



**EFCA Statement of Faith: Article 8**  
**Greg Strand, Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing**

*Christian Living*

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

There is no parallel article in our present Statement of Faith (1950).

- I. Introduction
- II. Logical Flow of This Article with No Parallel in our 1950 Statement of Faith
  - A. This follows the biblical narrative, the unfolding plan of God's redemption.
  - B. It follows theologically and logically in that the work of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit creates a new community that is marked by a new way of believing and living.
  - C. This emphasizes that the gospel has power to change lives, and we believed that something of the nature of that transformed life should be included in our Statement of Faith.
  - D. Though there is no exact parallel, this article does expand what is stated at the conclusion of article 4 in our 1950 Statement of Faith: ". . . and empower the believer for godly living and service."
  - E. This is an important correction to much of evangelicalism, including the Free Church. With our right and important emphasis on justification by faith, which is a biblical truth, we have neglected this doctrine of sanctification and the responsibility to the church and the world it demands, which is also a biblical truth
  - F. This emphasis is actually part of our history/heritage as evidenced in the 1912 Norwegian-Danish Association Statement of Faith. Here is the concluding article: XII. We believe that the sole duty of the Christian Church is to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, and to assist charitable institutions, to work for righteousness and temperance, for unity and cooperation with all believers, and for peace among all people and nations on the whole earth."

### III. Article 8

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A. We believe God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose (Matt. 7:17-18; 12:33, 35; Heb. 11:6; Eph. 2:10; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17, 23; 2 Thess. 2:13; 5:23; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Tit. 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 6:11, 14; 1 Pet. 1:15; Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 12:1, 14; Rom. 6; 2 Tim. 1:9; Js. 2:17; 1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

- Justifying grace
- Sanctifying power and purpose

B. We believe God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially (Dt. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37-39; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27).

- Love God supremely
- Love others sacrificially

C. We believe that, in loving God supremely and others sacrificially, we are to live out our faith with care for one another (Rom. 12:10; 14:13; 15:7, 14; Gal. 5:26; Eph. 4:32; 1 Thess. 3:12; 5:11, 15; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 4:9), compassion toward the poor (Dt. 15:11; Psa. 82:3,4; Psa. 140:12; Prov. 14:21,31; 19:17; 22:9,16,22,23; 28:8; 29:7; 31:8,9; Jer. 22:16; Gal. 2:10; Js. 1:27) and justice for the oppressed (Ex. 23:6; Lev. 19:15; Psa. 82:3,4; 140:12; Prov. 29:7; 31:9; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 9:24; Mic. 6:8; Zech. 7:9,10; Matt. 23:23; Luke 4:18).

- Live out our faith
- Care for “one another”
- Compassion for the poor
- Justice for the oppressed

D. We believe that with God’s Word, the Spirit’s power, and fervent prayer in Christ’s name (Eph. 6:10-18), we (Heb. 3:13; 10:25), are to combat the spiritual forces of evil (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:11, 12; 2 Tim. 4:7; 1 Jn. 5:3-4).

- God’s Word, the Spirit’s power, and fervent prayer in Christ’s name
- Combat spiritual forces of evil

E. We believe that, in obedience to Christ’s commission, we are to make disciples among all people (Matt. 28:19; Jn. 20:21; Rev. 7:9).

- Obedience to Christ’s commission
- Make disciples among all people

F. We believe that as we make disciples, we are always bearing witness to the gospel (Acts 1:8) in word and deed (Matt. 5:13-16).

