through EFC-ER.
 - vi. Yearly Meeting and Pastors Conference expenses for the pastor(s), as well as for each married pastor's spouse.
 - vii. An established accountable reimbursement plan that complies with all applicable tax rules subject to the church's budget limitations. Such expenses may include:
 - (a) Business use of automobile;
 - (b) Business travel away from home, including transportation, lodging, and meals on overnight trips;

- (c) Subscriptions, books, and software related to ministry;
 - (d) Entertainment and hospitality expenses related to ministry.
- c. Every full-time pastor will be eligible for vacation and other leaves of absence. Churches are required at a minimum to provide leave for their pastors in the following ways:
- i. One day off per week.
 - ii. Annual vacation, with the local church paying for the pulpit supply. The pastor(s) will enjoy a vacation schedule according to the following years of service to EFC-ER:
 - (a) 0-5 years of service: 3 weeks of vacation;
 - (b) 6-10 years of service: 4 weeks of vacation;
 - (c) 11 and more years of service: 4 weeks or more of vacation.
 - iii. Time off for ministry opportunities outside of the local church for up to a total of 2 weeks per year (e.g., revivals, camp ministry, mission trips);
 - iv. Time off for attendance at Yearly Meeting and Pastors Conference;
 - v. Time off for attendance at and fulfillment of services for EFC-ER boards and teams.
- d. Sabbatical or Leave of Absence
- i. A pastoral sabbatical is essentially a time of rest which results in renewal. At the heart of the sabbatical is a connection between the pastor and God. The connection happens through spiritual disciplines, study, vacations, and/or simple relaxation. Since God does not intend for His people to live exhausted lives, sabbaticals are practical ways to overcome exhaustion. Reasons for investing in sabbaticals are related to mental, physical, spiritual, or emotional weariness.²⁹⁴
 - ii. A sabbatical or leave of absence conversation may be initiated by the pastor, the Elder Board, or the Leadership Development Director.
 - iii. A sabbatical or leave of absence is granted with the approval of the local church and the Leadership Development Director.
 - iv. Reasons for sabbatical or leave of absence may include:
 - (a) Rest and renewal;

²⁹⁴ 1 Kings 19:3-18

- (b) Education;
 - (c) Ministry or mission project;
 - (d) Personal crisis/emergency.
- v. The local church will continue to pay the full salary and benefits of the pastor(s) as well as cover any necessary pulpit supply.

360 MINISTRY STAFF

- a. The local church may call other ministry staff (pastors and directors) to serve.
- b. The lead pastor, in consultation with the elders, will plan for the hiring of ministry staff (pastors and directors).
- c. Selection of any person for a pastoral staff position in the local church must be vetted by the Leadership Development Team.
- d. The ministry staff of a local church will submit their provisional resignations upon the resignation/retirement of the lead pastor. The conclusion of staff tenure will be arranged by the Elder Board in consultation with the Church Health Team. The incoming lead pastor may recommend the hiring of staff members previously employed.

370 CREDENTIALING

- a. Ministry Certificate
 - i. A member of the local church may apply for a ministry certificate through EFC-ER when credentials are necessary to fulfill ministry. Guidelines for application are available in the Leadership Development Team Handbook.
- b. Pastor's License
 - i. All individuals called to vocational ministry and fulfilling a pastoral ministry role in the local church must apply for a pastor's license with the Leadership Development Team. The procedures for application are detailed in the Leadership Development Team Handbook.
 - ii. Full-time licensed pastors are required to enter the recording-of-ordination process.
 - iii. Licensure will be renewed annually by the Leadership Development Team according to the application process outlined in the Leadership Development Team Handbook.

c. Recording of Ordination

- i. The process for recording of ordination is outlined in the Leadership Development Team Handbook. Candidates will only be considered for recording after a pastor's license has been approved.
- ii. When a candidate is deemed ready, the Leadership Development Director will submit a recommendation for the recording of ordination to the Leadership Development Team. Candidates are then brought to Yearly Meeting delegates for final approval.
- iii. The relationship of recorded pastors with EFC-ER will be reviewed every five years by the Leadership Development Team.
- iv. Retired pastors in good standing will maintain their credentials.

d. Transfer of Credentials

- i. Those licensed/recorded as ordained pastors seeking transfer from other Evangelical Friends Yearly Meetings or other denominations will be under the care of the Leadership Development Team. The team will evaluate experience, education, and ministerial training in the determination of credentials with EFC-ER.

EVANGELICAL FRIENDS CHURCH – EASTERN REGION

400 THE PURPOSE AND NATURE OF EVANGELICAL FRIENDS CHURCH – EASTERN REGION (EFC-ER)

- a. The EFC-ER is a movement of connected churches intentionally working together to fulfill a common mission, vision, and core values, based on the person and redemptive message of Jesus Christ. EFC-ER local churches send delegates to Yearly Meeting and agree to submit to its directives.
- b. The EFC-ER churches delegate the leadership and management of its programs to the Ministry Teams and Oversight Board.
- c. The mission of EFC-ER is to equip its member churches to make disciples.
- d. The vision of EFC-ER is to produce healthy, Christ-centered churches that produce disciples.
- e. The EFC-ER will be guided by the following core values:
 - i. Biblical Faithfulness – We will seek faithfulness to the inspired and authoritative Word of God, both in the truth we profess and in the practices we embody.
 - ii. Empowered Leadership – We will discover, develop, and deploy leaders into clearly defined ministry roles.
 - iii. Innovative Multiplication – We will use and encourage innovative multiplication across our movement.
 - iv. Efficient Organization – We will organize around mission, core values, and vision, increasing efficiency by being a nimble, right-sized organization.
 - v. Connectional Ministry – We will strengthen local and global ministries by partnering together with local churches and other organizations to accomplish our mission.

410 INCORPORATION

- a. The Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region is incorporated and its Executive Director is the statutory agent.
- b. The fiscal year for EFC-ER is August 1 through July 31.

420 YEARLY MEETING

- a. The annual conference of the delegates for EFC-ER is known as Yearly Meeting and is held at the time and place decided upon by the Oversight Board. The

purpose of the meeting includes worship, fellowship, resourcing, encouragement, and attending to the following areas of business:

- i. The selection of the Executive Director;
 - ii. The election of the at-large members of the Oversight Board;
 - iii. The election of trustees to the Malone University Board of Trustees;
 - iv. The hearing and receiving of reports from Malone University, the Oversight Board, and the Ministry Teams;
 - v. The approval of changes to the Faith and Practice;
 - vi. The approval of the annual budget;
 - vii. The affirmation of the recording of ordination;
 - viii. The celebration of the establishment of new churches.
- b. The Oversight Board is responsible for the general format, schedule, and programming for Yearly Meeting.
 - c. Between Yearly Meeting sessions, the Oversight Board may call for a vote by mail of the delegates.
 - d. Where action is necessary, the Oversight Board acts in lieu of the Yearly Meeting delegates when they are not in session.

430 YEARLY MEETING DELEGATES AND DELEGATE BODY COMPOSITION

- a. A delegate represents the local church at Yearly Meeting sessions. The local church determines the delegate selection process.
- b. The lead pastor of each local church and one full-time associate pastor will serve as delegates. All other staff pastors may qualify to serve as part of a church's delegation if selected by the local church.
- c. Additionally, each church will send one delegate for each fifty members or major portion thereof as reported to the Evangelical Friends Headquarters at the end of the previous calendar year.
- d. A church with fewer than twenty-five members may have one delegate in addition to its lead pastor.
- e. A developing church may seat a delegate who represents that church.
- f. Churches should select delegates who are:
 - i. Active members in the local church;

- ii. Open to participate in the business sessions and discussions while being supportive of decisions made by the delegate body;
 - iii. At least eighteen years of age.
- g. The local church will forward the names and contact information of delegates and alternates to the Evangelical Friends Headquarters by the deadline established by the Oversight Board.
- h. Alternate Delegates
 - i. Each local church should appoint as many alternate delegates as necessary. The alternate delegates should be selected on the same basis as regular delegates.
 - ii. In the absence of a lead pastor delegate, a person may be appointed to be a delegate in that seat.
- i. EFC-ER Missionaries as Delegates
 - i. All active EFC-ER missionaries in attendance at Yearly Meeting will serve as delegates.
- j. Financial Assistance to Delegates
 - i. The local church is expected to contribute to the expenses of delegates attending Yearly Meeting.

440 OFFICERS OF THE YEARLY MEETING

- a. A moderator and recording secretary shall be the officers of Yearly Meeting. They shall be appointed annually by the Oversight Board. Yearly Meeting officers will be members in good standing of an EFC-ER local church.
- b. The moderator presides at the business sessions of the delegates at Yearly Meeting and supervises the work of the recording secretary. In the absence of the moderator, the Oversight Board will appoint a replacement.
- c. The recording secretary is responsible for writing the Yearly Meeting Minutes; proofreading and preparing them for printing; and preparing Returning Minutes for guests from other Yearly Meetings. In the absence of the recording secretary, the Oversight Board will appoint a replacement.

