

“Living Truth”

The “*Confession of Faith*” of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference

Adopted July 2001

1. God

We believe in the one holy and loving God, filled with glory, power and wisdom, who lives in eternal Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God, who created and sustains the physical and spiritual universe, desires a relationship with us.

Characteristics of God. Our God is an awesome God who alone is worthy of our praise, our worship, and our faithfulness. God is supreme and does not tolerate any rivals. God is holy and calls all people to be imitators of his holiness. God is love and those who love reflect the character of their Creator. God’s surpassing greatness means that God’s life is uncreated, unending, life-giving, all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful, and free to accomplish his divine purposes. We have the privilege of knowing God even though we can not fully understand Him. God remains the sovereign King of the universe, who reigns in shining glory, majestic power, and vast wisdom.

Ex 20:1-6; Ps 90:2; 113:2-6; Isa 40:28-31; Mt 19:26; Eph 2:4-5; 1 Co 8:6; 1 Ti 6:15-16; 1 Pe 1:15; 1 Jn 3:20

Trinity and Godhead. God is the one true God who requires our complete loyalty and devotion. Within the unity of God’s being there is a three-fold harmony of relationship. The Father rules, plans, initiates, creates, cares for, and judges creation. The Son entered the world to teach, heal, suffer, die, rise, and redeem. The Holy Spirit indwells, empowers, resurrects, transforms, blesses, and guides the new creation. The persons of the Trinity unite the creating, redeeming, and life-giving activities of God from creation to the new creation. The Father sent the Son, who gave the Spirit to the church.

Dt 6:4-6; Mt 28:18-20; Jn 1:14, 18; 5:21-23; 14:15-17; 20:31-32; 1 Co 2:10; 2 Co 13:14; 1 Pe 1:2; 3:18; Rev 22:17

Creator and Sustainer. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God spoke, and out of nothing the universe was formed. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit participate in creating and sustaining the world. Creation expresses God's mind like a painting expresses the mind of the artist. We depend on God for land, air, water, food, shelter, friends, and life itself. We depend on God's providence to preserve life, to enable our actions, and to guide us toward his redemptive purposes. All our blessings are provided through God's goodness and grace

Ge 1:1-2:4; Ne 9:6; Ps 104; Isa 44:1-6; Jn 1:1-3; Ac 14:15-17;
Col 1:15-20; Heb 11:3

God's Relationships. God intensely pursues a personal relationship with all people. We can discover the fullness of life by entering into a lifelong covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Knowing God with this kind of intimacy involves heart, soul, mind, and strength. Our love for God will be reflected in faith and obedience to the One who loved us first.

Ge 12:1-3; Dt 7:9; Ps 23; Mk 12:29-30; Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 3:1; 2 Pe 3:9

2. Creation

We believe that all persons are made in the image of God with a capacity to make moral choices, and given the responsibility to manage creation. God desires all human life to begin in families where husband and wife are covenanted together under God for life.

Image of God. God created males and females as his image-bearers. We are flesh and blood representatives on earth of the invisible God in heaven. Human beings are wonderfully complex creations of body, mind, will, emotions, and soul. As image-bearers of God, all people deserve respect and possess worth. The dignity and value we see in a person is based on God's value, and not on the person's quality of relationships, morality, spirituality, knowledge, or physical abilities.

Ge 1:26-28, 31; 2:7; 9:6; Ps 8:4-5; 139:13-16; Ac 10:28; Col 3:10-11;
Jas 3:9-10

Moral choices. God created persons with the freedom of moral choice. Freedom of moral choice increases personal responsibility for faith and obedience, hope and work, love and compassion. However, human freedom is limited by the sovereign will of God. We are truly free when making choices in obedience to God and fulfilling God's purposes. Honest relationships with God and others involve the risks and rewards of choices freely made. Human freedom is best expressed in love for God and neighbour.

