

# **EPIC Student Church Constitution**

## **Article I: Name, Nature, and Purpose**

1. The name of this organization is “EPIC Student Church.”
2. EPIC Student Church is a student-oriented and student-led community of people at the University of Alberta who seek to live and promote a Christ-centered lifestyle, and to enrich the greater university community in a diversity of ways.
  - a. Rather than proselytizing, the EPIC Student Church community seeks to journey with people and share their God-perspective in an open, interesting, and respectful manner.
  - b. In addition to helping revitalize Christianity on the University of Alberta campus, the EPIC Student Church community will enrich the greater university community academically, culturally, and socially. Members of the EPIC Student Church community will do this through their promotion of, cooperation with, and/or involvement in other University of Alberta student groups, campus recreation programs and groups, Students’ Union events, faculty-specific initiatives, and other university initiatives.
    - i. Where it is relevant and flows naturally from EPIC Student Church’s university-oriented base, the EPIC Student Church community also seeks to transform and enrich its broader population base of the greater Edmonton metropolitan area, the province of Alberta, the nation of Canada, and the world – spiritually, academically, culturally, and socially.
  - c. EPIC Student Church is a non-profit organization. As such, the organization shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other gains to the organization shall be used solely in promoting its objectives.
3. EPIC Student Church desires to be a Christ-centered community of people who journey with others in understanding and fulfilling our roles in the “EPIC” Story of God, Humanity, and the Universe. In that vein, EPIC Student Church’s purpose is to embody and encourage Christian discipleship and missional living on a personal, social, communal, regional, and global level.

## **Article II: Affiliations**

1. On campus, EPIC Student Church is affiliated with Pentecostal Campus Ministries (the ministry of the Pentecostal Chaplain of the University of Alberta, affiliated with the University of Alberta Interfaith Chaplains Association).
  - a. As the official student group of Pentecostal Campus Ministries (PCM), EPIC Student Church shall remain subject to PCM’s Board of Directors and governing policies.
2. Externally, EPIC Student Church is affiliated with the Alberta & Northwest Territories District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC).

## **Article III: Membership**

1. Membership in EPIC Student Church is open to all Students’ Union members and non-members, providing that:
  - a. a minimum of 2/3 of all members are full members of the Students’ Union (undergraduate students who have paid Students’ Union fees).
2. EPIC Student Church members must sign a membership form indicating that they are in agreement with, and make a personal commitment to, the nature, purpose and vision of EPIC Student Church, as stated above.
  - a. Theologically, EPIC Student Church members agree to live in harmony with the spirit of the PAOC’s Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths (see attachment). EPIC Student Church

recognizes that the University of Alberta is a multicultural community of people from diverse religious backgrounds, including a variety of Christian denominations. In accordance with this setting, interested persons will not need to be “Pentecostal” or need to agree with all Pentecostal doctrines or lifestyle specifications to be EPIC Student Church members. EPIC Student Church members are, however, asked to acknowledge the distinctives of EPIC Student Church’s theological roots and to honor them in light of EPIC Student Church’s affiliation and orientation.

3. Membership in EPIC Student Church is maximally for a one-year term, starting from the date of executive approval, and ending April 30<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year.
  - a. Members who wish to continue to be a part of EPIC Student Church may renew their membership annually.
4. EPIC Student Church members have voting rights, the right to submit ideas and opinions on group aspects and operations, and the opportunity to be considered for a leadership position in the group.
  - a. Membership is not required for students or non-students to attend EPIC Student Church public gatherings and special public events.
5. Should a member not act in agreement with the nature, purpose, and policies of EPIC Student Church as described in this constitution, they will be given a warning by an EPIC Student Church Lead Team member and asked to change their behavior.
  - a. If the member in concern does not change their behavior immediately after being warned, they will be removed from membership in EPIC Student Church at the discretion of the Lead Team.
6. Where needed, a discipline committee may be formed to investigate willful breeches of EPIC Student Church’s constitution and regulations by any of its executives or members (including such actions as theft of EPIC Student Church property), and recommend a course of action to the general membership.

#### **Article IV: Membership Dues**

1. There are no dues for being a member of EPIC Student Church.
  - a. Members are encouraged, however, to be generous, regular givers and to contribute financially towards budgeted expenses and/or approved special projects associated with EPIC Student Church.
    - i. 20% of all general and individually-designated donations to EPIC Student Church will be put towards the EPIC Student Church “Mercy Fund,” which will periodically be distributed to U of A campus, municipal, provincial, national, or international community projects and initiatives.