450 THE YEARLY MEETING NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- a. The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee will include the Executive Director, the chairperson of the Oversight Board, and four at-large members who are not serving on the Oversight Board. At-large members will be recommended by the Oversight Board and approved by the Yearly Meeting delegates for a

three-year term. In the event of a vacancy during a term, a replacement will be appointed by the Oversight Board to complete the term. The committee will elect a chairperson from among the committee members.

- b. The Nominating Committee will nominate trustees for the Malone University Board of Trustees and the at-large members of the Oversight Board. These names will be presented to the delegates for formal approval.

460 INITIATION OF BUSINESS

- a. Requests, recommendations, and proposals for consideration at Yearly Meeting are received from two sources:
 - i. Local churches may send proposals and requests to the Oversight Board. The Oversight Board may present these proposals and requests to the Yearly Meeting delegates or refer them to a suitable Ministry Team or special committee for preliminary study and recommendation.
 - ii. The Oversight Board may offer proposals to the Yearly Meeting delegates.

470 CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

- a. Friends believe that business is an act of worship. This involves prayerfully seeking God's guidance. Together we will seek God until the meeting arrives at a high degree of unity. In general, the moderator discerns the consensus of the meeting. At times, voting is an acceptable method by which the moderator may more accurately determine "the sense of the meeting."
- b. Voting at Yearly Meeting is restricted to seated delegates, though members of local churches are encouraged to attend Yearly Meeting and to participate in discussions.
- c. The quorum requirement to conduct business in Yearly Meeting session will be any number of the delegates present at the session.

480 MINUTES AND THE FAITH AND PRACTICE

- a. Minutes of Yearly Meeting are written by the recording secretary and distributed to delegates following Yearly Meeting. Corrections or questions should be directed to the Evangelical Friends Headquarters. The final minutes will be approved by delegates via mail or electronic communication.
- b. Preservation: Minutes of Yearly Meeting and all other important records are kept by Malone University in the Archives of the Cattell Library.
- c. The EFC-ER Oversight Board recommends changes in the Faith and Practice to the delegates.

490 FUNDING THE MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES OF EVANGELICAL FRIENDS CHURCH – EASTERN REGION

- a. The mission, vision, and core values of EFC-ER will be funded by the annual budget.
- b. The purpose of the annual budget is to provide a unified approach to support the EFC-ER Ministry Teams.
- c. Funds needed are raised cooperatively through EFC-ER. Each local church commits to, and is expected to, share in supporting the annual budget.
- d. In the spring, each Ministry Team, and the Oversight Board, will present to the Finance and Administration Team its proposed budget for the ensuing fiscal year. The Finance and Administration Team leader will present the annual budget and funding plan for the next fiscal year at the spring meeting of the Oversight Board. With Oversight Board approval, the annual budget and funding plan will be presented to the Yearly Meeting delegates for adoption.
- e. The promotion of the annual budget is the responsibility of the Executive Director.
- f. Funds supporting the annual budget will be sent to the Evangelical Friends Headquarters to be administered by the Ministry Team leaders and the Ministry Directors.
- g. In the event of an annual budget shortfall, the Executive Director may require Ministry Teams to adjust their budgets appropriately.

BOARDS AND MINISTRY TEAMS OF EFC-ER

500 BOARDS AND MINISTRY TEAMS OF EFC-ER

501 Ministry Strategy

- a. The administrative structure consists of the Oversight Board and four Ministry Teams.
- b. The Oversight Board and Ministry Teams for EFC-ER will establish a Policy and Procedures Manual (Team Handbook) to provide needed detail of implementation of the vision.

510 STRUCTURE

511 Oversight Board

- a. The Oversight Board is made up of the Executive Director, the President of Malone University, the four Ministry Team leaders, and six at-large members. Ministry Team leaders are recommended by the Executive Director and appointed by the Oversight Board. The at-large members are elected by the delegates of EFC-ER²⁹⁵ and serve for three-year terms for a maximum of three terms before rotating off for a minimum of one year.
- b. The Oversight Board will give direction to EFC-ER between Yearly Meetings, and responsibilities will include:
 - i. Recommending the Executive Director to the Yearly Meeting delegates for approval;
 - ii. Reviewing the Faith and Practice and recommending changes to Yearly Meeting delegates for approval;
 - iii. Appointing and overseeing the Ministry Teams and Ministry Team leaders;
 - iv. Appointing and overseeing staffing, including Ministry Team Directors;
 - v. Developing a plan for the Yearly Meeting sessions;
 - vi. Appointing the moderator and recording secretary for Yearly Meeting business sessions;
 - vii. Serving as the governing body for EFC-ER;
 - viii. Managing the relationship with Malone University;

²⁹⁵ #430

- ix. Developing a yearly strategic plan;
- x. Discerning and discovering God's best plan for EFC-ER.

512 Ministry Teams

- a. The day-to-day work of implementing the mission, vision, and core values of EFC-ER will be led by four Ministry Teams. The four Ministry Teams are the Leadership Development Team, the Church Health Team, the Multiplication Team, and the Finance and Administration Team.
- b. Each Ministry Team will be assembled as follows:
 - i. The team leader is nominated by the Executive Director and approved by the Oversight Board. Each team leader is an ex officio member of the Oversight Board.
 - ii. The team director is recommended by the Executive Director and approved by the Oversight Board.
 - iii. Team members are nominated by the team leader in consultation with the Ministry Team Director and approved by the Oversight Board.
 - iv. Team members (including the team leader) are appointed for a three-year term and can serve a maximum of three terms before rotating off for a minimum of one year.

513 Leadership Development Team

- a. The Leadership Development Team will:
 - i. Oversee the credentialing process for pastors;
 - ii. Recruit potential pastors and leaders, while identifying methods to give potential leaders practical training and experience;
 - iii. Develop a structure for mentoring and/or coaching;
 - iv. Equip ministry leaders in the local churches (worship, children, youth, adult);
 - v. Provide assessment tools to help leaders grow in self-awareness;
 - vi. Oversee providing internships and/or scholarships for leaders;
 - vii. Promote and resource spiritual formation for pastors;
 - viii. Promote and resource pastoral support amid crisis;
 - ix. Resource and encourage lifelong learning;

- x. Oversee the annual Pastors Conference.

514 Church Health Team

a. The Church Health Team will:

- i. Provide an assessment process for the local churches;
- ii. Resource churches to develop mission, vision, and core values;
- iii. Provide resources to encourage missional engagement;
- iv. Oversee/assist in pastoral placement;
- v. Oversee establishing minimum salary for pastors;
- vi. Provide biblical accountability and encouragement to pastors and churches;
- vii. Promote and resource the starting of new ministries within local churches;
- viii. Provide direction for declining churches;
- ix. Exercise authority for churches in crisis.

515 Multiplication Team

a. The Multiplication Team will:

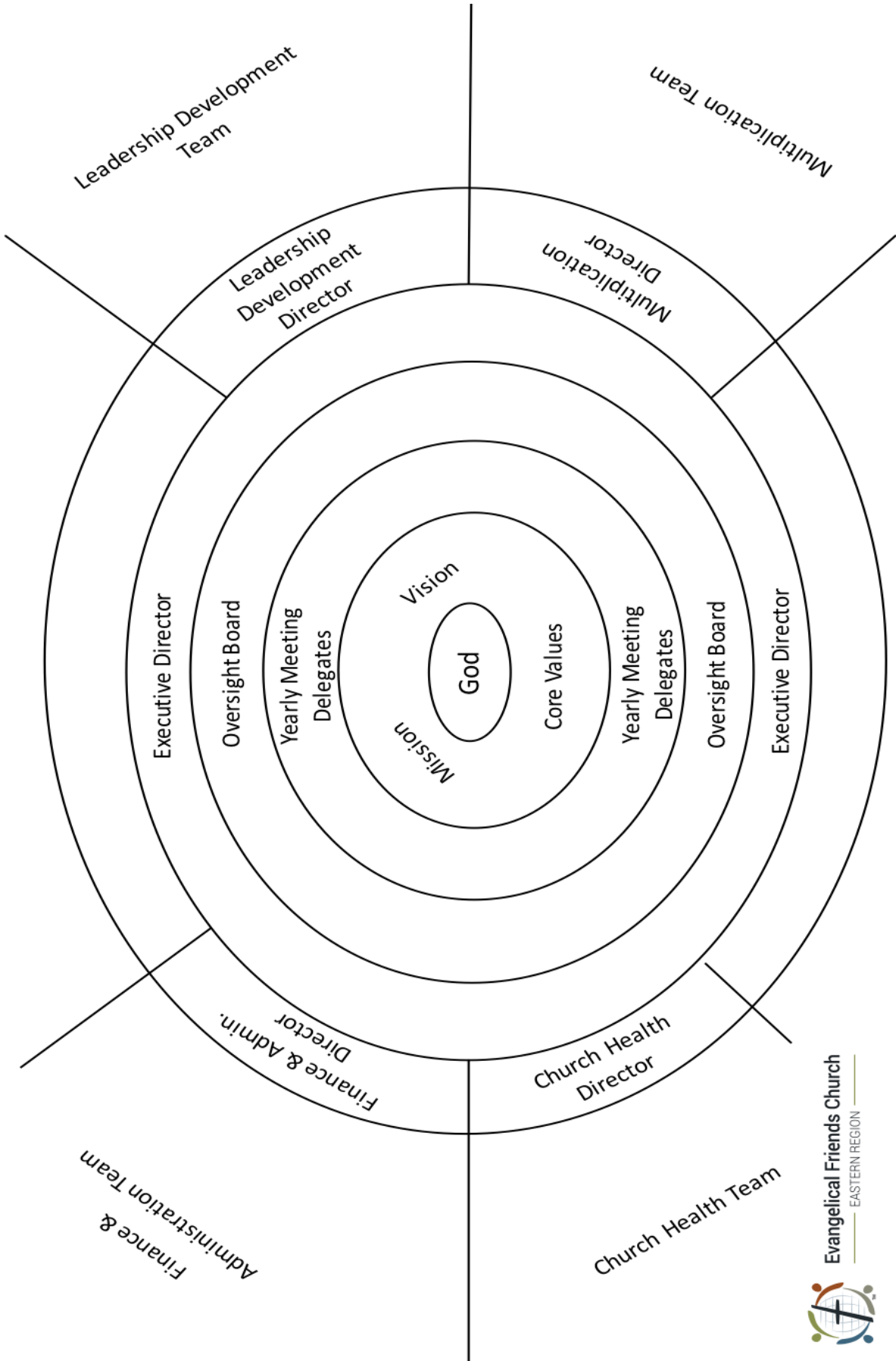
- i. Promote and resource the planting of new churches;
- ii. Determine full church status;
- iii. Oversee international partnerships focused on church planting;
- iv. Resource churches to develop cross-cultural ministries.

