



APPENDIX #3: ARTICLES of PRACTICE

(A Part of EMCC Bylaw #1)

1. ORDINANCES	1
2. DIVINE HEALING.....	2
3. THE LORD’S DAY	2
4. CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP	2
5. DEDICATION OF CHILDREN	3
6. MARRIAGE, SINGLENESS, FAMILY, AND HUMAN SEXUALITY	3
7. DIVORCE	4
8. PRACTICES AND CONDUCT	4
9. ATTITUDE TOWARD CIVIL GOVERNMENT	5
10. ATTITUDE TOWARD STRIFE AND MILITARY SERVICE	5
11. OATHS.....	5

1. ORDINANCES

1.3. The Christian ordinances are two in number, baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are the outward rites appointed by Christ to be administered in each local church, not as means of salvation, but as visible signs and seals of its reality.

1.3.1. **Baptism** by water is the symbol of one's union by faith with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. It constitutes the public confession of these spiritual realities to the world and is the answer of a good conscience toward God¹. Baptism is administered, preferably by immersion, to those who have been born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who give evidence of the genuineness of their salvation².

¹ Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:36-41; Rom. 6:3-5

² Acts 8:12-13,34-39

1.3.2. **The Lord's Supper** was instituted by Christ himself on the night of His betrayal³. It is a memorial of Christ's death, a center of communion and fellowship, a testimony to saving faith, and a visible token of Christ's redemptive covenant. It is observed only by believers and consists in partaking of the consecrated emblems of bread and the fruit of the vine, which symbolize the death of Christ for the remission of our sins and our continual dependence upon Him for life and sustenance until He comes⁴. While the Lord's Supper is open to all true believers, we are strongly exhorted to examine ourselves "and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup⁵."

2. DIVINE HEALING

- 2.1. God is able to heal, therefore we ought to pray for the sick⁶. Although healing cannot be demanded of God, it should be sought according to Scriptural instruction. God heals in three ways:
- 2.1.1. through the natural processes of the human body which may be aided by medical help;
 - 2.1.2. through the supernatural intervention of God bringing healing to the body; and
 - 2.1.3. through the death and resurrection of the body to a glorified state.

3. THE LORD'S DAY

- 3.1. The Lord's Day⁷, which commemorates the resurrection, is for private and public worship and for rest from unnecessary work. It should be devoted to spiritual development, Christian fellowship, and service⁸. It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian church and important to the welfare of society.

4. CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

- 4.1. In recognition of God's ownership of all⁹ things believers should practice systematic and proportionate giving, adopting the tithe as a minimum expression of their stewardship¹⁰. They should regard Christian liberality as a privilege and sacred duty, and freely give of their substance for the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad, for the maintenance of the local church, and for the support of the agencies and enterprises of the denomination.

³ Matt. 26:26-30

⁴ I Cor 11:26

⁵ I Cor. 11:26

⁶ Matt. 12:15; James 5:13-16

⁷ Matt. 28:1; I Cor. 16:2

⁸ Isa. 58:13-14; Heb. 10:25

⁹ Gen. 1:1, 14:18-23

¹⁰ Mal. 3:8,10

- 4.2. Believers should also dedicate themselves, their time, talents, and substance to God and to the advancement of His kingdom. Christians are encouraged to spend time in Bible study, prayer, and in sharing the gospel¹¹.

5. DEDICATION OF CHILDREN

- 5.1. God is concerned for the well-being of children¹² who are under the atonement of Christ¹³. We encourage the formal dedication of children in a public service of the church.

6. MARRIAGE, SINGLENESS, FAMILY, AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

- 6.1. As human beings, men and women, we are created in the image of God. God saw that his creation of humankind was very good. As a result, we have intrinsic worth and are found to be equally valued by God.
- 6.2. We believe God has established the church as a family of faith in which we are each a son or daughter. It is within this family of faith that we are established, rooted, fulfil our ministry, and find maturity in Christ.
- 6.3. We also believe the family of faith is where the goodness of being either single or married is to be honoured. We recognize that God has created human beings for relationship with him and with each other. God's intention is for people to be blessed through families: both the family of faith and the family into which God has placed us. God created the family to be the cornerstone of social order.
- 6.4. The home is a divinely established institution¹⁴ in which the husband is the head¹⁵ but serves its members by the law of love, and in which husband and wife are to work together to raise their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord."¹⁶ Obedience to parents is to be rendered by children in the spirit of mutual respect and love.
- 6.5. Marriage is part of God's design in establishing the family. We believe that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. This heterosexual union¹⁷ is the only appropriate relationship within which the joy of sexual intimacy is to be expressed. We affirm such marriage as God's design for a lifelong loving relationship, sexual intimacy, and the birth and nurture of children. Christian marriage is intended for those who share a common faith in Christ¹⁸. Such a marriage is blessed of God.