- Always bearing witness
- In word and deed

**Summarizing connection to the gospel:** “God’s gospel compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world.”

IV. Specific Ways the Article on the doctrine of **Christian Living** has been strengthened, or new issues addressed.

- Justifying grace and sanctifying power and purpose
- Great Commandment, Great Commission
- Individual and corporate engagement in combating the spiritual forces of evil, which Christ overcame on the cross
- Witness to the gospel in word and deed

V. Importance of Reaffirming the Biblical/Doctrinal Truths of **Christian Living** Today (which also carries with it denials)

- Justification and sanctification are components of salvation, and they cannot be separated, which is happening in many evangelical circles, pitting one against another
- Life together is emphasized such that the Christian life is to be lived in community, over against many in the broader evangelical community that attempt to be lone ranger Christians
- We are to care for others, remember the one another commands of Scripture, beginning with one’s own life and family, but not ending there. There is a larger family, this new community to whom we are accountable and responsible, and then the broader world
- True faith has implications – it is mental, but it has other entailments

VI. Additional Resources

### **Questions for Further Study**

1. Statements of Faith are written in a specific historical context. Why is it important to include this article at this time in this Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*)?
2. How do “God’s justifying grace” and “His sanctifying power and purpose” relate? How are they different? What does the expression “must not be separated” mean? What are ways they are wrongly separated?
3. “God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially.” Is this a command we either embrace abstractly as true, or does it have implications to our lives? Or is it both?

4. We are justified by “God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone.” But this faith is an active, living faith. Saving faith is the root while living faith is the flower. This living faith takes expression as we “care for one another” in the body of Christ, show “compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed.” What does this mean today? How will this bear out in our lives, in the life of the church? What is the weakness in the liberal church? What has been the weakness in the evangelical church?
5. The “spiritual forces of evil” are acknowledged as real, and as believers, we are to combat them. What are the means with which we are to engage in this combat? Why is the plural “we” important to remember? Please note the spiritual disciplines used and the Trinitarian reference: God’s Word, the Spirit’s power, and fervent prayer in Christ’s name. In addition, what does the reference to Christ’s “victorious resurrection” (article 5) add?
6. In Christ’s Great Commission, He exhorts us “to make disciples among all people.” Why is this underlying truth important to remember in this article? What does it mean if we are obeying this command, especially the “all people” part? How are we coming short?
7. As we “make disciples” we are always to bear “witness to the gospel.” Why is it that this command never grows old? How does this relate to Jesus’ ministry and the ministry of the early church?
8. Some today downplay the need for gospel proclamation, but rather emphasize living out the gospel. Why does this come short? Why is it essential to bear “witness to the gospel in word and deed?” With the emphasis on “always,” why is “the gospel” the critical thing to remember?

### **Preaching/Teaching Texts**

Ephesians 6:10-18

1 Peter 1:3-11

### **Memory Verses**

2 Timothy 1:9

Revelation 12:10-11

### **Hymns**

May the Mind of Christ, My Savior

The Church’s One Foundation

### **Choruses**

Let It Be Said of Us

Lord, Be Glorified

## EFCA Statement of Faith Commentary<sup>1</sup>

### *Christian Living*

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This statement has no parallel in the 1950 statement, though it expands what is said at the conclusion of #4. We wanted to affirm that the gospel has power to change lives, and something of the nature of that transformed life should be included in our Statement of Faith. Paul, in his outline of the gospel in his letter to the Romans, reflects this same concern. Evangelicals, with their emphasis on justification by faith, have often been accused of neglecting this doctrine of sanctification and the responsibility to the world that it demands.

***We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose.—***

This statement is not intended to demand either a Reformed or Wesleyan understanding of sanctification. Rather, it simply affirms that the God who justifies us also has power to sanctify us and that is an essential part of his saving purpose in our lives.

***God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially—***

This is simply a restatement of the Great Commandment and its companion (Mk. 12:29-31). Just as Jesus "went around doing good" (Acts 10:38), so should we (Jn. 20:21), loving not just our friends (Gal. 6:9-10), but our enemies as well (Matt. 5:43-48). On sacrificial love, cf. Jn. 13:34; 1 Jn. 3:16; Lk. 10:25-37.

***with care for one another—***

This reflect the special emphasis given in the New Testament to our responsibility toward fellow believers (cf., e.g., Jn. 13:35; Gal. 6:10). The expression "one another" ought to bring to mind the many "one anothers" of life together in the body of Christ (cf., e.g., Romans 12:10, 16; 13:8; 14:13, 19; 15:7, 14; 16:16).

***compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed.—***

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<sup>1</sup>This commentary will only highlight changes from the 1950 Statement of Faith and not expound the theological truth common to both statements.

These are strong biblical themes (cf., e.g., Dt. 15:11; Ps. 82:3,4; Prov. 14:31; 29:7; Isa. 1:17; Mic. 6:8; Lk. 16:19-31; Js. 1:22) that have too often received little emphasis in Evangelical circles. This does not supplant or replace the gospel, but rather is one important aspect of outworking of the true biblical gospel as we live out our faith in the world. This statement implies no particular political agenda. How we are to fulfill this biblical mandate must be worked out in fellowship with one another.

***With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil.—***

The reality of the Christian's battle against forces of evil, both within and without, is acknowledged here. This statement captures the struggle of the Christian life, as well as the powerful resources at our disposal. In its context, following the statement on the church (and in the use of the first person plural), it should be assumed that our engagement in the world has a corporate as well as an individual dimension. Our fellowship with one another in the body of Christ is one of our essential resources in the spiritual battle in which we are engaged.

Nothing is specifically said in this statement about "institutional evil," but this statement allows for an understanding of the "spiritual forces of evil" at work in social, cultural, and institutional ways.

***In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people,—***

Here we affirm the missionary mandate as a priority and an integral part of the gospel. God's gospel is for the world, and we have been given a commission to take it to everyone (Mt. 28:19). This statement makes explicit the proper concern of all Christians to seek to reach "all people" (the use of "among" here requires that "all people" be understood to refer not only to all individuals but also to all groups of people). This missionary mandate includes the process of discipleship as well as evangelism.

***always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.—***

Our witness to the gospel is to be verbal and non-verbal, for who we are and what we do is to reflect the message we bring.

## Appendix 2

### Frequently Asked Questions – Article 8

**I thought a SOF would just include beliefs. Why have you included both beliefs and behavior? In fact, it appears that most of this article addresses the implications of the gospel in our lives.**

*Credo*, the Latin expression for “I believe” is at the heart of Creeds. Many Creeds contain only beliefs. Being part of this Evangelical tradition, we also realize that belief (orthodoxy) and practice (orthopraxy) go together. For this reason we have included both what we ought to believe and how we ought to behave. This is one of the unique marks of this SOF.

**Explain further the reason for including orthopraxy.**

In any generation there are truths that need to be emphasized in a Statement of Faith that are at that point being undermined. Luther said, and I concur, that if one defends every point of orthodox doctrine except that one point at which it is presently being attacked, one is not defending the faith once for all entrusted to the saints. This is one reason Statements of Faith are revisable, and the only document that is not is the Bible. It alone is the touchstone for any discussion about this. It also means that any previous Statement is necessary and important, but not necessarily sufficient for the present day. This would include the Apostles’ and the Nicene-Constantinople Creeds. One of the needs in the evangelical church, broadly, and the EFCA, particularly, is that we address the issue of both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The fact that in surveys often the moral lives of those who profess to be evangelicals is indistinguishable from those who profess no faith at all is appalling. In fact, the truth of the gospel is belied with the way they live their lives. Granted, not all who say they are an Evangelical actually are, but even if allowances are made, it is a huge problem. Because Statements of Faith emphasize truths that are necessary at a point in time, we believe it is important to emphasize both orthodoxy and orthopraxy at this time in the life of the church. We have attempted to address both, but that is not to suggest that there is all there is to say about this issue. Not only have we stated the truth of being “justified by God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone” in different ways in different articles, so we have done something similar with this truth. Not only do we believe this is important to the EFCA today, this truth is rooted in Jesus’ teaching (Matt. 7:21-23; 22:37-40; 25:31-46).

**How does the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*) attempt to address this matter of including both orthodoxy and orthopraxy?**

Here are some other articles that include both orthodoxy and orthopraxy, though I am including the sections of the article that emphasize orthopraxy.

Article 2: The Bible: “Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.”