516 Finance and Administration Team

a. The Finance and Administration Team will:

- i. Care for the finances of EFC-ER;
- ii. Develop policies for maintaining financial accountability and transparency;
- iii. Oversee the EFC-ER pension program;
- iv. Oversee management of insurances (e.g., life, disability, property);

- v. Submit the annual budget to support EFC-ER's mission with a corresponding funding plan;
- vi. Oversee the EFC-ER Development Fund;
- vii. Oversee the properties of EFC-ER;
- viii. Oversee the staffing and management of the Evangelical Friends Headquarters;
- ix. Oversee the communication and marketing for EFC-ER.



MALONE UNIVERSITY

600 THE MALONE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- a. Composition: There are not fewer than 25 and not more than 33 Trustees composed of the following:
 - i. The Malone University President (ex-officio) who shall be or become a member of an EFC-ER church.
 - ii. The EFC-ER shall elect seventeen Trustees: two of such Trustees being the Executive Director and the chairperson of the Oversight Board (should the Oversight Board chairperson be an employee of the university, then the moderator shall serve as a Trustee in his place, and if the moderator is an employee of the university, then someone named by the Oversight Board shall serve); and fifteen Trustees, five elected each year for a three-year term. The Trustees shall take office at the close of Yearly Meeting. EFC-ER has the right to replace any of the 17 Trustees that it has elected at any time for their unexpired term.
 - iii. The Board of Trustees of Malone University shall elect the remaining Trustees, which shall number up to 15, to serve as it shall determine.
- b. The EFC-ER regards Malone University as an institution founded and operated to express its concern and provide for its needs in Christian higher education. It supports the university through the annual budget and encourages its youth to attend.
- c. Malone University is incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio and is certified by the Ohio Board of Education to grant certain degrees. It is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.
- d. It operates under its own Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation, which recognizes the right of EFC-ER to appoint certain Trustees and to receive an annual report from its President. EFC-ER recognizes the need for loyalty to the doctrines and to the Faith and Practice of EFC-ER and reserves the right to approve any amendments of the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation.
- e. Article Five of the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation provides that "Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue law) as the Trustees shall

determine, however, subject to any restrictions placed upon said assets by the donors. Any of such assets not so disposed of shall be conveyed, assigned, and transferred to Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region to be used as the church shall determine."

- f. Within the framework of the foregoing provisions, the Board of Trustees is charged with the full authority and responsibility of administering the university.

APPENDICES

Historical Documents

- Appendix A The Epistle of George Fox to the Governor of Barbados, 1671
- Appendix B The Declaration of Faith issued by the Richmond Conference, 1887

Statements of Faith and Affiliate Organizations

- Appendix C A Short List of Church Councils
- Appendix D The Constitution of Evangelical Friends Church International (EFCI)
- Appendix E The Evangelical Friends Mission (EFM)
- Appendix F The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

APPENDIX A – The Epistle of George Fox to the Governor of Barbados, 1671

We do own and believe in God, the only wise, omnipotent, and everlasting God; who is the Creator of all things, both in heaven and earth, and the Preserver of all that He hath made; Who is God over all, blessed forever; to Whom be all honor and glory, dominion, praise and thanksgiving, both now and evermore!

And we do own and believe in Jesus Christ, His beloved and only begotten Son, in Whom He is well pleased; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; Who is the express image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, by Whom were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers all things were created by Him.

And we do own and believe that He was made a sacrifice for sin, Who knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; and that He was crucified for us in the flesh, without the gates of Jerusalem; and that He was buried, and rose again the third day by the power of His Father, for our justification; and we do believe that He ascended up into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God.

This Jesus, Who was the foundation of the holy prophets and apostles, is our foundation; and we do believe that there is no other foundation to be laid but that which is laid, even Christ Jesus; Who, we believe tasted death for every man, and shed His blood for all men and is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world; according as John the Baptist testified, when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."²⁹⁶

We believe that He alone is our Redeemer and Saviour, even the Captain of our Salvation (Who saves us from sin, as well as from hell and wrath to come, and destroys the devil and his works), Who is the seed of the woman that bruises the serpent's head, to wit, Christ Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.

That He is (as the Scriptures of truth say of Him) our wisdom and righteousness, justification and redemption; neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved.

It is He alone Who is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; He it is Who is our Prophet, Whom Moses long since testified of, saying "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto Me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you; and it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear the prophet shall be destroyed from among the people."²⁹⁷ (He it is that is now come, "and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true." And He rules our hearts by His law of love and of life, and makes us free from the law of sin and death.)

²⁹⁶ John 1:29

²⁹⁷ Acts 3:22-23

And we have no life but by Him; for He is the quickening Spirit, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, by Whose blood we are cleansed and our consciences sprinkled from dead works, to serve the living God.

And He is our Mediator, that makes peace and reconciliation between God offended and us offending; He being the Oath of God, the new covenant of light, life, grace and peace; the Author and finisher of our faith.

Now this Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly Man, the Emmanuel, God with us, we all own and believe in Him Whom the high priests raged against, and said He had spoken blasphemy; Whom the priests and elders of the Jews took counsel together against and put to death; the same Whom Judas betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, which the priests gave him as a reward for his treason; who also gave large money to the soldiers to broach an horrible lie, namely, that His disciples came and stole Him away by night while they slept.

And after He was risen from the dead, the history of the Acts of the Apostles sets forth how the chief priests and elders persecuted the disciples of this Jesus for preaching Christ and His resurrection. This, we say, is that Lord Jesus Christ, Whom we own to be our life and salvation.

And as concerning the Holy Scriptures we do believe they were given forth by the Holy Spirit of God, through the holy men of God, who (as the Scripture itself declares²⁹⁸) "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." We believe they are to be read, believed, and fulfilled (He that fulfills them is Christ); and they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,"²⁹⁹; and are able to make wise "unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (We call the Holy Scriptures, as Christ and the apostles called them, and holy men of God called them -- the words of God.)

We do declare that we do esteem it a duty incumbent on us to pray with, and for, to teach and instruct, and admonish those in and belonging to our families. Now, Negroes and Indians make up a very great part of the families in this island for who an account will be required by Him Who comes to judge the quick and the dead, at the great day of judgment, when every one shall be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil; at that day, I say, of the resurrection both of the good and of the bad, of the just and the unjust. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day."³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ II Peter 1:21

²⁹⁹ II Timothy 3:16-17

³⁰⁰ II Thessalonians 1:7-10; II Peter 3:3.

We sincerely confess that divine honor and worship is due to the Son of God; and that He is, in true faith to be prayed unto, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ called upon (as the primitive Christians did), because of the glorious union of oneness of the Father and Son, and that we cannot acceptably offer up prayer and praises to God, nor receive a gracious answer or blessing from God, but in and through His dear Son.

-- From a declaration of Christian Doctrine given forth on behalf of the Church, 1671.

APPENDIX B – The Declaration of Faith Issued by the Richmond Conference, 1887

It is under a deep sense of what we owe to Him who has loved us that we feel called upon to offer a declaration of those fundamental doctrines of Christian truth that have always been professed by our branch of the Church of Christ.