#### **Article V: Lead Team**

1. Lead Team members must be official EPIC Student Church members, and be regularly involved in EPIC Student Church meetings and activities.
  - a. 3/4 of Lead Team executive members must be full or part-time University of Alberta students.
  - b. Lead Team executive members shall hold voting authority in Lead Team meetings, and are primarily responsible for the ongoing administration of EPIC Student Church.
  - c. The Lead Team (executive and non-voting members) shall remain subordinate to the group, and report to the general membership of EPIC Student Church.
2. The Lead Team shall consist of the following executive members:
  - a. Lead Team Coordinator (LTC)
    - i. This role shall be held *ex officio* by the Pentecostal Chaplain of the University of Alberta.
    - ii. The LTC is responsible for coordinating the leadership of EPIC Student Church and giving general oversight to its objectives and activities.

1. In the absence of the Team Leader, the LTC shall chair Lead Team meetings and EPIC Student Church general membership meetings.
- b. Team Leader (President)
    - i. Working in consultation with the LTC, the Team Leader is responsible for calling and chairing Lead Team meetings and EPIC Student Church general membership meetings, and for providing “hands-on” leadership in EPIC Student Church vision-casting, community objectives and activities. The Team Leader’s primary focus is not to “do everything by themselves,” but to facilitate a cooperative leadership format in which every Lead Team member contributes to the vision, direction, and activities of EPIC Student Church.
    - ii. The Team Leader also functions as the public contact for EPIC Student Church (listed by University of Alberta Student Group Services as the contact for new members, etc.).
    - iii. The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring EPIC Student Church’s adherence to the policies established for University of Alberta student groups, as prescribed in University of Alberta Students’ Union and Student Group Services meetings and publications.
    - iv. Together with the Secretary and Communications Coordinator, the Team Leader holds joint responsibility for any on-campus contract negotiations and bookings involving EPIC Student Church.
  - c. Treasurer
    - i. The Treasurer is responsible for managing the financial resources of EPIC Student Church, which includes: making recommendations to the EPIC Student Church Lead Team and general membership on any financially related decisions, overseeing the intake and dispersal of all EPIC Student Church-designated funds, paying any EPIC Student Church-related bills, and maintaining the financial book-keeping of EPIC Student Church in a clear and transparent manner for general viewing of all EPIC Student Church members at any time (while adhering to proper confidentiality principles in accordance with The Privacy Act). The Treasurer is also required to give clear, accurate monthly financial reports to Lead Team members at Lead Team meetings, as well as bi-annual reports to all members at EPIC Student Church general meetings.
  - d. Secretary and Communications Coordinator (SCC)
    - i. The SCC is responsible for recording and distributing minutes of all EPIC Student Church Lead Team and general membership meetings. At the request of the Team Leader, the SCC is also responsible for contacting Lead Team members and general membership to inform them of meetings and other EPIC Student Church events.
    - ii. The SCC collects and distributes EPIC Student Church mail, maintains records of all EPIC Student Church-related events and activities, and handles EPIC Student Church public correspondence in cooperation with the rest of the Lead Team.
    - iii. The SCC holds joint responsibility with the Team Leader for engaging in on-campus contract negotiations and bookings involving EPIC Student Church.
    - iv. The SCC also functions as the administrative contact for EPIC Student Church, and is responsible for re-registering the group with the University of Alberta Students’ Union annually.
  - e. Spiritual Life Coordinator (SLC)
    - i. The SLC is responsible for encouraging, overseeing, and giving leadership to the spiritual life aspects of the EPIC Student Church community. This includes emphasizing elements

associated with discipleship, prayer, and worship in EPIC Student Church gatherings and community activities, and in the personal lives of EPIC Student Church members.