Ge 2:15-17; Jos 24:14-15; Isa 1:16-20; Hab 2:4; Mk 12:30-31; Ro 12:1-2; Heb 11

Manage creation. The earth is the LORD's. God's creation is intended as a gift for all creatures, a home for people, a place of blessing, and a land of peace. God blessed Adam and Eve in the garden with food, space, and fertility. With the gift comes God's call to be fruitful and responsible in creation. Obedience to God invites blessings on creation, but disobedience to God turns creation against us. As a result, we do good work, make wise decisions, and lead sensible lifestyles in expressing our thanks for God's gracious gifts.

Gen 1:26; 2:4-25; 9:2; Nm 35:33-34; Deut 28; Lev 25; Ps 8:6-8; 24:1; Col 3:17

Family. God intended that marriage be a lifetime covenant where one man and one woman would leave their parents to form a stable, unified, and intimate relationship. God designed the family where parents would provide for the physical and spiritual needs of children. The family was designed for welcoming children, showing respect for elders, and blessing single persons. Parents are called to teach their children to know and serve God. Christians are called to live as brothers and sisters in the family of God, and especially to care for persons without family connections.

Gen 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Deut 6:6-9; Ps 127:3-5; Matt 19:3-9; 25:35-45; 1 Cor 7:32-35; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-21; 1 Pet 5:5; 1 Tim 5:8

3. Sin

We believe that sin is a rejection of God's rule, beginning with the rebellion of Satan and followed by Adam and Eve's deliberate choice to disobey God. Because of sin everyone has fallen short of God's will, creating a conflict with God, self, and others. The penalty for sin is physical and spiritual death.

Sin. The dignity of all persons contrasts starkly with the depths of human sin. The sin of Adam and Eve constituted rebellion against the rule of God. With one subversive act all humanity plunged into the grip of sin. Sinful thoughts, feelings, and actions fail to follow God's direction. Sin twists human relationships, leaving us with broken communities. Sin is a powerful influence that tempts us to make choices contrary to God's will.

Ge 3:1-24; Dt 28:1, 15, 38-48; Lev 19:2; Ps 51; Jer 31:30; Ro 5:12-14; 7:16-25

Angels and Satan. We share the world with spiritual beings that influence our moral choices. Angels were created to serve in God's court, send God's

messages, fight evil powers, and minister to the saints. Demons rebel against God by seeking to enslave the world with evil. Satan is the leading adversary of God. Satan's kingdom of darkness attempts to conquer God's kingdom of light through lies, destruction, and death.

Isa 6:1-8; Da 10:12-14; Mt 12:28-29; 2 Co 4:4; 10:3-6; 11:14-15; Col 1:16; Heb 1:14; Jas 4:7; 1 Pe 5:8-9; Rev 5:11; 12:7-12

Fall of Humans. In seeking to be wise like God, Adam and Eve became foolish. In the desire for freedom from God's law, humans became enslaved. In seeking to rise higher as reflections of God's glory, we fell away. Our image and likeness of God was blemished through selfishness. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Ge 3:14-19; 11:1-9; Isa 53:6; Jer 17:9; Ro 3:23; 5:12; 6:23

Consequences of Sin. God's holy anger toward sin is revealed by the severe judgement of sin. Sin breaks our relationship with God and exchanges true freedom for slavery. Human relationships become battlegrounds of pride, selfishness, separation, hostility, violence, and death. Inwardly people are damaged by feelings of shame, fear, loneliness and harmful cravings. Work in a hostile land becomes painful and tedious. The sinner has received the guilty verdict and awaits eternal death. Without God as our refuge, we are homeless wanderers in need of grace. Still, God offers unexpected mercy toward the sinner.

Ge 3:6-23; 4:13-16; Ro 1:18-32; 5:12-14; 6:23; 7:14-24

4. Revelation

We believe that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, the final authority for faith and life. God's revelation in the Old Testament through creation and the covenant was a preparation for the supreme revelation through Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

General Revelation. God reveals himself to all people through creation, history, and human nature. God's creative genius is evident in creation's intricate beauty. Sun, moon, stars, earth, plants and animals reflect the glory of God. God's purposes can be discovered in history. The pattern of events in the lives of nations and individuals reveals that God is at work. God's personal nature and moral principles are seen in people. By following their consciences and desiring to worship, people experience glimpses of the holy God. Such revelations of God are widespread but veiled in mystery. Through the eyes of faith, we see abundant evidence that God is pursuing a relationship with the sinful human race.