OF GOD

We believe in one holy,³⁰¹ almighty,³⁰² all wise³⁰³ and everlasting³⁰⁴ God, the Father,³⁰⁵ the Creator³⁰⁶ and preserver³⁰⁷ of all things; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, by whom all things were made,³⁰⁸ and by whom all things consist,³⁰⁹ and in one Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son,³¹⁰ The Reprover³¹¹ of the world, the Witness for Christ,³¹² and the Teacher,³¹³ Guide,³¹⁴ and Sanctifier³¹⁵ of the people of God; and that these three are one in the eternal Godhead,³¹⁶ to whom be honor, praise and thanksgiving, now and forever. Amen.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

It is with reverence and thanksgiving that we profess our unwavering allegiance to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.³¹⁷ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.³¹⁸ He is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;³¹⁹ through whom the light of truth in all ages has proceeded from the Father of lights.³²⁰ He is the eternal Word³²¹ who was with God and was God, revealing Himself in infinite wisdom and love, both as man's Creator³²² and Redeemer;³²³ for by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible. Conceived of the Holy Ghost,³²⁴ born of the virgin Mary,³²⁵ the Word was made flesh,³²⁶ and dwelt

³⁰¹ Isaiah 6:3, 57:15

³⁰² Genesis 17:1

³⁰³ Romans 11:33, 16:27

³⁰⁴ Psalms 90:1-2

³⁰⁵ Matthew 11:25-27

³⁰⁶ Genesis 1:1

³⁰⁷ Job 7:20

³⁰⁸ John 1:3

³⁰⁹ Colossians 1:17

³¹⁰ John 15:26, 16:7

³¹¹ John 16:8

³¹² John 15:26

³¹³ John 14:26

³¹⁴ John 16:13

³¹⁵ II Thessalonians 2:13

³¹⁶ Matthew 28:19, John 10:30, 17:21

³¹⁷ John 1:18

³¹⁸ John 1:4

³¹⁹ John 1:9

³²⁰ James 1:17

³²¹ John 1:1

³²² Colossians 1:13-16

³²³ Colossians 1:14

³²⁴ Matthew 1:20

³²⁵ Matthew 1:23-25, Luke 1:35

³²⁶ John 1:14

amongst men. He came in the fullness³²⁷ of the appointed time, being verily foreordained before the foundation of the world³²⁸ that He might fulfill³²⁹ the eternal counsel of the righteousness and love of God for the redemption of man.³³⁰ In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.³³¹ Though He was rich, yet for our sakes, He became poor, veiling in the form of a servant³³² the brightness of His glory, that, through Him, the kindness and love of God³³³ toward man might appear in a manner every way suited to our wants and finite capacities. He went about doing good;³³⁴ for us He endured³³⁵ sorrow, hunger, thirst, weariness,³³⁶ pain, unutterable anguish³³⁷ of body and soul, being in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.³³⁸ Thus humbling Himself that we might be exalted, He emphatically recognized the duties and the sufferings of humanity as among the means whereby, through the obedience of faith, we are to be disciplined for heaven, sanctifying them to us, by Himself performing and enduring them, leaving us the one perfect example³³⁹ of all righteousness³⁴⁰ in self-sacrificing love.

But not only in these blessed relations must the Lord Jesus be ever precious to His people. In Him is revealed as true God and perfect man,³⁴¹ a Redeemer, at once able to suffer and almighty to save. He became obedient³⁴² unto death, even the death of the cross, and is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;³⁴³ in whom we have redemption through His blood,³⁴⁴ the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. It is our joy to confess that the remission of sins which any partake of is only in and by virtue of His most satisfactory sacrifice and not otherwise.³⁴⁵ He was buried and rose again the third day³⁴⁶ according to the Scriptures, becoming the first fruits³⁴⁷ of them that sleep, and having shown Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs,³⁴⁸ He ascended into heaven, and hath sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, now to appear in the presence of God for us.³⁴⁹ With the apostles who beheld His ascension, we rest in the assurance of the angelic messengers, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in

³²⁷ Galatians 4:4

³²⁸ I Peter 1:20

³²⁹ Isaiah 11:1-5, Isaiah 52:13-15

³³⁰ Isaiah 53

³³¹ Colossians 2:9

³³² Philippians 2:7

³³³ Titus 3:4

³³⁴ Acts 10:38

³³⁵ Isaiah 53:4, Luke 12:50, 19:41, 22:44

³³⁶ John 4:6

³³⁷ Luke 22:43-44

³³⁸ Hebrews 4:15

³³⁹ I Peter 2:21

³⁴⁰ Matthew 3:15

³⁴¹ Ephesians 4:13

³⁴² Philippians 2:8

³⁴³ I John 2:2

³⁴⁴ Ephesians 1:7

³⁴⁵ Barclay, Robert. *An apology for the true Christian divinity : Being an explanation and vindication of the principles and doctrines of the people called Quakers* (10th ed). Harvey and Darton, London, 1841.

³⁴⁶ I Corinthians 15:4

³⁴⁷ I Corinthians 15:23

³⁴⁸ Acts 1:3

³⁴⁹ Hebrews 1:3, 9:24

like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."³⁵⁰ With the apostle John, we would desire to unite in the words "Amen; even so, come, Lord Jesus."³⁵¹ And now, whilst thus watching and waiting, we rejoice to believe that He is our King and Savior, He is the one Mediator of the new and everlasting covenant,³⁵² who makes peace and reconciliation between God offended and man offending;³⁵³ the great High Priest whose priesthood is unchangeable.³⁵⁴ He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.³⁵⁵ All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth.³⁵⁶ By Him the world shall be judged in righteousness;³⁵⁷ for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the son even as they honor the Father.³⁵⁸ All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.³⁵⁹

We reverently confess and believe that divine honor and worship are due to the Son of God, and that He is in true faith to be prayed unto, and His name to be called upon, as the Primitive Christians did, because of the glorious oneness of the Father and the Son; and that we cannot acceptably offer prayer and praises to God, nor receive from Him a gracious answer or blessing, but in and through his dear Son.³⁶⁰

We would, with humble thanksgiving, bear an especial testimony to our Lord's perpetual dominion and power in His church. Through Him the redeemed in all generations have derived their light, their forgiveness, and their joy. All are members of this church, by whatsoever name they may be called among men, who have been baptized by the one Spirit into the one body; who are builded as living stones upon Christ, the Eternal Foundation, and are united in faith and love in the fellowship which is with the Father and with the Son. Of this church the Lord Jesus Christ is the alone Head.³⁶¹ All its true members are made one in Him. They have washed their robes and made them white in His precious blood,³⁶² and He has made them priests unto God and His Father.³⁶³ Then He dwells in their hearts by faith, and gives them of His peace. His will is their law, and in Him they enjoy the true liberty, a freedom from the bondage of sin.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is, in the unity of the eternal Godhead, one with the Father and with the Son.³⁶⁴ He is the comforter "Whom" saith Christ, "the Father will send in my

³⁵⁰ Acts 1:7,11

³⁵¹ Revelation 22:20

³⁵² I Timothy 1:5, Hebrews 9:15

³⁵³ Appendix A

³⁵⁴ Hebrews 4:14, 7:24

³⁵⁵ Hebrews 7:25

³⁵⁶ Matthew 28:18

³⁵⁷ Acts 17:31

³⁵⁸ John 5:22-23

³⁵⁹ John 5:28-29

³⁶⁰ Sewel, William. *The history of the rise, increase, and progress, of the Christian people called Quakers: Intermixed with several remarkable occurrences.* (2nd ed). Assigns of J.Sowle, 1725.

³⁶¹ Ephesians 1:22

³⁶² Revelation 7:14

³⁶³ Revelation 1:6

³⁶⁴ Matthew 28:19, II Corinthians 13:14

name."³⁶⁵ He testifies of and glorifies Jesus.³⁶⁶ It is the Holy Spirit who makes the evil manifest. He quickens them that are dead in trespasses and sins, and opens the inward eye to behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.³⁶⁷ Coming in the name and with the authority of the risen and ascended Savior, He is the precious pledge of the continued love and care of our exalted King. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them, as a realized possession, to the believing soul.³⁶⁸ Dwelling in the hearts of believers,³⁶⁹ He opens their understanding that they may understand the Scriptures, and becomes, to the humbled and surrendered heart, the Guide, Comforter, Support, and Sanctifier.

We believe that the essential qualification for the Lord's service is bestowed upon His children through the reception of and baptism with the Holy Ghost. This Holy Spirit is the seal of reconciliation to the believer in Jesus³⁷⁰, the witness to his adoption into the family of the redeemed,³⁷¹ the earnest and the foretaste of the full communion and perfect joy which are reserved for them that endure unto the end.