Article 7: The Church: “The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s Supper”

Article 8: Christian Living: “We believe that God’s justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others



sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed."

Article 9: Christ's Return: "The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission."

Article 10: Response and Eternal Destiny: "We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ."

### **Does not justification equal salvation? I thought they were the same thing.**

Often people will use the terms interchangeably, as if they mean exactly the same thing. Though we can say the salvation includes justification, to conclude it means only justification is to use the term too narrowly according to the biblical evidence. Salvation, broadly speaking, consists of justification and sanctification, plus much more. Although the various components of salvation can be dissected so that each part can be studied biblically and theologically, they must not ultimately be separated or divorced from one another. In a sense, though applied in a different manner in this case, "what God has put together, let not man put asunder." These two are intimately connected because they are both rooted in conversion/regeneration. Through faith one is converted, i.e. given a new heart, so that sins are forgiven, the law is written on the heart, and there is a new power, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, that progressively transforms one into the image of Christ. (We understand sanctification to be both positional and progressive.)

We are justified by God's grace and we are sanctified by God's grace. Too often people conclude that grace is only necessary for the initial act of salvation, viz. conversion, and then they forget that it is every bit as essential for the ongoing process of sanctification. It is not our work apart from God's grace. Anything we do as Christians is a consequence of God's gracious work within us (cf. Phil 2:12; cf. also Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 1 Thess. 5:23).

### **How do justification and sanctification relate to one another?**

We have also recognized the difference between justification and sanctification, being careful not to equate them because otherwise the unadulterated, unmerited grace of God for salvation, narrowly understood, turns into a work (cf. article 7). And yet we also acknowledge their connectedness such that though different, one will not be present without the other (article 8). That is the broader understanding of salvation.

### **Why did you include justification and sanctification in this article? How does this relate to the "free grace" position?**

This statement better captures the vital connection between justification and sanctification that Paul makes in his letters (cf. esp. Rom. 6). Before responding to the second question,

the history of our 1950 Statement of Faith would be good to know. Just as our 1950 Statement had acceptable parameters on many doctrinal matters, e.g. Arminianism and Calvinism, infant and believer baptism, they did also make it clear that some things were outside those acceptable parameters. For example, though infant baptism could be practiced in the Free Church, it was clearly stated in article 7 that it was not considered salvific. Similarly, though Dispensationalism was one of the acceptable positions in the Free Church, hyper-Dispensationalism was not in that article 7 clearly states that the ordinances are to be observed during this present age. This was a clear statement against the hyper-Dispensational thought known as O'Harism and Bullerism.

What this means specifically is that the position known as "free grace" is acceptable in the Free Church. But it is another thing to make this the only position in the Free Church as it then enters into a hyper category, and it makes it unacceptable. This gets at the Free Church ethos question of the "significance of silence."

#### **Why did you include "prayer in Christ's name," rather than prayer in Jesus' name?**

Regarding your concern about the statement of "fervent prayer in Christ's name," since this is not directly a prayer we are praying, we did not believe we were compelled to state it as if we were praying, "in Jesus' name." Moreover, in this SOF there has been an intentionality to include orthodoxy and orthopraxy. This statement emphasizes more the orthopraxy, and the recognition of the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord! We chose to use the title Christ, for His Lordship is on the basis of the fact that He is the Christ.

We attempted to use various names and titles of Christ. For example, here are the references throughout the SOF: the Son (1), Jesus Christ (3, 4, 5), God incarnate (4), fully God and fully man (4), one Person in two natures (4), Jesus (4), Israel's promised Messiah (4), High Priest and Advocate (4), representative and substitute (5), Lord Jesus Christ (6, 9, 10), Christ (6, 7, 8[2x], 9), Head (7), Lord Jesus (7), Lord (10). As you can see, we did not use the full expression in each of the occurrences. But taken as a whole, which is intended for the SOF, it has a very strong cumulative statement regarding Jesus.

Though this does not get at your concern, it is important to note, which I am sure you did, that this expression is Trinitarian: "With **God's** Word, the **Spirit's** power and fervent prayer in **Christ's** name."