- f. Community Involvement Coordinator (CIC)
  - i. The CIC is responsible for encouraging spiritual, academic, cultural, and social community involvement by members and interested adherents of EPIC Student Church at the University of Alberta, in the city of Edmonton, and beyond.
3. Optimally, the Lead Team shall also have non-voting members working towards EPIC Student Church's purpose alongside the executive in the following roles:
  - a. EPIC Student Church Public Gathering Coordinator (EPGC)
    - i. The EPGC is responsible for leading and working with the EPIC Student Church Public Gathering Design Team in planning regular EPIC Student Church public gatherings.
      1. The EPGC will work in consultation with the LTC and Team Leader to appoint EPIC Student Church members as Design Team members, and to call and chair Design Team meetings.
      2. The EPGC will work collaboratively with Design Team members to help them find meaningful forms of involvement that are relevant to EPIC Student Church's nature and purpose in various aspects of its public gatherings, and suitable to their personal giftings and interests.
  - b. Spiritual Life and Community Involvement Facilitator(s)
    - i. Facilitators are responsible for working alongside the Spiritual Life Coordinator, Community Involvement Coordinator, and other EPIC Lead Team members to help them fulfill their leadership roles, grow in their leadership ability, and fulfill EPIC's purpose at the University of Alberta and beyond.
4. The Lead Team will meet once every month during the regular academic year (September – April), and once during the Spring/Summer (May – August), at a time that is most convenient to the majority of Lead Team members.
  - a. Quorum for Lead Team meetings is defined as no less than 75% of Lead Team executive members.
    - i. Lead Team meetings without quorum shall be allowed to continue, but no official business may transpire.
5. Lead Team members are recommended by the LTC, based upon the LTC's discernment and referrals from EPIC Student Church members, and are ratified by receiving a majority of the members' votes at the EPIC Student Church general meeting in April.
  - a. Lead Team candidates will be publicized to the EPIC Student Church general membership no later than 2 weeks before the EPIC Student Church general meeting at which they will be voted on.
6. Lead Team members have a one-year term of office, going from May 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>.
7. Should a Lead Team member not follow the membership guidelines of EPIC Student Church, or consistently neglect their specific leadership responsibilities, they may be removed from their role at the discretion of the LTC.
  - a. Any complaints or suspicions of irresponsible actions concerning a Lead Team member should be reported by EPIC Student Church members directly to the LTC.
  - b. If necessary, the LTC may call a special EPIC Student Church general meeting for the purpose of voting on a new Lead Team member to replace the member who was removed from their role.

- i. In this circumstance, the LTC will still give public notice to all EPIC Student Church members of the recommended replacement candidate no less than 2 weeks before the EPIC Student Church general meeting at which they will be voted on.

#### **Article VI: Faculty Advisors**

1. EPIC Student Church may have up to two faculty advisors who are non-voting members of the Lead Team.
  - a. Faculty advisors are chosen each year by the EPIC Student Church Lead Team.
  - b. Faculty advisors are invited, but not expected to be at all EPIC Student Church Lead Team meetings, general membership meetings, and group activities.
  - c. Although faculty advisors are non-voting members of the EPIC Student Church Lead Team, their opinions, suggestions, and other contributions are invited and will be seriously, respectfully, and gladly considered by the EPIC Student Church Lead Team.

#### **Article VII: Committees**

1. In addition to the Lead Team, EPIC Student Church shall have an EPIC Student Church Public Gathering Design Team, which functions to plan and implement the different aspects of regular EPIC Student Church public gatherings.
  - a. This Design Team shall be coordinated and chaired by the EPGC, in consultation with the LTC and Team Leader.
    1. In the absence of the EPGC, the Design Team shall be coordinated and chaired by the LTC and/or Team Leader.
  - b. The LTC, Team Leader, SCC, SLC, CIC, and EPGC are all members of the EPIC Student Church Public Gathering Design Team *ex officio*.
    1. In addition, other EPIC Student Church members who are deemed to be able to benefit the team may be appointed to the Design Team for a one-year term by the EPGC.
  - c. At minimum, the Design Team shall meet on a biweekly basis, and shall seek to maintain a planning “buffer” for EPIC Student Church public gatherings.

#### **Article VIII: Meetings**

1. Two general meetings involving all EPIC Student Church members will be held each year: one in October, during the Fall Semester, and one in the first two weeks of April, during the Winter Semester
  - a. A minimum of 2 weeks notice concerning the meeting will be given to all EPIC Student Church members, via email and the EPIC Student Church website.
  - b. The meeting will be called and chaired by the Team Leader, in consultation with the LTC.
  - c. The meetings will be held at a time that is most convenient for the majority of EPIC Student Church members.
  - d. Quorum at each meeting will be constituted by the presence of 50% of all EPIC Student Church members.
  - e. *Robert's Rules of Order* will be the form of procedure used in governing the meetings.
2. Outside of the two annual meetings, special general meetings may be called by the Team Leader of LTC if circumstances require it.
  - a. Again, in this case a minimum of 2 weeks notice concerning the meeting will be given to all EPIC Student Church members, via email and the EPIC Student Church website.

#### **Article IX: Office Space**

1. EPIC Student Church shall have shared use of the Pentecostal Campus Ministries' office space at the University of Alberta, providing that preference is given to PCM's use of the office, and EPIC Student Church members keep and use the space in a respectful, orderly manner.