We own no principle of spiritual light, life, or holiness, inherent by nature in the mind or heart of man. We believe in no principle of spiritual light, life, or holiness, but the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, bestowed on mankind, in various measures and degrees, through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the capacity to receive this blessed influence, which, in an especial manner, gives man pre-eminence above the beasts that perish; which distinguishes him, in every nation and in every clime, as an object of the redeeming love of God; as a being not only intelligent but responsible; for whom the message of salvation through our crucified Redeemer is, under all possible circumstances, designed to be a joyful sound. The Holy Spirit must ever be distinguished, both from the conscience which He enlightens, and from the natural faculty of reason, which when unsubjected to His Holy influence, is, in the things of God, very foolishness. As the eye is to the body, so is the conscience to our inner being, the organ by which we see; and as both light and life are essential to the eye, so conscience, as the inward eye, cannot see aright without the quickening and illumination of the Spirit of God. One with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit can never disown or dishonor our once crucified and now risen and glorified Redeemer. We disavow all professed illumination or spirituality that is divorced from faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, crucified for us without the gates of Jerusalem.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

It has ever been, and still is, the belief of the Society of Friends that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God; that, therefore, there can be no appeal from them to any other authority whatsoever; that they are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life

³⁶⁵ John 14:26

³⁶⁶ John 16:14

³⁶⁷ Ephesians 2:1

³⁶⁸ John 16:14

³⁶⁹ John 14:17

³⁷⁰ Ephesians 1:13-14

³⁷¹ Romans 8:15-16

through His name."³⁷² The Scriptures are the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines which we are bound, as Christians, to accept, and of the moral principles which are to regulate our actions. No one can be required to believe, as an article of faith, any doctrine which is not contained in them; and whatsoever anyone says or does, contrary to the Scriptures, though under profession of the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, must be reckoned and accounted a mere delusion. To the Christian, the Old Testament comes with the solemn and repeated attestation of his Lord. It is to be read in the light and completeness of the New; thus will its meaning be unveiled, and the humble disciple will be taught to discern the unity and mutual adaptation of the whole, and the manysidedness and harmony of its testimony to Christ. The great Inspirer of Scripture is ever its true Interpreter. He performs this office in condescending love, not by superseding our understandings, but by renewing and enlightening them. Where Christ presides, idle speculation is hushed; His doctrine is learned in the doing of His will, and all knowledge ripens into a deeper and richer experience of His truth and love.

MAN'S CREATION AND FALL

It pleased God, in His wisdom and goodness, to create man out of the dust of the earth, and to breathe into his nostrils the breath of life, so that man became a living soul; formed after the image and likeness of God, capable of fulfilling the divine law, and of holding communion with his Maker.³⁷³ Being free to obey or to disobey, he fell into transgression, through unbelief, under the temptation of Satan,³⁷⁴ and, thereby, lost that spiritual life of righteousness in which he was created; and so, death passed upon him, as the inevitable consequence of his sin.³⁷⁵ As the children of fallen Adam, all mankind bear his image. They partake of his nature, and are involved in the consequences of his fall. To every member of every successive generation, the words of the Redeemer are alike applicable, "Ye must be born again."³⁷⁶ But while we hold these views of the lost condition of man in the fall, we rejoice to believe that sin is not imputed to any until they transgress the divine law, after sufficient capacity has been given to understand it; and that infants, though inheriting this fallen nature, are saved in the infinite mercy of God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."³⁷⁷ We believe that justification is of God's free grace, through which, upon repentance and faith, He pardons our sins, and imparts to us a new life. It is received, not for any works of righteousness that we have done,³⁷⁸ but in the unmerited mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Through faith in Him, and the shedding of His precious blood, the guilt of sin is taken away, and we stand reconciled to God. The offering up of Christ as the propitiation for the sins of the whole world is the appointed manifestation both of the righteousness and of the love of God. In this propitiation the pardon of sin involves no abrogation or relaxation of the law of holiness.

³⁷² John 20:31

³⁷³ Genesis 2:7, 1:26-27

³⁷⁴ Genesis 3:1-7

³⁷⁵ Romans 5:12

³⁷⁶ John 3:7

³⁷⁷ John 3:16

³⁷⁸ Titus 3:5

It is the vindication and establishment of that law,³⁷⁹ in virtue of the free and righteous submission of the Son of God Himself to all its requirements. He, the unchangeably just, proclaims Himself the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.³⁸⁰ From age to age, the sufferings and death of Christ have been a hidden mystery, and a rock of offense to the unbelief and pride of man's fallen nature; yet, to the humble penitent whose heart is broken under the convicting power of the Spirit, life is revealed in that death. As he looks upon Him who was wounded for our transgressions,³⁸¹ and upon whom the Lord was pleased to lay the iniquity of us all,³⁸² his eye is more and more opened to see, and his heart to understand, the exceeding sinfulness of sin for which the Saviour died; whilst, in the sense of pardoning grace, he will joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.³⁸³

We believe that in connection with Justification and Regeneration, that they who come to this experience know that they are not their own,³⁸⁴ that being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we are saved by His life;³⁸⁵ a new heart is given and new desires; old things are passed away, and we become new creatures,³⁸⁶ through faith in Christ Jesus; our wills being surrendered to His holy will, grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.³⁸⁷

Sanctification is experienced in the acceptance of Christ in living faith for justification, in so far as the pardoned sinner, through faith in Christ, is clothed with a measure of His righteousness and receives the Spirit of promise; for, as saith the Apostle, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."³⁸⁸ We rejoice to believe that the provisions of God's grace are sufficient to deliver from the power, as well as from the guilt, of sin, and to enable His believing children always to triumph in Christ.³⁸⁹ How full of encouragement is the declaration, "According to your faith be it unto you."³⁹⁰ Whosoever submits himself wholly to God, believing and appropriating His promises, and exercising faith in Christ Jesus, will have his heart continually cleansed from all sin by His precious blood, and through the renewing, refining power of the Holy Spirit, be kept in conformity to the will of God, will love Him with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength and be able to say, with Apostle Paul, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."³⁹¹ Thus, in its full experience, Sanctification is deliverance from the pollution, nature, and love of sin. To this we are every one called, that we may serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all of the days of our life.³⁹² It was the prayer of the apostle for

³⁷⁹ Romans 3:31

³⁸⁰ Romans 3:26

³⁸¹ Isaiah 53:5

³⁸² Isaiah 53:6

³⁸³ Romans 5:11

³⁸⁴ I Corinthians 6:19

³⁸⁵ Romans 5:10

³⁸⁶ II Corinthians 5:17

³⁸⁷ Romans 5:21

³⁸⁸ I Corinthians 6:11

³⁸⁹ II Corinthians 2:14

³⁹⁰ Matthew 9:29

³⁹¹ Romans 8:2

³⁹² Luke 1:74-75

the believers, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."³⁹³ Yet the most holy Christian is still liable to temptation, is exposed to the subtle assaults of Satan, and can only continue to follow holiness as he humbly watches unto prayer, and is kept in constant dependence upon his Saviour, walking in the light,³⁹⁴ in the loving obedience of faith.

THE RESURRECTION AND FINAL JUDGMENT

We believe, according to the Scriptures, that there shall be a resurrection from the dead, both of the just and of the unjust,³⁹⁵ and that God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ whom He hath ordained.³⁹⁶ For, as saith the apostle, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."³⁹⁷

We sincerely believe, not only a resurrection in Christ from the fallen and sinful state here, but a rising and ascending into glory with Him hereafter; that when He at last appears we may appear with Him in glory. But that all the wicked, who live in rebellion against the light of grace, and die finally impenitent, shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation. And that the soul of every man and woman shall be reserved, in its own distinct and proper being, and shall have its proper body as God is pleased to give it. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body;³⁹⁸ that being first which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. And though it is said, "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality,"³⁹⁹ the change shall be such as will accord with the declaration, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."⁴⁰⁰ We shall be raised out of all corruption and corruptibility, out of all mortality, and shall be the children of God, being the children of resurrection.⁴⁰¹

"Our citizenship is in heaven,"⁴⁰² from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

We believe that the punishment of the wicked and the blessedness of the righteous shall be everlasting; according to the declaration of our compassionate Redeemer, to whom the judgment is committed, "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life."⁴⁰³

³⁹³ I Thessalonians 5:23-24

³⁹⁴ I John 1:7

³⁹⁵ Acts 24:15

³⁹⁶ Acts 17:31

³⁹⁷ II Corinthians 5:10

³⁹⁸ I Corinthians 15:44

³⁹⁹ I Corinthians 15:53

⁴⁰⁰ I Corinthians 15:50

⁴⁰¹ Luke 20:36; Sewel, William. *The history of the rise, increase, and progress, of the Christian people called Quakers: Intermixed with several remarkable occurrences.* (2nd ed). Assigs of J.Sowle, 1725.

⁴⁰² Philippians 3:20-21

⁴⁰³ Matthew 25:46

BAPTISM

We would express our continued conviction that our Lord appointed no outward rite of ceremony for observance in His church. We accept every command of our Lord, in what we believe to be its genuine import, as absolutely conclusive. The question of the use of outward ordinances is with us a question, not as to the authority of Christ, but as to His real meaning.