Ge 1, 2; Job 12:7-10; 38-42; Ps 19:1-6; 139:13-18; Ac 17:22-34; Ro 1:19-21; 2:14-15; 1 Co 2:7-16; 2 Co 3:2-3

Word of God. The living God of the Bible spoke. God spoke and creation burst from nothing. God spoke and entered into a lasting covenant with Abraham and his descendants. God spoke and the Law was written to guide the people of Israel in their pursuit of holiness. God spoke and the prophets declared with passionate conviction what the LORD said about justice, righteousness and walking humbly with God. God spoke and the Word became a living person, the supreme revelation of God – Jesus Christ. God spoke and offered direction to the early church through the apostles. God spoke of promised judgement and the hope of Christ’s return in the future.

Ex 3:14-16; Dt 4:9-14; Ps 119:105; Jer 1:1-10; John 1:14-18;
Col 1:15-16; 2 Pe 1:20-21; Heb 1:1-2; 11:3

Authority of the Bible. The Bible is the only authoritative written word of God. Writers inspired by the Holy Spirit faithfully recorded God’s words and actions in creation, Israel, Jesus, and the early church. The Bible is God’s appointed revelation for teaching people to live faithfully and for leading us into eternal life. The words of the Bible empowered by the Holy Spirit create a community of faith that reflects the character of the Author.

Ps 119; Isa 40:8; 2 Ti 3:16-17; 1 Pe 1:24-25; 2 Pe 1:20-21

Reading the Word. The Bible was written to instruct and inspire believers toward faithfulness. Its message is best interpreted in the context of the community of faith. Meditation on the Bible imparts God’s wisdom as the Spirit clarifies the meaning of the words and directs the application. Bible reading involves careful submission to the text in its cultural context, be it story, law-code, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, miracle, or letter. Meaningful Bible reading focuses on Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, the Word of God in the New Testament, and the foundation of the church for all generations.

Josh 1:8; Neh 8:8; Ps 1:2-3; John 16:7-8, 13-15; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor 2:6-8, 12; 2 Cor 3:2-3;
2 Tim 2:15; 3:16; Heb 1:1-2

5. Jesus Christ

We believe in God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, fully God and fully human, who proclaimed the rule of God, lived a sinless life, died on the cross as payment for our sins, rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, and reigns as Lord of all.

God the Son. Jesus Christ our Saviour is God from all eternity. The Son is a member of the Trinity, loved by the Father, and active in creation and redemption. He is the exact representation of God's nature and character. The Son is the creator of heaven and earth who lives eternally. God sent the Son into the world to save those who believe in him.

Lk 1:35; Jn 1:14; 3:16-18; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:1-2, 8-12

God with Us. God the Son became fully human to identify with a lost and dying world. Mary, as a virgin, conceived Jesus through the agency of the Holy Spirit. So the birth of Jesus Christ conveyed the good news of God with us. The promised Messiah had come to bring salvation to a people in spiritual exile. The angels in the heavens announced the return of God's glory and peace on earth to those in God's favour.

Mt 1:21-23; 3:16-17; Lk 1:30-55; 2:9-14; Jn 3:16; 17:1-5; Php 2:5-11; Heb 2:17

Life and Teaching. Like a Hebrew prophet, Jesus announced the coming of God's kingdom. But his teaching went beyond the other prophets. Jesus announced that the kingdom was coming through his very words and actions. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount intensified the standards of righteousness for living in the Kingdom. The parables revealed new meanings of God's rule in the world. The miracles demonstrated God's power through the Messiah. Jesus' fellowship with sinners revealed a love that overcame boundaries. The Great Commandment to love God and neighbour, and the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, were central to Jesus' life and teaching.