#### **How is "living out our faith" in this article understood in relation to "faith alone" in article 7?**

In article 8, the important truth stated is that faith is cognitive knowledge, but it is more than that as even the demons believe – and shudder (Jms. 2:19). It also states the doctrinal/theological truth of the broader understanding of salvation, viz. that salvation is more than conversion, though it is certainly not less. Salvation, more broadly and biblically understood, contains faith and repentance, justification, adoption, union with Christ, sanctification, glorification. In light of the over-emphasis on free grace and some of the over-statements in reply from some in the Lordship salvation category, we have attempted to state the important biblical truths, and then some of the implications of those truths.

**What is the importance of “living out our faith,” and how is this connected with the “faith alone” of the gospel?**

Regarding the practical implications, Jesus is quite clear that this is important in the determination of the distinction between sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31-46). We know that the liberal church abandoned biblical truth, and embraced the social gospel, i.e. meeting social needs. In response, Fundamentalists (before the Evangelicals of the 1940s, but they did not do much better which is why Carl F. H. Henry’s books, *The Uneasy Conscience of Fundamentalism*, was so critical) emphasized the gospel and eternity. But it was at the expense of the now. In order to be faithful to the Scripture both are essential (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; 25:31-46). This is also the heart of discussion in many denominations. For example, Katharine Jefferts Schori, the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA, bemoans the fact that it is no longer the social norm to be a Christian. But her response to this problem is not to teach the Bible and theology but rather to reach out to all ages and cultures with Christlike social action. Because we are attempting appropriately to address an imbalance, we must be careful we do not fall off the other side of the horse. We must also be very careful to state that the changing of the lives (conversion, being born again, salvation) is the priority and though He uses us and we must be faithful in our witness, the changing of lives is ultimately done by God, not us. Otherwise we depend on ourselves, not on God. Think of Hudson Taylor. He almost had a nervous breakdown when he felt the weight on his shoulders for the missionary agency he began (CIM). Until he realized that this was not about him, but rather about Him. It is why he said (a paraphrase), “God’s ministries done in God’s power will not lack God’s supply.” This is also the truth Paul states: “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, **struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me**” (Col. 1:28-29, emphasis mine).”

**By including this article are we moving away from our commitment to gospel ministry, our commitment to the salvation of sinner? Have we moved away from our heritage?**

Article 8 on “Christian Living” in the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*) is actually not so new after all. If you look further back in our history, you will discover that the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Free Church Association Statement of Faith (1912) article 12 addressed something similar. It stated the following:

XII. We believe that the sole duty of the Christian Church is to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, and to assist charitable institutions, to work for righteousness and temperance, for unity and cooperation with all believers, and for peace among all people and nations on the whole earth.”

(For a comparison, here is article 8 from the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*): “We believe that God’s justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God’s Word, the Spirit’s power, and fervent prayer in Christ’s name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of

evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.")

Notice five things of which we were aware of and committed to in our work on the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*).

- First, the key emphasis and focus is the gospel, the proclamation of the gospel to the whole world. This, as you recall, was the organizing principle of the whole Statement up until we added premillennialism back into article 9.
- Second, the preaching of the gospel is accompanied by assisting "charitable institutions" and "to work for righteousness." This is the major emphasis in article 8 of the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*), the one that has probably received the most support of any of the articles.
- Third, there is a strong commitment to partner with others in this gospel ministry. They proclaim and live the gospel and strive "for unity and cooperation with all believers." This is one of our key distinctives as a Free Church.
- Fourth, the goal is to proclaim the live the gospel "among all people," a statement in the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*), and a key phrase in our mission, "to glorify God by multiplying healthy churches 'among all people.'"
- Finally, the fact that they raise to the level of a SOF a commitment to "temperance" reminds us that all SOFs are written in a historical context and are revisable. The only un-revisable document is the Bible, another strong argument we made during this process.

It appears we are being faithful to our history and heritage, not moving away as some have claimed. Even more importantly, we are being faithful to the gospel!