#### **Article X: Signing Authority**

1. Signing authority for EPIC Student Church financial matters, contracts, bookings, and other EPIC Student Church documents and activities will be held by the LTC, Team Leader, Treasurer, and SCC as they are elected annually.

#### **Article XI: Amendments to the Constitution**

1. Amendments to the EPIC Student Church Constitution must be proposed in writing and made available to all members at least two weeks prior to any general or special meeting.
2. After presentation and discussion on the proposed amendment at a general or special meeting of the EPIC Student Church membership, it may be passed by a 2/3 majority of members' votes.

#### **Article XII: Dissolution**

1. The EPIC Student Church student group may be dissolved by a two-thirds vote at a quorate general membership meeting, or by the Director of University of Alberta Student Group Services after a period of inactivity according to Clubs Policy.
2. In the event of the dissolution of EPIC Student Church, all of its remaining assets, after payments of liabilities, shall revert to *Pentecostal Campus Ministries of the University of Alberta (Charity #: 86373 5619 RR0001)*.

**Date Accepted:** August 31, 2010

### **STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL & ESSENTIAL TRUTHS**

ARTICLE V of the General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions adopted by General Conference 1994  
The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada  
[See "Clarifications" below]

#### **PREAMBLE**

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada stands firmly in the mainstream of historical Christianity. It takes the Bible as its all-sufficient source of faith and practice, and subscribes to the historic creeds of the universal church. In common with historical, evangelical Christianity, it emphasizes Christ as Saviour and coming King. It also presents Christ as Healer and it adopts the distinctive position that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence when Christ baptizes in the Holy Spirit (See Section VI, 3).

#### **I. HOLY SCRIPTURES**

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God<sup>1</sup> by which we understand the whole Bible to be inspired in the sense that holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the very words of Scripture.<sup>2</sup> Divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the original writings. The whole Bible in the original is, therefore, without error and, as such, is infallible, absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and practice.<sup>3</sup>

The Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christian believers today receive spiritual illumination to enable them to understand the Scriptures,<sup>4</sup> but God does not grant new revelations which are contrary or additional to inspired biblical truth.<sup>5</sup>

## **II. THE GODHEAD**

The Godhead exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having the same nature and attributes and are worthy of the same homage, confidence, and obedience.<sup>6</sup>

### **1. THE FATHER**

The Father exists eternally as the Creator of heaven and earth, the Giver of the Law, to whom all things will be subjected, so that He may be all in all.<sup>7</sup>

### **2. THE SON**

The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of the Father, is true God and true man.<sup>8</sup> He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,<sup>9</sup> and by His sinless life, miracles and teaching, gave full revelation of the Father.<sup>10</sup> He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust, as a substitutionary sacrifice.<sup>11</sup> He rose from the dead.<sup>12</sup> He is now at the right hand of the majesty on high as our great High Priest.<sup>13</sup> He will come again to establish His kingdom in righteousness and peace.<sup>14</sup>

### **3. THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit is also God, performing actions and possessing the attributes of Deity.<sup>15</sup> His personality is shown by the fact that He has personal characteristics and that individuals may relate to Him as a person.<sup>16</sup>

## **III. ANGELS**

### **1. CLASSIFICATION**

Angels were created as intelligent and powerful beings to do the will of God and worship Him.<sup>17</sup> However, Satan, the originator of sin, fell through pride and was followed by those angels who rebelled against God. These fallen angels or demons are active in opposing the purposes of God.<sup>18</sup> Those who remained faithful continue before the throne of God and serve as ministering spirits.<sup>19</sup>

### **2. THE BELIEVER AND DEMONS**

Demons attempt to thwart God's purposes; however, in Christ, the believer may have complete liberty from the influence of demons.<sup>20</sup> He cannot be possessed by them because his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in which Christ dwells as Lord.<sup>21</sup>

1 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:16,17

2 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:20,21

3 - Psa. 119:160a; Matt. 5:17,18

4 - 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:12-14

5 - Prov. 30:5,6

6 - Matt. 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14

7 - Gen. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:28

8 - John 1:1,14; 10:30; 17; Phil. 2:6,7; Heb. 1:8

9 - Luke 1:26-35

10 - John 12:49; Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26

11 - Rom. 5:6,8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:18

12 - Matt. 28:6; 1 Cor. 15:4,20

13 - Acts 1:9-11; 2:33; Heb. 8:1

14 - Matt. 25:31

15 - Acts 5:3,4

16 - John 16:13-14

17 - Psa. 103:20; Rev. 5:11,12

18 - Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Eph. 6:11,12; 1 Tim. 4:1; Jude 6