Mt 5-7; 13; 11:4-6; 12:31; 22:37-39; 28:18-20; Mk 1:15; Jn 14:10

Work for Us. Jesus came to be the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. At the Passover celebration before his death, Jesus explained that his body and blood would take on new meaning in the meal. The death of Jesus' body on the cross was the final sinless sacrifice for the sins of the world. Through his blood, the penalty for sin was paid. God's sacrificial love brought forgiveness. Humanity could now be reconciled to God. The power of Satan, sin, and death were broken in God's victory of raising Jesus from the dead. As our High Priest, Jesus Christ opened our access to the presence of God in heaven. Now Jesus Christ serves as our advocate and reigns as our Lord.

Luke 22:14-20; John 1:29-31; 19:16-37; Acts 5:29-31; Rom 5:10-11, 18-19; Col 2:15-17; Heb 2:17; 10:20-22; 1 Tim 2:5; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:8

6. Salvation

We believe that salvation is a gift of God's grace, received only through personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Believers have forgiveness of sin, salvation from sin, reconciliation with God, and eternal life. Believers have assurance of their salvation as they live in faith and obedience.

Gift of Grace. Salvation involves our deliverance from the power of Satan, sin, and death through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. Out of a hopeless condition, Jesus saved us by forgiving our sin, freeing us from punishment, giving us new birth, cleansing our hearts, and adopting us into God's family – making us citizens of heaven. God offers salvation and blessing by grace to undeserving persons without hope of earning it. God then gives us grace to live in a way that is pleasing to him.

Lk 3:6; Ro 5:8-11, 20-21; 6:5-7; 2 Co 5:21; Eph 1:5; 2:8-9

Repentance and Faith. God welcomes all people as estranged sinners who turn from their ways and come home to God's rule. Repentance is that decision to turn the heart, mind, and actions away from self, and to consciously die to sin. Faith is our return to the heavenly Father, trusting in the promise of grace, finding safety in divine mercy, and deciding to follow God in all of life.

2 Ch 7:14; Lk 15:11-32; Jn 1:12; Ac 2:38-39; 3:19; Ro 10:9-10; Gal 2:20; Heb 11:1

Lord and Saviour. Persons who have come to God through faith in Jesus Christ will desire to live as children of God. Since God has saved us through Jesus Christ, our complete loyalty and obedience go to him. The image of Jesus Christ is reflected in all of his faithful followers. The church is built on the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Mt 6:33; Ro 10:9; 1 Co 3:11; 2 Co 3:18; 4:4-6; Eph 4:11-15; Col 3:10; 2 Pe 3:18; 1 Jn 5:3-5

Assurance of Salvation. Children of God are confident that their heavenly Father will bring them to safety in their eternal home. This trust is based on the faithful promises of God, our acceptance by Christ, and the guarantee of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The assurance of God's forgiveness in our lives will grow as the community of faith affirms the evidences of salvation. Children of God display a love for God, submission to Christ, and qualities of life influenced by the Spirit.

Jn 10:28-29; 15:1-8; Ro 8:15-16, 38-39; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 1:13-14; 2 Ti 1:12; Heb 10:19-25; 12:5-11; 1 Pe 1:3-6; 1 Jn 5:13

7. Holy Spirit

We believe in God the Holy Spirit who gives new life to all who have placed their faith in Christ. The Spirit, who indwells believers, continues to comfort, empower, gift, guide, and unite them to fulfil the mission of the church.

God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God from all eternity. The Spirit brings glory to the Son and Father in the Trinity. Through the inspired writers of Scripture, the Spirit reveals the mysteries of God. As the one who is making all things new, the Spirit often works in surprising ways. We are blessed with the Holy Spirit whose thoughts, feelings, and actions relate personally to us. We bring glory to God when we acknowledge the Spirit's presence and power working in the world.

