

PROPOSAL TO ADOPT THE AMENDED EFCA STATEMENT OF FAITH IN HOPE CHURCH ARTICLES & BYLAWS

WHAT:

- In June 2019, the EFCA voted to change Article 9 of the Statement of Faith regarding Christ's Return. This simply changed a single word – "premillennial return" was changed to "glorious return".
- The Hope Church Elder Board is recommending that Hope Church adopt this change and continue to use the EFCA Statement of Faith word for word.

WHY:

- Our Elder Board agrees with and desires to be consistent with the EFCA position to major on the majors regarding holding to major doctrine while not dividing over things that are not central to the gospel that may be held by Christians of equal dedication, Biblical knowledge, spiritual maturity and love of Christ. A person's view concerning the millennium is not considered a major doctrine central to the gospel.
- The EFCA published an article explaining the history and rationale, along with other information regarding this change. You can find that document on our website for further reading, but a few excerpts may be helpful:
 - *This amendment better reflects what we say about ourselves. We believe one of the most positive features of our movement is that we are centered in the inerrant Scriptures and on the gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in those Scriptures, and that we aspire to be an association of churches of believers only, but of all believers who can join with us in affirming those truths integral to the authoritative Scriptures, the biblical gospel, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Broadening the acceptable millennial views in our SOF would allow us to be consistent with who we say we are, and the proposed change will allow us to speak with greater integrity when we affirm that our essential theological convictions are all vitally connected to the gospel.*
 - *Here is the heart of the issue. The insistence in the EFCA that you must be premillennial is in conflict with our strong value of unity in the gospel in which we major on the majors. And what is central to the gospel—and ought to be central in our SOF—is that the coming of Christ will be glorious. Our SOF reflects a desire for unity in the fundamental tenets of the gospel. We are silent on those doctrines which through the centuries have divided Christians of equal dedication, Biblical knowledge, spiritual maturity and love for Christ. We are silent except in this one place—where we come down on one particular view—and we require that only those who are premillennialists can be full members of our association, and in many cases, of our churches. Many see a significant conflict here. You can be young earth or old earth, you can be Covenantal or Dispensational, you can be Calvinist or Arminian, you can be credobaptistic or paedobaptistic, you can be cessationist or charismatic, but you must be premillennial. For many, this is a tension that ought to be addressed—we must either quit saying that we major on the majors or we must quit requiring premillennialism as the one eschatological position that is allowed among us. This amendment is designed to discuss and seek to resolve this conflict.*

WHEN:

- This change was proposed at our August 25, 2019 annual congregational meeting and will be voted on at our April 2020 congregational meeting.

QUESTIONS:

- If you have any questions at all, please contact the church office to set up a time with Pastor Matt for further discussion.