19 - Heb. 1:14

20 - Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; 4:1-4

#### **IV. MAN**

Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God.<sup>1</sup> He fell through sin and, as a consequence, incurred both spiritual and physical death.<sup>2</sup> Spiritual death and the depravity of human nature have been transmitted to the entire human race<sup>3</sup> with the exception of the Man Christ Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Man can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

#### **V. SALVATION**

Salvation has been provided for all men through the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.<sup>6</sup> It is the only perfect redemption and substitutionary atonement for all the sins of the world, both original and actual. His atoning work has been proven by His resurrection from the dead.<sup>7</sup> Those who repent and believe in Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and receive eternal life.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in the atonement, divine healing was provided for all believers.<sup>9</sup>

##### **1. REPENTANCE AND FAITH**

Man can be born again only through faith in Christ. Repentance, a vital part of believing, is a complete change of mind wrought by the Holy Spirit,<sup>10</sup> turning a person to God from sin.

##### **2. REGENERATION**

Regeneration is a creative work of the Holy Spirit by which man is born again and receives spiritual life.<sup>11</sup>

##### **3. JUSTIFICATION**

Justification is a judicial act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous solely on the basis of his acceptance of Christ as Saviour.<sup>12</sup>

#### **VI. THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE**

##### **1. ASSURANCE**

Assurance of salvation is the privilege of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ,<sup>13</sup> resulting in love, gratitude and obedience toward God.<sup>14</sup>

##### **2. SANCTIFICATION**

Sanctification is dedication to God and separation from evil.<sup>15</sup> In experience it is both instantaneous<sup>16</sup> and progressive.<sup>17</sup> It is produced in the life of the believer by his appropriation of the power of Christ's blood and risen life through the Person of the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup> He draws the believer's attention to Christ, teaches him through the Word and produces the character of Christ within him.<sup>19</sup> Believers who sin must repent and seek forgiveness through faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup>

##### **3. BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT [See Clarification #1 below]**

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience in which the believer yields control of himself to the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> Through this he comes to know Christ in a more intimate way,<sup>22</sup> and receives power to witness and grow spiritually.<sup>23</sup> Believers should earnestly seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup> The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.<sup>25</sup> This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the experience of the new birth.<sup>26</sup>

##### **4. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural abilities given by God through the exercising of which believers are enabled to minister effectively and directly in particular situations.<sup>27</sup> They serve the dual function of building up the Church, and of demonstrating the presence of God within His Church.<sup>28</sup>

##### **5. DIVINE HEALING**

Divine healing provided in the atonement of Christ<sup>29</sup> is the privilege of all believers. Prayer for the sick and gifts of healing are encouraged and practised.<sup>30</sup>

1 - Gen. 1:26; 2:7

2 -Rom. 5:12; James 1:14,15

3 - Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19,23

4 - Heb. 7:26

- 5 - John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5,6
- 6 - Isa. 53:3-6; John 12:32,33; 1 Pet. 2:24
- 7 - Acts 2:36; Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:14,17,20; Heb. 10:12; 1 John 2:2
- 8 - Acts 20:21; 1 Pet. 1:23,25
- 9 - Isa. 53:4,5; Matt. 8:16b, 17
- 10 - Isa. 55:7; Acts. 17:30; Gal. 3:22,26; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:10-13
- 11 - John 3:3b,5b,7; 2 Cor. 5:17,18a; 1 Pet. 1:23
- 12 - Rom. 3:24; 4:3-5; 5:1-2
- 13 - John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:35-39
- 14 - John 14:23; Col. 3:17; 1 John 2:6
- 15 - 2 Cor. 6:14; 7:1
- 16 - John 17:17,19; Heb. 10:10,14
- 17 - 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 1:14-16
- 18 - Rom. 6:11,13,14,18
- 19 - 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22,23; 2 Pet. 1:3-4
- 20 - 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2
- 21 - Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; Eph. 5:18
- 22 - John 16:13-15
- 23 - 2 Cor. 3:18; Acts 1:8
- 24 - Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8
- 25 - Acts 2:1-4, 39; 9-17; 1 Cor. 14:18
- 26 - Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46
- 27 - 1 Cor. 12:4-11
- 28 - 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:12,24-25
- 29 - Matt. 8:16,17
- 30 - 1 Cor. 12:28-30; James 5:14

## **VII. THE CHURCH**

### **1. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

All who are born again are members of the universal church, which is the Body and Bride of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### **2. THE LOCAL CHURCH**

#### *A. Purpose*

The local church is a body of believers in Christ who have joined together to function as a part of the universal church.<sup>2</sup> The local church is ordained by God and provides a context in which believers corporately worship God,<sup>3</sup> observe the ordinances of the church, are instructed in the faith and are equipped for the evangelization of the world.<sup>4</sup>