Ps 139:7-10; Jn 16:13-15; Ac 5:3-4; Ro 8:14, 26; 2 Ti 3:16; Eph 4:30; Heb 9:14

Giver of Life. The spirit of God swept over the waters at creation. God's breath gave life to Adam. The Spirit of God made his presence known to Israel. Old Testament prophets anticipated when God's Spirit would give birth to a new people in the new covenant. When the time was fulfilled, Mary conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. The Spirit descended upon the disciples at Pentecost creating the church. The Spirit has the power to regenerate persons dead in sin. At conversion, the Spirit baptises the individual, who becomes alive to God, and enters into a new way of living. Through prayer and receptivity to the Spirit, we may experience continuing revival.

Ge 1:2; 2:7; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30; 139:7 Joel 2:28-29; Lk 1:35; Jn 3:3-8; Ac 2:1-4; Ro 8:11-17, 26-27; Eph 1:13; Tit 3:5

Indwelling Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God in us. The Spirit empowered godly saints, priests, kings, and prophets in Israel for service. The Spirit descended on Jesus at baptism and empowered him for his mission. Jesus gave the Spirit to his disciples for continuing his mission in the world. All believers have received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a gift of the new creation.

Mt 3:11-16; 4:1; Lk 4:16-21; 11:13; 12:12; Jn 20:22; Ro 8:15-17

The Spirit's Work. The Holy Spirit represented the presence of Jesus on earth after his ascension into heaven. Pentecost marked the outpouring of the Spirit to all people. The Spirit actively convicts the world of sin, calls for return to God, reveals the word of God, and enables people to respond to God's call. The Spirit baptises all believers into the body of Christ. He gives new life to believers, adopts us into God's

family, and frees us from the hold of sin. The continual filling of the Spirit empowers us to live according to God's purposes. The Spirit enters into our struggle so that we may persevere in living the good news of salvation. The Spirit blesses the church with spiritual gifts. We exercise all gifts in a manner that recognises the authority of the Scripture and the common good of the church.

Jn 16:7-15; 3:3-8; Ac 1:8; 2:1-4, 17-18; 1 Co 1:23-24; 12:4-7; Ro 8:15; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:14, 13; 5:18; 2 Th 2:13

8. Discipleship

We believe that following Jesus as Lord in all of life means that the Christian life is characterised by love, integrity, purity, and simplicity. The believer's commitment to Christ and the global church becomes the standard for discerning the level of participation in society.

Following Jesus. Jesus calls all believers to follow him obediently. By God's grace we follow the pattern of Jesus as his disciples. The life and teaching of Jesus reveal what faithful discipleship means. Following Jesus is made possible through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, in the context of an accountable, loving church community.

Mt 7:21, 24-27; 18:15-20; Ro 6:11; Eph 5:18; 1 Pe 2:21-25; 1 Jn 3:11; 4:12-13

Characteristics of Discipleship. Believers follow Jesus in discipleship because of his call to follow and in response to his love. Disciples are characterised by a commitment to unconditional love for all people, whether friend or foe. They love with integrity, willingly suffering for what is right. Disciples are committed to truthfulness in word and deed, where yes means yes and no means no. They are committed to purity, not conforming to the sinful patterns of the world. Disciples of Jesus live in a manner consistent with kingdom values regarding material wealth. Disciples are not enslaved to materialism and give generously to those in need.

Mt 5:10-12, 33-37, 43-48; 6:19-33; Ro 12:1-2; 2 Co 9:6-7; Php 4:11-12; 1 Ti 6:6-12; 1 Jn 4:7-16; 2 Co 8

Global Church Commitment. Disciples of Jesus Christ from all nations are citizens of God's kingdom. Believers from around the world unite as witness of the salvation that God has provided through Jesus Christ. A commitment to discipleship means that we are aware of, and willing to partner with sisters and brothers around the world. We are committed to work with believers globally to

spread the Gospel to every nation. Since we have received God's gracious gift of life, we will seek to enhance the life of our brothers and sisters of all nations.