We reverently believe that, as there is one Lord and one faith, so there is, under the Christian dispensation, but one baptism⁴⁰⁴ even that whereby all believers are baptized in the one Spirit into the one body.⁴⁰⁵ This is not an outward baptism with water, but a spiritual experience; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,⁴⁰⁶ but the inward work which, by transforming the heart and settling the soul upon Christ, brings forth the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the experience of His love and power, as the risen and ascended Savior. No baptism in outward water can satisfy the description of the apostle, of being buried with Christ by baptism unto death.⁴⁰⁷ It is with the Spirit alone that any can thus be baptized. In this experience the announcement of the Fore-runner of our Lord is fulfilled, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."⁴⁰⁸ In this view we accept the commission of our blessed Lord as given in Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."⁴⁰⁹ This commission, as we believe, was not designed to set up a new ritual under the new covenant, or to connect the initiation into a membership, in its nature essentially spiritual, with a mere ceremony of a typical character. Otherwise it was not possible for the Apostle Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle,⁴¹⁰ to have disclaimed that which would, in that case, have been of the essence of his commission when he wrote, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."⁴¹¹ Whenever an external ceremony is commanded, the particulars, the mode, and incidents of that ceremony become of its essence. There is an utter absence of these particulars in the text before us, which confirms our persuasion that the commission must be construed in connection with the spiritual power which the risen Lord promised should attend the witness of His apostles and of the church to Him, and which, after Pentecost, so mightily accompanied their ministry of the word and prayer, that those to whom they were sent were introduced into an experience wherein they had a saving knowledge of, and living fellowship with, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁰⁴ Ephesians 4:4-5

⁴⁰⁵ I Corinthians 12:13, R.V.

⁴⁰⁶ I Peter 3:21

⁴⁰⁷ Romans 6:4

⁴⁰⁸ Matthew 3:11

⁴⁰⁹ Matthew 28:18-20, R.V.

⁴¹⁰ II Corinthians 11:5

⁴¹¹ I Corinthians 1:17

THE SUPPER OF THE LORD

Intimately connected with the conviction already expressed is the view that we have ever maintained as to the true supper of the Lord. We are well aware that our Lord was pleased to make use of a variety of symbolic utterances, but He often gently upbraided His disciples for accepting literally what He had intended only in its spiritual meaning. His teaching, as in His parables or in the command to wash one another's feet, was often in symbols, and ought ever to be received in the light of His own emphatic declaration, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."⁴¹² The old covenant was full of ceremonial symbols; the new covenant, to which our Savior alluded at the last supper, is expressly declared by the prophet to be "not according to the old."⁴¹³ We cannot believe that in setting up this new covenant the Lord Jesus intended an institution out of harmony with the spirit of this prophecy. The eating of His body and the drinking of His blood cannot be an outward act. They truly partake of them who habitually rest upon the sufferings and death of our Lord as their only hope, and to whom the indwelling Spirit gives to drink of the fullness that is in Christ. It is this inward and spiritual partaking that is the true supper of the Lord.

The presence of Christ with His church is not designed to be by symbol or representation, but in the real communication of His own Spirit. "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, who shall abide with you forever."⁴¹⁴ Convincing of sin, testifying of Jesus, taking of the things of Christ, this blessed Comforter communicates to the believer and to the church in a gracious, abiding manifestation, the REAL PRESENCE of the Lord. As the great remembrancer, through whom the promise is fulfilled, He needs no ritual or priestly intervention in bringing to the experience of the true commemoration and communion. "Behold," saith the risen Redeemer, "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me."⁴¹⁵ In an especial manner, when assembled for congregational worship, are believers invited to the festival of the Savior's peace, and, in a united act of faith and love, unfettered by any outward rite or ceremonial, to partake together of the body that was broken and of the blood that was shed for them, without the gates of Jerusalem. In such a worship they are enabled to understand the words of the apostles as expressive of a sweet and most real experience: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."⁴¹⁶

WORSHIP

Worship is that adoring response of the heart and mind to the influence of the Spirit of God. It stands neither in forms nor in the formal disuse of forms; it may be without words as well as with them, but it must be in spirit and in truth.⁴¹⁷ We recognize the value of silence, not as an end, but as a means toward the attainment of the end; a silence, not of listlessness or of vacant musing, but of holy expectation before the Lord. Having become His adopted children through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our privilege to

⁴¹² John 6:63

⁴¹³ Jeremiah 31:32, Hebrews 8:9

⁴¹⁴ John 14:16

⁴¹⁵ Revelation 3:20

⁴¹⁶ I Corinthians 10:16-17

⁴¹⁷ John 4:24

meet together and unite in the worship of Almighty God, to wait upon Him for the renewal of our strength, for communion with one another, for the edification of believers in the exercise of various spiritual gifts, and for the declaration of the glad tidings of salvation to the unconverted who may gather with us. This worship depends not upon numbers. Where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, there is a church, and Christ, the living Head, in the midst of them. Through His mediation, without the necessity for any inferior instrumentality is the Father to be approached and reverently worshiped. The Lord Jesus has forever fulfilled and ended the typical and sacrificial worship under the law, by the offering up of Himself upon the cross for us, once for all. He has opened the door of access into the inner sanctuary, and graciously provided spiritual offerings for the service of His temple, suited to the several conditions of all who worship in spirit and in truth. The broken and the contrite heart, the confession of the soul prostrate before God, the prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, the earnest wrestling of the spirit, the outpouring of humble thanksgiving, the spiritual song and melody of the heart,⁴¹⁸ the simple exercise of faith, the self-denying service of love, these are among the sacrifices which He, our merciful and faithful High Priest, is pleased to prepare, by His Spirit, in the hearts of them that receive Him, and to present with acceptance unto God.

By the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit, He, as the Head of the church, alone selects and qualifies those who are to present His messages or engage in other service for Him; and hence, we cannot commit any formal arrangement to any one in our regular meetings for worship. We are well aware that the Lord has provided a diversity of gifts⁴¹⁹ for the needs both of the church and of the world, and we desire that the church may feel her responsibility, under the government of her Great Head, in doing her part to foster these gifts, and in making arrangements for their proper exercise.

It is not for individual exaltation, but for mutual profit, that the gifts are bestowed;⁴²⁰ and every living church, abiding under the government of Christ, is humbly and thankfully to receive and exercise them, in subjection to her Holy Head. The church that quenches the Spirit and lives to itself alone must die.

We believe the preaching of the Gospel to be one of the chief means, divinely appointed, for the spreading of the glad tidings of life and salvation through our crucified Redeemer, for the awakening and conversion of sinners, and for the comfort and edification of believers. As it is the prerogative of the Great Head of the church alone to select and call the ministers of His Gospel, so we believe that both the gift and the qualification to exercise it must be derived immediately from Him, and that, as in the primitive church, so now also, He confers spiritual gifts upon women as well as upon men, agreeable to the prophecy recited by the apostle Peter, "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,"⁴²¹ respecting which the apostle declares, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall

⁴¹⁸ Ephesians 5:19

⁴¹⁹ I Corinthians 12:4-6

⁴²⁰ I Corinthians 12:7

⁴²¹ Acts 2:17

call."⁴²² As the gift is freely received so it is to be freely exercised,⁴²³ in simple obedience to the will of God.

Spiritual gifts, precious as they are, must not be mistaken for grace; they add to our responsibility, but do not raise the minister above his brethren or sisters. They must be exercised in continued dependence upon our Lord, and blessed is that ministry in which man is humbled, and Christ and His grace exalted. "He that is greatest among you," said our Lord and Master, "let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve. I am among you as he that serveth."⁴²⁴

While the church cannot confer spiritual gifts, it is its duty to recognize and foster them and to promote their efficiency by all the means in its power. And while, on the one hand, the Gospel should never be preached for money,⁴²⁵ on the other, it is the duty of the church to make such provision that it shall never be hindered for want of it.