#### **(a) The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is a symbol, memorial and proclamation of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. This ordinance of communion is to be participated in by believers until Christ's return.<sup>5</sup>

#### **(b) Water Baptism**

Water baptism signifies the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and is practised by immersion.<sup>6</sup>

#### *B. Ministry*

A divinely called and ordained ministry is the provision of the Lord to give leadership to the church as it fulfils its purposes.<sup>7</sup>

## **VIII. THE END OF TIME**

### **1. THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DEAD**

At death the souls of the believers pass immediately into the presence of Christ,<sup>8</sup> and these remain in constant bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body.<sup>9</sup> The souls of the unbelievers remain after death conscious of condemnation<sup>10</sup> until the final bodily resurrection and judgement of the

unjust.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. THE RAPTURE

The rapture, the blessed hope of the church, is the imminent coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself His own, both the living who shall be transformed, and the dead in Christ who shall be resurrected.<sup>12</sup>

This event takes place before the wrath of God is poured out during the tribulation. Believers then will appear before the judgement seat of Christ to be judged according to faithfulness in Christian service.<sup>13</sup>

## 3. THE TRIBULATION

The tribulation will be a time of judgement on the whole earth.<sup>14</sup> During this period the Antichrist will emerge to offer false hope to the nations.<sup>15</sup>

## 4. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The return of Christ to earth in power and great glory will conclude the great tribulation with the victory at Armageddon,<sup>16</sup> the defeat of Antichrist and the binding of Satan.<sup>17</sup> He will introduce the millennial age,<sup>18</sup>

restore Israel to her own land, lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation, and bring the whole world to the knowledge of God.<sup>19</sup>

## 5. THE FINAL JUDGEMENT

There will be a final judgement in which the unbelieving dead will be raised and judged at the great white throne, according to their works.<sup>20</sup> The beast and false prophet, the devil and his angels, and whoever is not found in the Book of Life, shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to annihilation but to everlasting punishment, which is the second death.<sup>21</sup>

## 6. THE ETERNAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The righteous will share the glory of God in the new heaven and the new earth for eternity.<sup>22</sup>

1 - 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:25b; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:15

2 - Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 16:19

3 - John 4:23; Acts 20:7

4 - Acts 1:8; 11:19-24; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:2

5 - Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-26

6 - Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-5

7 - Acts 6:2b-4c; 13:2-4a; 14:23; Eph. 4:8,11-13

8 - 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21,23-24

9 - Rom. 8:22,23; 1 Cor. 15:42-44; 2 Cor. 5:1,4b

10 - Luke 16:22-31; John 3:36

11 - Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:11-15

12 - 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:51-57; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13

13 - Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10

14 - Matt. 24:15,21-22; 1 Thess. 5:1-3

15 - 2 Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 13:11-18

16 - Matt. 24:27,30; Luke 17:24,26-30

17 - Rev. 16:12-16; 17:8,12-14; 19:11-20:3

18 - Psa. 2:6-12; Dan. 2:44-45; Luke 22:29-30; Rev. 3:21; 20:6

19 - Isa. 1:24-27; 2:1-4; Zech. 14:3,4,9; Rom. 8:19-23; Rev. 22:3

20 - Dan. 7:9-10; John 12:48; Rom. 2:2,6,11,16; Rev. 14:9-11;20:11-15

21 - Matt. 25:41b; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10,15; 21:8

22 - Matt. 13:43; John 17:24; 2 Pet. 3:13; Heb. 11:10; Rev. 21:1-2,10,22-23

## IX. POSITIONS AND PRACTICES

### 1. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY [See Clarification #3 below]

Marriage is a provision of God whereby a man and a woman enter into a lifelong relationship<sup>1</sup> through a marriage ceremony which is recognized by the church and legally sanctioned by the state. Marriage establishes a "one-flesh" relationship<sup>2</sup> which goes beyond a physical union and is more than either a temporary relationship of convenience intended to provide personal pleasure or a contract which binds two people together in a legal partnership. Marriage establishes an emotional and spiritual oneness which enables both partners to respond to the spiritual, physical and social