Mt 5:43-48; Jn 13:3-17; 17:11; 2 Co 8:7; Eph 2:11-22; Col 1:6; 1 Pe 2:9-17; Rev 5:9

Participation in Society. The confession that Jesus Christ is Lord shapes our decisions about society. We will participate with persons and organisations that we discern are promoting peace, justice, reconciliation, generosity, truth, health, and godly values. We will challenge people and groups engaged in war, injustice, racism, greed, deception, disease, and ungodliness. We realise that people and groups are subject to mixed motives. So we follow the pattern of Jesus who associated with sinners and shared God's love without becoming a sinner in the process.

Mt 9:10-13; Jn 17:14-21; 2 Co 6:14-18; 1 Ti 2:1-2; Jas 4:4

9. Church

We believe that the Church is the visible body of believers, the global community of those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ. Members of this body are covenanted together in local congregations and participate in the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Visible Church. The church is God's global people, born at Pentecost through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Believers enter the church through the gift of salvation. We are called together to hear and do God's word. The church is the visible representation of Jesus through its gatherings and ministries in the world. The church is the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, the people empowered and gifted for witness. The church expresses faithfulness to Jesus Christ by gathering regularly in local communities of believers for worship, teaching, fellowship, witness, and service. These assemblies are visible signs of God's gracious rule in the present and for eternity.

Mt 5:13-16; 16:18; Ac 2; Ro 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:4-6; Col 3:16-17; Heb 10:24-25

Covenanted Community. Churches are ordered so believers may worship, fellowship, and work together in harmony. Believers who have confessed their faith in Jesus Christ through baptism enter into a membership covenant with a local congregation. Believers who make this covenant belong to the church, express the goals of the church, accept responsibility for others in the church, ask for accountability from the church, choose leaders for the church, and serve according to their gifts in the church.

Mt 18:15-20; Ro 12:10-13; 15:7; 1 Co 12:20-27; Gal 6:1-10; Eph 4:16; 1 Th 5:11-18; Heb 13:17

Ordinance of baptism. Baptism serves as a public confession and act of commitment to Jesus Christ in the presence of God and the community of believers. Baptism is commanded for those who have accepted salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore baptism is expected of those who desire to make a public commitment to follow Jesus Christ in all of life. A voluntary decision to follow Christ in baptism is a condition for receiving this ordinance. After instruction in the faith and affirmation by the church, the baptismal candidates are baptised by immersion or pouring.

Mt 28:19-20; Ac 2:38; 8:35-37; Ro 6:1-14; Gal 3:26-28; Tit 3:5; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 3:21

Ordinance of Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a public act that reminds the believer to continue in faithfulness to Jesus Christ. By participating in the bread and the cup, believers thankfully remember the death of Jesus on the cross for their salvation. The Lord's Supper also represents the believer's communion with Christ and the unity that believers find in the body of Christ. By taking the bread and cup we anticipate the heavenly banquet when we finally unite with God for eternity. We encourage regular, corporate participation in the Lord's Supper by believers who are in right relationship with Christ and each other.

Mt 26:26-30; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:19-20; 1 Co 10:14-17; 11:23-26; Rev 19:8-9.

10. Peace and Reconciliation

We believe that God offers peace and reconciliation to all humanity through the work of Christ on the cross. Followers of Christ's law of love affirm the sacredness of life as they make peace in personal, social, and international situations.

Peace through Christ. The church demonstrates the power of Christ's work by its life together. There are many differences in God's people and still we find our common foundation in Jesus Christ. We are a community of reconciliation because God intends to bless the world through his people. We strive for unity and friendship because Jesus prayed that we would be one. We have found peace with God through Jesus Christ and now we invite the world to share in our peace.

