

ARTICLES OF FAITH
THE ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

THE HOLY TRINITY

There is but one true and living God, an eternal being without body, indivisible, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible.

In this Godhead, there is a Trinity of one essence and power, coeternal, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

(Gen. 1:1; 17:1; Ex. 3:13-15; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 90:2; 104:24; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 10:10; Jn. 1:1-2; 4:24; 5:18; 10:30; 16:13; 17:3; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 16:27; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:18; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Jn. 5:7, 20; Rev. 19:13)

THE SON OF GOD

The Holy Scriptures declare that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, in Whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united.

He is the eternal Word made flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

As ministering Servant, He lived, suffered and died on the cross. He was buried, rose from the dead and ascended bodily into heaven to be with the Father, from whence He shall return.

He is eternal Savior and Mediator, who intercedes for us, and by Him all men will be judged.

(Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23; Jn. 1:14; Acts: 1:3, 9-11; 2:22-24; 4:10; 17:3; 1 Cor. 15:3-8; 2 Cor. 5:10; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 7:25; Rev. 20:11-15)

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as the true and eternal God; of one essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son.

He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He also comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

(Job 33:4; Mt. 28:19; Jn. 4:24-26; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 4:6)

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The Holy Scriptures were given to us by Divine Inspiration, were inerrant in the original manuscripts, and continue to be our infallible authority as the written Word of God.

(Ps. 19:7; Lu. 24:27; Jn. 17:17; Acts 17:2, 11; Rom. 1:2; 15:4; 16:26; Gal. 1:9; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; Ja. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Rev. 22:14, 19)

DEPRAVITY & PREVENIENT GRACE

The Holy Scriptures declare that through the transgression of Adam, man is fallen from original righteousness and apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is not only entirely destitute of holiness but is inclined to evil, and that continually.

They declare that except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

The Scriptures also declare that man in his own strength, without divine grace, cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God.

The Holy Scriptures further declare that man is a free moral agent and that he is responsible for his eternal destiny, and that, influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit and due to the prevenient grace of God, is enabled to exercise his will for good and to the glory of God.

(Gen. 6:5; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Jn. 3:3-7; Acts 17:24-28; Rom. 2:4; 3:10-18; 23: 5:15-21; Eph. 2:1, 8-9; Phil. 2:13; Titus 2:11)

THE ATONEMENT

The atonement of Christ, once made, through His sufferings and meritorious death on the cross, is that perfect redemption and propitiation for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual. There is none other ground of salvation from sin but that alone.

This atonement is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race and graciously efficacious to the salvation of the irresponsible from birth, or to the righteous who have become irresponsible, and to children in innocency.

However, this atonement is efficacious to the salvation of those who reach the age of awareness of responsibility only when they repent and believe.

(Lu. 24:46-47; Jn. 3:16; Acts 3:18; 4:12; Rom. 5:8-11, 18-19; 8:34; 1 Cor. 6:11; 15:22; Gal. 2:16; 3:2-3; Eph. 1:7; 2:13, 16; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 7:23-27; 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:14)

JUSTIFICATION, REGENERATION, ADOPTION

The Holy Scriptures declare that we are never accounted righteous before God through our works or merit, but that those who truly repent of their sins are justified or accounted righteous before God only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Regeneration is the renewal of man in righteousness through Jesus Christ after the image of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature and experience newness of life. This is initial sanctification.

By this new birth the believer becomes a child of God, receives the spirit of adoption, and is made an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Holy Spirit bears witness to this gracious work and immediately assures the regenerate believer that he has passed from death unto life, that his sins are all forgiven, and that he is a child of God.

(Isa. 64:6; Jn. 1:12; Rom 4:3-5; 5:1-2; 8:14-16; 2 Cor. 5:17; 6:18; Gal. 2:16; 4:4-7; 5:5-6; Titus 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:1)

SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. After receiving the Holy Spirit, it may happen that a person depart from grace, and fall into sin; and even then, by the grace of God, may rise again and amend his life.

Therefore, we do not agree with those who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

(Mal. 3:7; Mt. 18:21-22; 1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1)

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

Entire Sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is cleansed from all inbred sin through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is subsequent to regeneration, and wrought instantaneously by faith when the believer consecrates himself a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

The evidence of this gracious work is love out of a pure heart, soul, mind, and strength expressed to God and to our neighbors as ourselves. It is further evidenced by a blameless walk according to God's holy commandments.

There is clear distinction that must be made between consecration and the spirit-filled life. Consecration is that more or less gradual process of devoting one's self to God by the help of the Holy Spirit. This process comes to a completion at a point in time. Total consecration of necessity precedes and prepares the way for that act of faith which brings God's instantaneous sanctifying work to the soul.

We believe this gracious work does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes common to man, nor from the possibilities of further sin. The Christian must continue to guard against the temptation to spiritual pride, and seek to gain victory over this and every temptation to sin.