needs of the other.<sup>3</sup> It provides the Biblical context for the procreation of children. Marriage is to be an exclusive relationship that is maintained in purity.<sup>4</sup> It is intended by God to be a permanent relationship. It is a witness to the world of the relationship between Christ and His Church.<sup>5</sup> Marriage requires a commitment of love, perseverance and faith. Because of its sanctity and permanence, marriage should be treated with seriousness and entered into only after counsel and prayer for God's guidance. Christians should marry only those who are believers.<sup>6</sup> An individual who becomes a believer after marriage should remain with his or her partner in peace, and should give witness to the gospel in the home.<sup>7</sup> The Bible holds family life as a position of trust and responsibility. The home is a stabilizing force in society, a place of nurture, counsel, and safety for children.<sup>8</sup> Marriage can only be broken by "porneia" which is understood as marital unfaithfulness<sup>9</sup> involving adultery, homosexuality, or incest. While the Scriptures give evidence that the marriage vow and "one-flesh" union are broken by such acts, and therefore do recognize the breaking of the marriage relationship, the Scriptures do recommend that the most desirable option would be reconciliation.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. DIVORCE

We believe that divorce is not God's intention. It is God's concession to the "hardness of men's hearts."<sup>11</sup> We, therefore, discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. Our objective is reconciliation and the healing of the marriage union where possible. Marital unfaithfulness should not be considered so much an occasion or opportunity for divorce but rather an opportunity for Christian grace, forgiveness, and restoration. Divorce in our society is a termination of a marriage through a legal process authorized by the State. While the Church recognizes this legal process as an appropriate means to facilitate the permanent separation of spouses, the Church restricts the idea of divorce, in the sense of dissolution of marriage, to reasons specified by the Scriptures. The weight of the Biblical record is negative and the explicit statement is made, "God hates divorce."<sup>12</sup> Divorce is more than an action of the courts which breaks the legal contract between the partners in a marriage. It is also the fracture of a unique human relationship between a male and a female. Divorce has profound consequences for the children. Divorce is evidence of the sinful nature expressed in human failure. Jesus gives one explicit cause for the dissolution of marriage: "porneia" or marital unfaithfulness. Where all attempts at reconciliation have failed and a divorce has been finalized, we extend Christ's love and compassion.

## 3. REMARRIAGE

Remarriage is the union, legally sanctioned by the State, of a man and woman, one or both of whom have been previously married. It is regarded as acceptable by the Scriptures in the event of the death of the former spouse. It is also regarded as acceptable when there has been sexual immorality on the part of the former partner or the former partner has remarried.

## 4. TITHING [See Clarification #2 below]

Tithing was divinely instituted by God under the old covenant and was compulsory upon the people who worshipped God.<sup>13</sup> Under the new covenant we are not bound by arbitrary laws; but the principles of right and wrong, as expressed by the law, are fulfilled in the believer's life through grace. Grace should produce as much as, or more than, law demanded. Regular systematic giving is clearly taught in the New Testament. It is known as the grace of giving.<sup>14</sup> The gauge or rule of this systematic giving is defined in the Old Testament, known as the law of tithing. All Christians should conscientiously and systematically tithe their income to God.

1 - Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6

2 - Matt. 19:5; Mal. 2:15

3 - Gen. 2:18, 1 Cor. 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4

4 - Eph. 5:3,26,27

5 - Eph. 5:25,31,32

6 - 2 Cor. 6:14,15

7 - 1 Cor. 7:12-14,16

8 - Eph. 6:4

9 - Matt. 5:32; 19:9

10 - Eph. 4:32

11 - Matt. 19:8

12 - Mal. 2:16

13 - Lev. 27:30-32; Mal. 3:10

14 - 2 Cor. 9:6-15

## Clarifications

EPIC Student Church supports the spirit of the theology and lifestyle criteria in the PAOC Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths. We may not necessarily agree with every detail and point, but we agree to live in harmony with it. By doing so, EPIC Student Church can benefit from the theological foundations that have been developed and refined by other Christ-followers over hundreds of years, all the while acknowledging that every humanly-developed theology is imperfect and incomplete.

The challenge with the PAOC statement of truths is the style of the writing and the worldview implied. The writing styles can be exclusive rather than inclusive in tone. The worldview conveys the perception of “us versus them” rather than: “we are in this together and in process on an agreed direction.”

EPIC Student Church desires to embody a value of grace that says: “We extend open arms to everyone. No matter who you are or where you’re from, what you think or what you’ve done you are always accepted in this community. We aspire to live God’s example of forgiveness and acceptance.”

The following items offer what is hoped will be a simpler, clearer understanding regarding some of our theological orientations.

### **1) The Gift of Tongues (Baptism of the Holy Spirit)**

The gift of tongues is frequently referred to in the New Testament. It can be apparent in two ways: personal prayer and public communication. If it is expressed in public there should be an interpreter available.