The church, if true to her allegiance, cannot forget her part in the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."⁴²⁶ Knowing that it is the Spirit of God that can alone prepare and qualify the instruments who fulfill this command, the true disciple will be found still sitting at the feet of Jesus listening that he may learn, and learning that he may obey. He humbly places himself at his Lord's disposal, and when he hears the call "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" is prepared to respond, in childlike reverence and love, "Here am I, send me."⁴²⁷

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Prayer is the outcome of our sense of need, and of our continual dependence upon God. He who uttered the invitation, "Ask and it shall be given you,"⁴²⁸ is himself the Mediator and High Priest who, by His Spirit, prompts the petition, and who presents it with acceptance before God. With such an invitation, prayer becomes the duty and the privilege of all who are called by His name. Prayer is, in the awakened soul, the utterance of the cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner"⁴²⁹ and, at every stage of the believer's course, prayer is essential to his spiritual life. A life without prayer is a life practically without God. The Christian's life is a continual asking. The thirst that prompts the petition produces, as it is satisfied, still deeper longings, which prepare for yet more bounteous supplies, from Him who delights to bless. Prayer is not confined to the closet. When uttered in response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, it becomes an important part of public worship, and whenever the Lord's people meet together in His name, it is their privilege to wait upon Him for the spirit of grace and supplications.⁴³⁰ A life of prayer cannot be other than a life of praise. As the peace of Christ reigns in the church, her living members accept all that they receive as from His pure bounty, and each day brings them fresh pledges of their

⁴²² Acts 2:39

⁴²³ Matthew 10:8; Acts 20:33-35

⁴²⁴ Luke 22:26-27

⁴²⁵ Acts 8:20, 20:33-35

⁴²⁶ Mark 16:15

⁴²⁷ Isaiah 6:8

⁴²⁸ Matthew 7:7

⁴²⁹ Luke 18:13

⁴³⁰ Zechariah 12:10

Father's love. Satisfied with the goodness of His house, whether as individuals, in families, or in congregations, they will be still praising Him,⁴³¹ heart answering to heart, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name."⁴³²

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE IN ITS RELATION TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT

That conscience should be free, and that in matters of religious doctrine and worship man is accountable only to God, are truths which are plainly declared in the New Testament; and which are confirmed by the whole scope of the Gospel, and by the example of our Lord and His disciples. To rule over the conscience, and to command the spiritual allegiance of His creature man, is the high and sacred prerogative of God alone. In religion every act ought to be free. A forced worship is plainly a contradiction in terms, under that dispensation in which the worship of the Father must be in spirit and in truth.⁴³³

We have ever maintained that it is the duty of Christians to obey the enactments of civil government, except those which interfere with our allegiance to God. We owe much to its blessings. Through it we enjoy liberty and protection, in connection with law and order. Civil government is a divine ordinance,⁴³⁴ instituted to promote the best welfare of man, hence magistrates are to be regarded as God's ministers who should be a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well. Therefore, it is with us a matter of conscience to render them respect and obedience in the exercise of their proper functions.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is an institution graciously ordained by the Creator Himself, for the help and continuance of the human family. It is not a mere civil contract, and ought never to be entered upon without a reference to the sanction and blessing of Him who ordained it. It is a solemn engagement for the term of life,⁴³⁵ designed for the mutual assistance and comfort of both sexes, that they may be helpmates to each other in things temporal and spiritual. To this end it should imply concurrence in spiritual as well as temporal concerns, and should be entered upon discreetly, soberly, and in the fear of the Lord.

PEACE

We feel bound explicitly to avow our unshaken persuasion that all war is utterly incompatible with the plain precepts of our divine Lord and Lawgiver, and the whole spirit of His Gospel, and that no plea of necessity or policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release either individuals or nations from the paramount allegiance which they owe to Him who hath said, "Love your enemies."⁴³⁶ In enjoining this love, and the forgiveness of injuries, He who has brought us to Himself has not prescribed for man precepts which are incapable of being carried into practice, or of which the practice is to be postponed until all shall be persuaded to act upon them. We cannot doubt that they are incumbent now, and that we have in the prophetic scriptures the distinct

⁴³¹ Psalm 134:4

⁴³² Psalm 103:1

⁴³³ John 4:24

⁴³⁴ Romans 13:1, I Peter 2:13-16

⁴³⁵ Matthew 19:5-6

⁴³⁶ Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27

intimation of their direct application not only to individuals, but to nations also.⁴³⁷ When nations conform their laws to this divine teaching, wars must necessarily cease.

We would, in humility, but in faithfulness to our Lord, express our firm persuasion that all the exigencies of civil government and social order may be met under the banner of the Prince of Peace, in strict conformity with His commands.

OATHS

We hold it to be the inalienable privilege of the disciple of the Lord Jesus that his statements concerning matters of fact within his knowledge should be accepted, under all circumstances, as expressing his belief as to the fact asserted. We rest upon the plain command of our Lord and Master, "Swear not at all;"⁴³⁸ and we believe any departure from this standard to be prejudicial to the cause of truth and to that confidence between man and man, the maintenance of which is indispensable to our mutual well being. This command, in our persuasion, applies not to profane swearing only, but to judicial oaths also. It abrogates any previous permission to the contrary, and is, for the Christian, absolutely conclusive.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Whilst the remembrance of our Creator ought to be at all times present with the Christian, we would express our thankfulness to our Heavenly Father that He has been pleased to honor the setting apart of one day in seven for the purpose of holy rest, religious duties, and public worship; and we desire that all under our name may avail themselves of this great privilege as those who are called to be risen with Christ, and to seek those things that are above where He sitteth at the right hand of God.⁴³⁹ May the release thus granted from other occupations be diligently improved. On this day of the week especially ought the households of Friends to be assembled for the reading of the Scriptures and for waiting upon the Lord; and we trust that, in a Christianly wise economy of our time and strength, the engagements of the day may be so ordered as not to frustrate the gracious provision thus made for us by our Heavenly Father, or to shut out the opportunity either for public worship or for private retirement and devotional reading.

CONCLUSION

In presenting this declaration of our Christian faith, we desire that all our members may be afresh encouraged, in humility and devotedness, to renewed faithfulness in fulfilling their part in the great mission of the church, and through the Church to the world around us, in the name of our Crucified Redeemer. Life FROM Christ, life IN Christ, must ever be the basis of life FOR Christ. For this we have been created and redeemed, and by this alone can the longings of our immortal souls be satisfied.

⁴³⁷ Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:1

⁴³⁸ Matthew 5:34

⁴³⁹ Colossians 3:1

STATEMENTS OF FAITH AND AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

APPENDIX C – A SHORT LIST OF CHURCH COUNCILS

Church councils have been called throughout the life of the Christian Church for the purpose of addressing the need for clear and reliable church doctrine. These include:

- The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) refuted the arguments of the Judaizers who pressed that new believers must become Jews first.
- The Council of Nicea (AD 325) refuted the claims of the Arians that Jesus was not truly God.
- The Council of Constantinople I (AD 381) made it clear that Jesus was both God and Man.
- The Council of Ephesus (AD 431) reemphasized the Constantinople outcome by declaring that Jesus had two natures (human and divine) joined in one person.
- The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) confirmed that Jesus was the God-Man.
- The Lateran Council IV (AD 1215) denied the Albigensians who thought that there were two Supreme Beings: good and evil.
- The Council of Trent (AD 1545-1563) settled questions of which books went into the Bible as inspired scriptural texts.

APPENDIX D – THE CONSTITUTION OF EVANGELICAL FRIENDS CHURCH INTERNATIONAL

Preamble

Arising out of a God-given concern to participate fully as Friends in seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness through the church, we herein set forth a constitution to serve as a guide for faith and action by Evangelical Friends Church International. In so doing, we declare our belief in the value of Christian unity for the spiritual welfare and for the advancement of the program of the Evangelical Friends Church worldwide.

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be: Evangelical Friends Church International.

Article II – Purpose

The organization shall be an international alliance of Friends churches that officially accept and communicate the evangelical doctrines of the Christian faith as herein defined. This purpose of the alliance will be seen:

1. By working together under policies and arrangements herein stated,
2. By serving together in Christian ministries based upon Biblical principles,
3. By prayerfully investing both personal and material resources in order to fulfill the Great Commission,
4. By seeking continuously to discern both the call of God and the need of humanity as it is expressed in diverse cultures and respond appropriately in a Christian manner.

Article III – Objectives

1. Renewal. To motivate a renewed sensitivity to God's voice through Scripture and contemporary needs by persistent waiting on the Lord and total availability to the Holy Spirit for living the life of Christ in and through us.
2. Evangelism. To share creative and effective methods of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the world with those who have not received Him as Savior and Lord.
3. Fellowship. To stimulate genuine sharing of joys and burdens with one another in the family of Friends, locally, nationally and internationally.
4. Leadership. To develop individuals whose God-given call and vision, spiritual gifts and Christ-like lifestyles command respect as servant leaders among God's people.

Article IV – Statement of Faith

THE HOLY BIBLE

We believe that the 66 books of the Holy Bible were given by the inspiration of God; that there can be no appeal from these Scriptures to any other authority whatsoever; that they are able to make one wise unto salvation through faith that is in Jesus Christ; that the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures must ever be its true interpreter as Christ works through the disciplined and dedicated minds of those within His Church; that any professed guidance that is contrary to these Scriptures must be counted as a delusion.

GOD

We believe in one God, revealed through the Holy Spirit in the person of Jesus Christ; that He is both the creator and preserver of all things visible and invisible; that He alone is worthy of worship, honor, glory, dominion, praise, and thanksgiving both now and forevermore; and that in the unity of the Godhead there exists three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, inseparable in divinity, power, glory, and eternity.

JESUS CHRIST

We believe Jesus Christ to be the only begotten Son of God; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary; that He is the express image of the invisible God; and that He combines within Himself both the nature of God and the nature of man in one perfect indivisible personality, the God-man.

We believe that He was crucified as a substitutionary atonement for us and for the sins of the whole world, making provision whereby each person may find the forgiveness of sins, the power for a new life, and be brought back into a perfect relationship with the Father. We believe that He arose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of God, making intercession for us, and that He will come to earth again to receive His Church unto Himself and to judge the world in righteousness.

HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Holy Spirit to be the third person of the Trinity, proceeding from both Father and Son, but equal with them in authority, power, and glory; that He convicts the world of sin, imparts life to the penitent believer, sanctifies the child of God, empowers the disciple for service to others, and enables each one by His indwelling presence to love God supremely.

PEOPLE

We believe that God created people as male and female in His own image; that they enjoyed unbroken fellowship with their Maker; and that their whole life centered in the person of God. We believe that people fell from this original state by an act of transgression; that in this fall they suffered the immediate loss of their perfect relationship to God, making self the center of their life; and that in this act they suffered immediate spiritual death. All people are born in this disposition to sin. We own no principle inherent naturally by which they may be saved, except by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as a provision for all people.

SALVATION

We believe that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the direct and immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, people can be recovered from their fallen state through divine enlightenment, forgiveness of sin, regeneration and sanctification of their affection, and the final glorification of their bodies; that in this life they can love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength; that they can live in victory over known sin and enjoy unbroken fellowship with the Heavenly Father; and that once more their whole lives may center in and revolve around their Creator and Redeemer.

We believe that the experience of sanctification is the work of God's grace by which affections are purified and exalted to a supreme love to God and others, and the believer is empowered to witness of the living Christ. This is accomplished by the filling with the Holy Spirit in the life of a dedicated and believing child of God; that this is both an act in which the heart is purified by faith and a process in which the life is continuously disciplined into paths of holiness. By submission and availability to Jesus Christ, people become channels for Christ to do His work in this present age.

THE CHURCH

We believe that all those persons who repent of their sins, believe in and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior, are born again into His kingdom by the Holy Spirit, and that these constitute the Church of Jesus Christ. This Church we believe to be spiritual in nature, universal in scope, holy in character, and redemptive in her life and purpose.

We believe that wherever two or three are gathered together regularly and faithfully in the name of Christ, He is truly present in the person of the Holy Spirit and that such an assembly is a local church, the visible expression of His body and the Church universal.

We believe that believers must relate themselves to the local and visible body of Christ being fitly framed together with others into a holy temple in the Lord and built together for a habitation of His Holy Spirit.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

We believe that in the church, the believer is committed to both the worship and the work of God; that this work involved not only personal righteousness as the fruit of a new life, but the ministry of evangelism and teaching; that in this commission of Christ every believer is involved in the stewardship of the kingdom, and that is fulfilled only by faithful service in and through the fellowship of His Church; and that this work is continuous until Christ comes again calling the Church unto Himself. We believe that all Christians are called upon to witness by word and by deed within a sinful world, not returning evil for evil, but in Christlikeness demonstrating love, forgiveness, and the way of peace.

We believe that in the fellowship of His body, the Holy Spirit gives to every member a gift to be exercised for the mutual advantage of every member in the body, and for the influence of the Church upon those outside; the ministry is a special calling given to certain ones whom God ordains for a service of leadership in His Church; that this service may be that of pastoring, teaching, evangelizing, administration, or other kinds of service to humanity.

LIBERTY

Regarding Christian liberty, we recognize that among Evangelical Friends and among the larger body of evangelical Christians there are minor differences of faith and practice, due in part to historical and cultural differences and our imperfections. We look forward to the time when we shall all come into a greater unity of the faith. Until then, we believe that in biblical essentials there must be unity, that in nonessentials there must be liberty, but in all things there must be charity.

SPIRITUAL REALITIES

We believe that both Christian baptism and communion are spiritual realities which are not dependent upon physical and outward ordinances; that baptism is an inward receiving of the Holy Spirit in which He becomes Lord over all -- guiding, cleansing, empowering, and in general, representing God to us in immediate experience; that communion is the daily receiving and realization of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; that this communion is dependent not only upon the condition of the believer walking daily in the light of Christ but also in the historic act of Christ on Calvary as His body was broken and blood shed once and for all for us; that Christ thus becomes a daily personal spiritual reality known immediately in Christian experience; and that through Him and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, God and divine realities are known experientially and immediately.

RESURRECTION AND JUDGEMENT

We believe in the second coming of Christ; that at His coming the dead shall be resurrected, some to everlasting glory and others to everlasting condemnation; that we shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive recompense for the things done in the body; that the judgment of the blessed shall be unto heaven, and the judgment of the lost shall be unto hell; that the punishment of the wicked and the blessedness of the righteous shall be everlasting; that this judgment is in the hands of our compassionate Redeemer, who does all things after the counsel of His wisdom, love and holiness.

Article V – Membership

Any Yearly Meeting of the Friends, or any organized Friends group of churches, may apply for membership in Evangelical Friends Church International and will be accepted provided there is official agreement with the doctrines and policies of Evangelical Friends Church International and the Regional Coordinating Council of the respective region approves such application.

For a single international or regional event, a non-member Yearly Meeting or Friends group of churches who agrees with the Statement of Faith may participate on a temporary basis. Their financial support will be proportionate for this event. Planning and participation will last for this single event only.

Article VI – Organization

Membership shall be under a two-level system.

Level I -- Membership in Evangelical Friends Church International by geographical region, i.e.:

EFC – AFRICA

EFC – ASIA

EFC – LATIN AMERICA

EFC – NORTH AMERICA

EFC – EUROPE

It shall be directed by an International Council composed of the Director of each region, plus an International Director to be nominated by them and approved by each Regional Coordinating Council.

Level II -- Membership in respective regions as a Yearly Meeting or organized Friends group within any of the regions. It shall have a controlling body to be known as the Coordinating Council and is made up of representatives of member Yearly Meetings, as determined by each respective region.

There shall be in addition an Executive Committee of each Regional Coordinating Council composed of the general superintendents or their equivalent, and a member-at-large of each member Yearly Meeting, or any organized Friends group of churches.

Appendix E – THE EVANGELICAL FRIENDS MISSION (EFM)

The Evangelical Friends Mission (www.friendsmission.com) represents the coordinated mission work of the North American Region of Evangelical Friends International represented by EFC-ER, Mid-America, Northwest, Rocky Mountain, Southwest, and Alaska Yearly Meetings.

The purpose of EFM is to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ through healing to build His church, encouraging the efforts of Friends Internationally in proclaiming Jesus Christ as “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” EFM seeks to fuel a worldwide movement of people who seek first the kingdom of God, planting churches that live and die to carry out the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment.

EFM carries out its mission by moving into the neighborhoods where God leads, learning languages and cultures, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, discipling those who respond to the Gospel in holistic ways, and helping them to form churches. EFM also helps to equip disciples for ministry with the goal of creating self-sustaining ministries that can send out missionaries on their own.

The rationale for EFM is that by working together, Evangelical Friends can accomplish more in fulfilling the Great Commission and bringing others into the family of God.

APPENDIX F – THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS (NAE)

EFC-ER endorses the following statements from the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE):

Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that, for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in 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.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pornography and Obscenity Resolution

The National Association of Evangelicals affirms the declaration of Scripture that all persons are made in the image of God and are therefore to be treated with respect and dignity. We also affirm that sex is a gift from our loving Father to be enjoyed within the sacred bonds of marriage between husband and wife. Because of our sin, we, as individuals and as a nation, continue to experience a decline in moral values and beliefs. Our sinful behavior has resulted in increasing rates of unmarried adolescent and adult sexual activity, the birth of children to unwed mothers, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and decreasing marital fidelity. These are all signs of the decline of our culture.

Today pornography and obscenity are available through increasingly sexually explicit movies and television programs, magazines, videotapes and, most recently, the Internet. The Internet brings pornography into our homes, schools, and libraries. Everything from soft-core to hard-core to child pornography is now available not just for adults, but for children. The powerfully corrosive effect within American society is deeply troubling to Evangelicals. Pornography and obscenity cause harm to those (often women and children) who are abused in the production of it as well as to those who use it. These materials exploit persons made in God's image, destroy healthy relationships and distort

God's gift of loving, mutual sexuality between husband and wife. As members of the National Association of Evangelicals, we are therefore committed to educating both our members and the broader culture about the harm of pornography. To facilitate that commitment, we encourage our membership denominations to take official action at their national governing bodies and to implement an educational process that will protect God's people from the impact of pornography. We encourage pastors and congregations to protect their youth and children from exposure to these materials. We call upon leaders of businesses, schools, and libraries as well as parents to participate in an effort to protect children and youth from being harmed by these materials. We also urge local, state, and federal agencies to prosecute aggressively those who break the law in producing and distributing illegal pornography or who operate illegal sex businesses. Lastly, we call upon all leaders of the broader faith community, all persons of goodwill and especially representatives of the Evangelical community to be —salt and light|| in protecting people from the harm of pornography, obscenity, and sex businesses. We also call upon these same people to join together in their own communities to win the battle against pornography and obscenity through education, appropriate law enforcement efforts, and by helping those who have been harmed.