¹¹ I Cor. 5:14-15, 8:9-12, 9:6-8

¹² I Sam. 1:24-28; Matt. 19:13-15; Luke 2:21-22

¹³ Mark 10:13-15; John 3:16-19; Rom. 5:13

¹⁴ Gen. 2:23-24

¹⁵ Eph. 5:22-25, 28; Col 3:18-21

¹⁶ Deut. 6:4-9

¹⁷ Gen. 2:23-24; Rom 1:26-27

¹⁸ Deut. 7:3; I Cor 6:14-17

- 6.6. Since the EMCC believes the Bible defines marriage as being a covenant union of one man and one woman, the EMCC only recognizes covenantal heterosexual unions as marriages. Therefore, ministers are forbidden to perform ceremonies or make any public comment that would give any indication to the contrary.

7. DIVORCE

- 7.1. Divorce is viewed in the Scriptures as contrary to God's will¹⁹. Christians should seek by forbearance and forgiveness to preserve the marriage bond.
- 7.2. Persons divorced and remarried who give evidence of being genuinely born again are eligible to be received into membership in the church.
- 7.3. Divorce between members of the church is an occasion of great tragedy. Such conduct brings the teaching and reality of Christian reconciliation under reproach and offenders are to be disciplined.
- 7.4. The church board shall provide counsel and take proper disciplinary action giving consideration to appropriate aspects of local church discipline.
- 7.5. Care should be exercised that such action be as redemptive as possible for all parties involved.
- 7.6. Ministers are to refrain from performing marriage ceremonies where one or both parties are divorced. However, ministers are permitted, at their discretion, to solemnize the marriage of a person whose previous marriage partner committed adultery, who is recognized as living a genuine Christian life, and where there is good evidence that a true Christian marriage is intended.

8. PRACTICES AND CONDUCT

- 8.1. Believers are not to be conformed to the view and lifestyle of the world of which they are a part²⁰, but, on the contrary, are to function as salt²¹ to prevent the spread of moral corruption, and as light to dispel spiritual darkness. High standards should therefore be set for their personal and collective life including the following:
- 8.2. Their disposition and attitudes be characterized by godliness and the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control²²;
- 8.3. Their social relationships bear witness to Christ, their entire conduct reflecting the spiritual ideals of Christianity rather than the world; they shall not engage in sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage; shall not marry unbelievers, shall not hold membership in oath-bound secret societies, and shall not compromise Christian principles in partnerships²³;

¹⁹ Gen. 2:24-25; Mal. 2:15-16; Matt. 5:31-32, 19:3-12; I Cor. 7:10-16

²⁰ Rom. 12:1,2

²¹ Matt. 5:13

²² Gal. 5:22-24

²³ I Cor. 6:14-16

8.4. Their bodies be treated as temples of the Holy Spirit²⁴ thus making it inconsistent with both Christian testimony and sound principles of health to compromise their influence and injure their bodies through inappropriate practices or substance abuse²⁵.

9. ATTITUDE TOWARD CIVIL GOVERNMENT

9.1. Civil government is ordained of God²⁶ for the welfare of society to promote and protect the good and to restrain and punish evil²⁷. Therefore, we consider it the duty of Christians to pray for rulers and for those who are in authority over them and to give due loyalty, respect, and obedience to them²⁸. Christians are also encouraged to take an active interest in government at all levels. Where the demands of civil law would militate against the supreme law and will of God, Christians should obey God rather than man²⁹

10.ATTITUDE TOWARD STRIFE AND MILITARY SERVICE

10.1. Believers are to love their enemies, do good to them that hate them³⁰, overcome evil with good, and, as much as possible, live peaceably with all men³¹. Therefore, it is not fitting for the Christian to promote strife between nations, classes, groups, or individuals.

10.2. Sincere Christians have conscientious differences as to their understanding of the teaching of the Word of God with reference to their responsibility as Christian citizens to human government both in times of war and times of peace. We are, therefore, to exercise tolerance and understanding, and respect the individual conscience with regard to participation in war.

11.OATHS

11.1. A Christian's life should be so transparent in its honesty and integrity that his or her word can be fully trusted without swearing on the Bible in judicial situations³² or taking the Lord's name in vain³³.

²⁴ I Cor. 3:16,17, 6:19,20

²⁵ I Cor. 6:12-20

²⁶ Dan. 4:17

²⁷ Rom. 13:1-5

²⁸ I Tim. 2:1-4

²⁹ Acts 4:13-20, 5:27,28

³⁰ Matt. 5:43-48

³¹ Rom. 12:14-21, 13:1-4

³² Matt. 5:33-35, 37; James 5:12

³³ Ex. 20:7