The gift of tongues is an indication to the Christ-follower of the potential and further empowerment of the Spirit of Christ who resides in every Christ-follower. This further empowerment comes as a result of the Christ-follower yielding themselves to God and being completely immersed (i.e. “baptized”) in God’s Spirit. This empowering “baptism” is meant to be a continual, ongoing experience – not a one-time event.

The gift of tongues enables the Christ-follower to communicate more intimately with God. Not every Christ-follower has the gift of tongues, but it is a good gift to ask Christ for.

### **2) Personal / Church Finances**

The teaching of a 10% tithe comes out of the old covenant / Old Testament which had rules for giving, but today we live under new teaching, or a “new Covenant” that does not bind us to such rules. There are, however, some important principles that come out of the Old Covenant / Old Testament teaching. Old Testament followers of God were required to give 23.3% of their income: 10% to support Levites who provided spiritual community nurturing, 10% to God as an act of worship, and 10% to the poor every three years (3.3% per year).

What truths and principles can we apply from these Old Testament rules to our lives today?

- The number matters: it is important to commit to a number.
- The first portion of our income should be given to the place that provides spiritual community and nurture.
- It is important to commit to a benchmark / minimum that is generous, challenging, and proportional to the passions of our lives.
- We should give as a form of worship.
- We should give to support the poor.

If you receive spiritual nurturing from EPIC Student Church and/or from another church community, if you feel that you belong to that community, and if your passions line-up with its passions, then your commitment to being a generous giver should begin there.

Together, our combined passion and commitment will far exceed anything we can accomplish alone.

### **3) Lifestyle and Sexuality**

#### **A. Sexual Intimacy**

We believe that sexual intimacy is to be reserved for the exclusive, life-long commitment of marriage between one man and one woman. We ask that those who consider themselves part of the EPIC Student Church community not engage in sex outside of marriage.

We have the legal and cultural permission to have sex with whom we want. We have the right to select our sexual partner in marriage or outside of marriage. So why should we wait, why would we not act on our impulses? What reason can there be to defer, to wait? If sex is so important to God and obviously to us, should we not give careful consideration to delaying the gratification for something better?

We are whole beings - spiritual, physical, emotional and sexual. We cannot separate the sexual from the whole. To be defined by our sexuality or our sexual drive is to minimize our personhood. More than that, we are sacred beings created in God's image. Sexual sin, unlike other sin, invades and distorts the sacred - the wholeness that defines us as created in God's image. Sex is an emotional experience and it affects our lives in ways we cannot fully understand. Sex outside of marriage often leaves us with feelings of guilt, embarrassment, distrust, resentment, and lack of respect.

Regardless of our sexual history it isn't too late – sacred sex is possible. We may be broken, hurting, dysfunctional units but we were created to receive God's intimate love and to respond in kind.

#### **B. Marriage**

We believe that marriage is a life-long covenant agreement between a man and a woman. We accept that many marriages fall short of this ideal and graciously accept both those divorced and those remarried into the community of EPIC Student Church. We affirm the need for all people to engage in the journey towards wholeness in Christ.

#### **C. Same Gender Attraction and lifestyle**

##### **1. We believe**

- i. All people are created in the image of God and have inherent worth and value.
- ii. God loves same-gender-attracted people. This love is unconditional, regardless of their response to God, sexual behaviour, beliefs about homosexuality, or desire to seek change.
- iii. God invites same-gender-attracted people, as He does all people, to discover His intention in relationship to God, self, and others.

##### **2. God's Intention for Sexuality**

- i. God created humanity as male and female to live in complimentary relationship.
- ii. Jesus affirmed God's intention in creation: that sexual intimacy is reserved for the exclusive, life-long commitment of marriage between one man and one woman.
- iii. The same-gender-attracted person may glorify God through either the chaste single life or the restoration to chaste heterosexual marriage.

3. God's Renewing Work
  - i. Recognizing humanity's brokenness, we affirm the need for all people to engage in the journey towards wholeness in Christ.
  - ii. The healing journey for the same-gender-attracted is unique for each individual and offers transformation in primary identity, behaviour, and the frequency and intensity of attractions.
  
4. EPIC Student Church's Response
  - i. Same-gender-attracted people should be treated with the justice and respect that is consistent with the good news of Jesus Christ.
  - ii. God has called EPIC Student Church to relate graciously with same-gender-attracted people, providing a safe, supportive environment in which to experience God's healing love and healthy, intimate relationships.

(Thanks to New Direction Ministries of Canada for same-gender attraction information).

**(These clarifications were adopted from the Urban Bridge Church Local Church Constitution).**