Jn 17:10-11, 20-23; Ro 5:10; 1 Co 1:10; 2 Co 5:16-20; Eph 2:13-17; 4:1-6; Col 1:19-23; 1 Pe 3:8-9

Law of Love. Followers of Jesus Christ live by a law that can restore the relationships broken by sin, death, and Satan. We are to love God with our whole being and love our neighbors as ourselves. After receiving God's gracious love,

we now bear the responsibility to share God's love. In the church, the law of love provides a standard in appreciating differences, offering forgiveness, and healing broken lives. In the world, the law of love provides incentive to move beyond our boundaries. God calls us to love persons in our communities, the strangers entering our borders, and those living beyond our borders.

Mt 5:43-48; Jn 13:34; 1 Co 13; Eph 2:11-22; 1 Jn 4:20-21

Sacredness of Life. God has created and continues to nourish the gift of life. Our churches will continue to be places where life is highly respected. We will affirm the dignity of all people including the pre-born, the handicapped, and the elderly, so that they may enjoy God's gift of life. We will only support the means of resolving international disputes that promote justice and preserve life. We will support the privilege of life for lawbreakers in society. We will seek to enhance the quality of life for the poor and persons at risk. We will provide support for families and persons with broken relationships.

Ge 1:26; 6:7; Ex 10:13; Ps 139:13-16; Pr 22:9; Isa 51:4-5; Mt 5:21-22; Jn 10:10

Making peace. The church is an ambassador calling people to reconciliation with God. We are peacemakers proclaiming the good news of peace with God. We gain knowledge of peace with God through the study of God's word. We desire to model peace by actively seeking reconciliation between individuals and groups within the church. We support a non-violent approach to solving conflicts. We encourage governments to promote justice and compassion for their citizens. We believe in working for peace using peaceful means to the point of personal suffering and death. We present the Gospel with the love of Christ and like Christ we trust God for the victory.

Mt 5:3-12; 18:15-20; Ro 12:14-21; 1 Co 6:1-11; Eph 2:11-22

11. Mission

We believe that the mission of the Church is to make disciples in all the world by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in evangelism and compassionate ministries.

Church and Mission. God the Father is inviting all people to enter the kingdom, to accept salvation in Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the blessings of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers the church in obeying the command of Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations. The church is called to send missionaries into the

world and to support them in prayer. The church will continue God's mission until the end of the age.

Mt 9:37-38; 28:18-20; Ac 1:8; 2:38-41; 13:2-3; Ro 1:16

Proclaiming the Gospel. The church communicates the Gospel through spoken and written words. We proclaim that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, sins are forgiven and reconciliation with God is available. We proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through worship celebrations, bold preaching, teaching the Bible, intercessory prayer, local and international missions.

Mk 1:14-15; Jn 3:16; Ac 2:22-36; 4:12; Ro 10:13-15;
1 Co 1:18-25; 15:2-3

Living the Gospel. The church communicates the Gospel through service. By serving others, the church embodies the love of Christ in the world. Through inspiring worship, fervent prayer, biblical teaching, and supportive relationships, we are exhorted to service for Christ. We serve others with the love of Christ. We display generosity, justice, and compassion to those at risk and to those on the outside of society. The Gospel needs words for explanation, and actions for integrity.

Dt 24:17; Ps 106:3; Isa 56:1; Am 5:28; Mic 6:8; Lk 4:18-19; 14:12-14;
Ro 12:6-8; Jas 2:1-5, 14-17; 1 Pe 4:10

Leadership for Mission. Spiritual leadership is vital for enabling the church to fulfil God's mission. Following the Spirit's lead, the church will be creative in organising ministries for a diversity of people and contexts. Congregations will follow biblical patterns for ministry and leadership selection. Congregations will select leaders through prayerful discernment of God's direction. Church leaders are chosen based on godly character, and spiritual gifts. Congregations call and may financially support pastors and ministry leaders. Persons called to the pastoral ministry will be examined on their faith, doctrine, and gifts by the congregation and conference. The pastor's ministry will be confirmed in a covenant with the congregation.

Ac 6:1-6; 13:1-3; 14:23-28; 1 Ti 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9

12. Christ's Final Triumph

We believe in the return and reign of Jesus Christ, the final resurrection, the judgement of the unrighteous in hell and the eternal reward of the righteous in heaven.