(Gen 17:1; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 130:8; Ezek. 26:25-29; Mt. 5:48; Lu. 1:74-75; 3:16-17; 24:49; Jn. 17:2-23; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-4; 15:8-9; Rom. 8:3-4; 11:26; 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; 14:20; Eph. 4:13, 24; 5:25-27; Phil. 2:5, 7; Col. 4:12; 1 Thess. 3:10; 4:3-7; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:17; Titus 2:12; Heb. 9:13-14; 10:14, 18:22; Ja. 1:27; 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:2, 10; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Jn. 1:7, 9; 3:8-9; 4:17-18; Jude 24)

SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

The Holy Scriptures declare that the believer is secure in Christ as long as he walks in obedience and faith.

The Scriptures also declare that it is possible after the experience of regeneration and/or the experience of entire sanctification to depart from grace and fall into sin, and if one remains in this state to be eternally lost.

However, by the grace of God, a man may through repentance and faith rise again from a backslidden state and be restored to righteousness and true holiness.

(Ezek. 18:24-26; Mt. 18:15-35; Gal. 5:4; 6:1; Phil. 1:6; 2:12; Heb. 6:1-6; 10:26-31)

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The Gift of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit Himself. He is to be desired more than the gifts of the Spirit, or the supernatural endowments which the Spirit in His wise counsel bestows upon individual members of the church to enable them properly to fulfill their function as members of the Body of Christ.

These gifts of the Spirit, although different from natural endowments, function through them for the edification of the whole church.

These gifts are to be exercised in love under the administration of the Lord of the church, not through human volition.

The relative value of the gifts of the Spirit is to be tested by their usefulness in the church, and not by the ecstasy produced in the ones receiving them.

(Lu. 11:13; 24:49; Acts 2:38-39; 10:45; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4, 11, 18, 21-25, 29-31; 13:1-13; Eph. 4:11-16)

THE CHURCH

The Holy Scriptures declare that the Church is the community of born again believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the fellowship of the redeemed in which the Word of God is preached by men divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment.

Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

(Acts 2:41-47; Rom. 1:18, 21; 1 Jn. 1:7)

THE SACRAMENTS

Two sacraments are ordained by Christ our Lord, namely, Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

The Holy Scriptures declare that the sacraments, ordained by Christ, are not only pledges and symbols of the Christian's profession but they are also signs of God's love and grace toward us, and that, by these sacraments He works invisibly in us, quickening, strengthening, and confirming our faith in Him.

Baptism signifies entrance into the household of faith, and is a symbol of repentance and inner cleansing from sin. It is a representation of the new birth in Christ Jesus and a mark of Christian discipleship, and is to be administered to those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The Lord's Supper is a representation of our redemption, a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and a token of love and union which Christians have with Christ and with one another.

Those who rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until He comes.

(Mt. 28:19-20; Lu. 22:19-22; Acts 2:38-41; 8:36-39; 16:30-33; 1 Cor. 11:23-29)

THE LORD'S DAY

The Holy Scriptures declare that the Lord's Day is divinely ordained for private and public worship, for rest from unnecessary work, and should be devoted to spiritual improvement, Christian fellowship and service.

It is commemorative of our Lord's resurrection and is an emblem of our eternal rest.

It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian Church, and important to the welfare of the civil community.

(Mt. 28:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Heb. 10:25; Rev. 1:10)

PUBLIC WORSHIP

The Holy Scriptures declare that divine worship is the duty and privilege of man, who, in the presence of God, bows in adoration, humility, and dedication.

It is essential to the life of the church. The assembling of the people of God for such worship is necessary to Christian fellowship and spiritual growth.

The Scriptures further reveal that the order of public worship need not be the same in all places but may be modified by the church according to circumstances and the needs of men. It should be in a language and form understood by the people, consistent with the Holy Scriptures to the edification of all.

(Ps. 95:1, 2, 6; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-7; Eph. 4:11-16; 5:19; 1 Thess. 5:11)

THE RAPTURE

The Rapture is the coming of Jesus Christ for His Church. The believers will be instantaneously lifted from the earth following the bodily resurrection of those who died in the faith.

(Ps. 17:15; Dan. 12:1-4; Mt. 24:29-44; Mk. 13:26-27; Lu. 17:30-36; 21:24-36; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Jn. 3:2-3)

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The Scriptures teach the second coming of Christ to be a bodily return to the earth, and that He will cause the fulfillment of all prophecies made concerning His final and complete triumph over all evil.

Faith in the imminence of Christ's return is a rational and inspiring hope to the people of God.

(Job 19:25-27; Isa. 11:1-12; Zech. 14:1-11; Mt. 24:1-51; 26:64; Mk. 13:26-37; Lu. 17:26-37; Jn. 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 1:7-8; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 9:27-28; Ja. 5:7-8; 2 Pet. 3:1-14; Jude 14; Rev. 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:6-7, 20)

THE LAST JUDGMENT

Jesus Christ will come in the last day to judge all mankind by a righteous judgment.

God will give unto the resurrected believers eternal life, happiness, rest, peace, and joy without end.

But God will bid the resurrected impenitent and ungodly depart unto the lake of fire with the devil and his angels, to endure everlasting damnation, punishment, pain, torment, and misery.

(Eccl. 12:14; Dan. 12:2; Mt. 10:15; 25:31-46; Mk. 9:43-48; Lu. 11:31-32; 13:3; Jn. 8:21, 23; 14:3; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:6, 10; 8:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 2:1-3; 9:27; 10:26-31; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 20:11-13)