



# THE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ENGLAND

This complete doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Christian Church is an extensive examination of the history, the theology, and the practices found from this historic movement in England. This is summed up in our first official slogan: "UNITY in the essentials, LIBERTY in the non-essentials, LOVE in all things."

The Evangelical Christian Church desires desperately to base doctrine and practice on the Bible alone, and seeks to restore the ideals of the New Testament church through the gospel of grace. This is called Christian primitivism, also known as restorationism; it is the belief that a purer form of Christianity should be restored using the early church as the only model.

Fundamentally, the Evangelical Christian Church's vision also seeks to correct faults or deficiencies [in the church] by appealing to the primitive church as a normative model, and return it to its original biblical structure, belief, and practice by escaping the thralldom of human creeds and destructive ecclesiastical structures.

Beginning with the new commandment of John 13: 34-35, the Evangelical Christian Church asserted that the church is founded not upon doctrinal agreement, Arminianism, Calvinism, creeds, church claims, names, rites, or rituals, but solely upon the individual's relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Evangelical Christian Church rejects the use of man-made confessions or creeds as equal in authority with Holy Scripture. Creeds or Confessions are only viewed as teaching resources or as "testimonies of faith" in the church (Ecclesia) of Jesus Christ, but they are never used as "tests of faith" for the "priesthood of all believers."

In the Evangelical Christian Church ministers are encouraged to study and examine the Bible and come to their own private scriptural interpretation. John 14:26, says, "...the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things..." The Evangelical Christian Church guarantees these theological and religious freedoms whilst maintaining scrutiny on any obvious heresy.

As there are doctrinal differences among what Evangelical Christian Church ministers and congregations believe; it is not uncommon to find individuals in the Church who seemingly hold diametrically opposed beliefs from issues such as the speaking in tongues, to eternal security within the same congregation. This allows others the freedom to hold a variety of biblical interpretations and opinions on a number of issues, while simultaneously giving supreme authority of interpretation back to each minister, including the local congregation.

The Evangelical Christian Church tolerates diversity of opinion, and grants all ministers and congregations the right and liberty to practice their faith without human restrictions that teach "after the commandments and doctrines of men" (Col. 2:22), but a faith that is established on the new covenant of grace which was founded on the Righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.

Evangelical Christian Church clergy are Christians who yearn to return to the first Christian age by seeking out His truth. Some seek to recover the Pentecost experience of the Holy Spirit. Others, like many Holiness denominations, seek to recover ancient norms for holy living. Still others seek to reconstruct forms and structures of the primitive church on a rational and scientific basis. That is why the Church celebrates our ministers difference of opinion, and does not expect everyone's interpretation of the Bible, or living the Christian life to be identical. Freedom of religious belief and private scriptural interpretation of the Bible allows many to commit to the basic fundamental truths found in the Holy Scriptures. This is also summed up in our second official slogan: "Where the scriptures speak, we speak, Where the scriptures are silent, we are silent."

Evangelical Christian Church member clergy may serve other denominational or independent bodies while holding credentials with this Christian body. The purpose behind all restoration movements is to tear down the walls of division by a return to the practice of the original, essential and universal features of the Christian faith found in Christian unity. Different groups have tried to implement restorationist theology in different ways; for instance, some have focused on the structure and practice of the church, others on the ethical life of the church, and others on the direct experience of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. This has also been described as "practicing church the way it is perceived to have been done after the simplicity of primitive Christianity found in the New Testament." That is why the Evangelical Christian Church does not advocate extremism or fanaticism of any kind, unless it is consistent with the Word of God, and does not engender a spirit of legalism which only produces a false gospel of fear, intimidation, division, and confusion.

As all the basic teachings of Christ are studied and applied to life, there is the freedom to all Evangelical Christian Church members to interpret Jesus Christ's teachings in different ways. All members are encouraged to study the scriptures, to participate in the life and mission of the church, and to examine their own experiences as they grow in understanding and response to the gospel of grace to make it relevant in today's world.

The core values of the Evangelical Christian Church have always stipulated that the Bible is not about us, and it is not a book of man-made rules that leads to right living, but it is about a relationship with Christ that leads to right believing. That is why the Evangelical Christian Church in England guarantees freedom of thought and conscience to practice those teachings found in the Bible.

Evangelical Christian Church clergy are also at greater liberty to hold other Christian personal views on non-disputable matters pertaining to dress, hair length or observation of days, etc., and are free to do so as long as they do not conflict with these eleven Articles of Faith.

1. The Bible as the written Word of God
2. The Virgin Birth
3. The Deity of Jesus the Christ
4. The Person and work of the Holy Spirit
5. The Trinity
6. Salvation through the Atonement
7. The guidance of our life through prayer

8. The death and resurrection of Christ
9. The return of the Saviour
10. The resurrection of the redeemed and the lost
11. Establishment of the Millennial Kingdom

The Articles of Faith are based on inter-denominational Christian doctrines, and beyond the essential commitment to follow Jesus Christ, there is no requirement to give assent to any other belief or creed, nor is there any "official" interpretation of the Bible that they can refer to as their distinctive doctrinal stance.