Return of Christ. Jesus promised that he would return in the same manner as he ascended into heaven. The return of Jesus Christ is our confident hope based on his promises. All nations will witness this visible and public event. The return of Jesus Christ could happen at any time. While the signs pointing to this event include cosmic and social disturbances, still we are cautioned not to be preoccupied with setting dates. Believers are encouraged to persevere and live holy lives in expectation of the return of Jesus Christ. When Christ returns he will destroy the works of evil, establish a kingdom of righteousness, and reign as Lord in that kingdom.

Mt 24; Mk 13; Lk 21; Jn 14:3; Ac 1:11; 2 Pe 3:10-14; Rev 1:7-8

Final Resurrection. The last enemy will be defeated as God raises all people from the dead. God gave us a preview of the final victory over death by raising Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our future hope. For the believer, the final resurrection is the completion of salvation. Since we are united with Christ, his resurrected life provides eternal life for us. Our physical bodies will be transformed into spiritual bodies like the body of Christ. Believers who die are secure in the presence of God. Unbelievers who die are resurrected to face judgement.

Da 12:1-3; Jn 5:24-29; 1 Co 15:1-58; 2 Co 5:1-10; Php 1:19-26; 2 Th 1:5-2:12; 4:16; Rev 20:4-5

Judgement of Unrighteous. The day of judgement occurs at the end of the age. God will determine the final destiny of humanity and spiritual beings. The heavenly Father entrusts the judgement to Jesus Christ. The basis of our judgement depends upon what we have done with the gift of salvation given to us in Christ. The unrighteous will spend eternity separated from God's presence. These persons along with Satan, demons, and death, will be eternally consigned to Hell.

Mt 10:28; 25:31-46; Lk 16:19-31; Jn 5:22; Ro 2:5-11; Rev 20:7-15; 21:8

Reward of Righteous. On the day of judgement, the Lord Jesus Christ will reward all believers for their faith in, and obedience to God. All whose names are in the Book of Life will enjoy God's presence forever. On that day God will make a new creation where heaven and earth will unite in paradise regained. The faithful will experience perfect fellowship with Christ, in the glorious presence of God, and life everlasting through the Spirit's blessings. Hallelujah!

Mt 25:21-23; Ro 14:10-12; 1 Co 3:11-15; 2 Co 5:6-10; 2 Pe 3:10-13; Rev 19:6-9; 21:1-27; 22:1-5

About our “Confession of Faith”

Why create a document stating our “Confession of Faith”?

We believe it is important that every generation of Christians articulate its faith in its own context using its own language. If we know what we believe, why we believe it, and how it impacts our lives, our walk with Christ has the potential of being dynamic and relevant. This is true both in the context of our church communities and in our witness to the world. The EMMC *Confession of Faith* provides such a resource.

How should this document be used?

This *Confession of Faith* can be used as a resource for personal or group study. The twelve major confessional statements at the beginning of this booklet are designed to be copied and shared with persons inquiring about our faith. The many biblical references in the commentaries following each statement throughout the Confession will be helpful in discovering the biblical basis upon which this confession is based.

Are there additional resources to accompany this document?

A lesson series, entitled *Living Truth: Living What You Believe*, written by Dr. Terry Hiebert, has been developed to assist individuals and groups explore the truths contained in this Confession. This interactive and dynamic study guide challenges us to discover and apply these living truths in our lives. Contact the EMMC Office to obtain copies of these lessons.

This confession is the result of nearly a decade of work spearheaded by the Ministerial Council of the Evangelical Mennonite Missions Conference. Many drafts have been written, all EMMC churches have had numerous opportunities to be involved, and a major theological consultation was held in Winnipeg to help shape the text of the confession. A special thanks to Dr. Terry Hiebert for his tireless efforts in drafting the text initially and then graciously adjusting it many times during the course of the dialogues designed to make this a confession that is in effect written by the people for the people of the EMMC.

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