United Evangelical Free Church
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Statement of Faith class
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Article 3[1]

The Human condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

    5. We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

I. Introduction

II. Change of order in Articles 3 and 5

A. This follows the biblical narrative which reveals the creation and fall/sin of humanity.

B. It follows logically in that the truth stated in this article outlines the problem—sin incurring God's wrath—that Jesus Christ came to address through his person and work (articles 4 and 5).

C. This does not, however, preclude the notion that the full extent of our sin is known only after the revelation of the gospel of Christ.

D. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is reserved for article 6 on the Holy Spirit, where the emphasis is on his application of the work of Christ.

Discussion questions:

- Why is it important to state that God created Adam and Eve?

God created Adam and Eve – We have moved from the generic statement about the creation of "man" to a specific reference to the first human beings, Adam and Eve. This ties our doctrinal statement more closely to the biblical story itself (Genesis 3), and indirectly affirms the equal

[1] Adapted from "EFCA Statement of Faith: Article 3," by Greg Strand, Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing. http://www.efca.org/files/document/office-of-the-president/sof-proposed-revision-article-3.pdf

value of men and women as equally created in God's image. In addition, this created order has important ramifications in the current debates concerning homosexual belief and behavior.

The mention of these two by name also supports the notion that the Bible is not a set of abstract philosophical propositions but a record of the work of God in history. This creative act of God and the tragic events that follow set the stage for the unfolding story of God's saving work and points to the significance of Christ as the "last Adam" (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45).

- What does it mean that they are created "in God's image"? What does that mean for all humanity?

In his image – The creation of the first human beings was a unique and special act of God which separated them from any other creature in the natural world.

- What is the significance of the reference to "in union with Adam"? Who does that include?

Adam and Eve sinned – We have replaced "fell into sin" to emphasis the deliberate and rebellious nature of this act.

When tempted by Satan – This is one of three changes in this revised statement of faith that indicate the reality of the spiritual realm, which is not mentioned in the 1950 statement. Significantly, Satan provides only the occasion of human sin, not its cause.

- Because of "union with Adam," there are implications. What are they? How do they affect us?

Union with Adam – Though the Bible declares that both Adam and Eve sinned, Paul attributes the lasting impact of sin upon the human race to Adam in particular (cf. Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22). This union is how Adam's sin affects us, and it provides a parallel with our union with Christ stated below.

- What does it mean that we are "sinners by nature and by choice"?

Sinners by nature and by choice – This spells out what that lasting effect of our union with the sinful Adam is. The "and" in this clause means "as well as", "in addition to." In other words, both of these are true: human beings are sinners by the nature they inherit and they are sinners by the choices they make. This is not meant to declare that humans are sinful only when the sinful human nature is confirmed by some conscious human choice.

- Often sin is mentioned alone, without mentioning anything else. It becomes something we do, that adversely affects us. Why is it imperative to mention the vertical implications of our sin against God, viz. alienation and under his wrath? Why is that avoided today?

These two statements strengthen the 1950 statement in the assessment of the human condition, further defining what it means to be "lost". Sin is not simply an impersonal cause and effect reality, but sin incurs the wrath of God. This means that not only do human beings need to be saved from sin, but they need to be saved from what sin incurs: the wrath of God. This is a doctrine being questioned by some today.

- What is the lone remedy that God has provided to our sin?

- What is the significance of the words "rescued, reconciled, and renewed"? How does this prepare for the next article in the flow of redemptive history?

Rescued, reconciled, renewed – This includes both the negative and positive aspects of God's saving work in Christ, and, implicitly, its past, present, and future dimensions in the life of the believer as well: we have been rescued (1 Thessalonians 1:10) from the consequences of sin (including legal condemnation and moral captivity), we are reconciled into a new relationship of peace with God as our Father (cf. Romans 5:1, 2), and we will ultimately be renewed into the image of God (which is the image of Christ) when we are glorified with Christ at the resurrection (Romans 8:29, 30; Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2). Reference to the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit which is mentioned at this point in the 1950 statement is reserved for statement #6.

III. Article 3 – The Human Condition

Creation

A. We believe God created Adam and Eve in His image (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9).

God created Adam and Eve – We have moved from the generic statement about the creation of "man" to a specific reference to the first human beings, Adam and Eve. This ties our doctrinal statement more closely to the biblical story itself (Genesis 3), and indirectly affirms the equal value of men and women as equally created in God's image. In addition, this created order has important ramifications in the current debates concerning homosexual belief and behavior.

The mention of these two by name also supports the notion that the Bible is not a set of abstract philosophical propositions but a record of the work of God in history. This creative act of God and the tragic events that follow set the stage for the unfolding story of God's saving work and points to the significance of Christ as the "last Adam" (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45).

In his image – The creation of the first human beings was a unique and special act of God which separated them from any other creature in the natural world.

Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)
[26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.[2]

Genesis 5:1 (ESV)
[1] This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

Genesis 9:6 (ESV)
[6] "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

1 Corinthians 11:7 (ESV)
[7] For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.

Colossians 3:10 (ESV)
[10] and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

James 3:9 (ESV)
[9] With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

Sin (Fall)

B. We believe Adam and Eve sinned when tempted by Satan (Genesis 3:1-6; John 8:44; Romans 5:12-14; 16:20; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14).

Adam and Eve sinned – We have replaced "fell into sin" to emphasis the deliberate and rebellious nature of this act.

When tempted by Satan – This is one of three changes in this revised statement of faith that indicate the reality of the spiritual realm, which is not mentioned in the 1950 statement. Significantly, Satan provides only the occasion of human sin, not its cause.

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2 *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

Genesis 3:1-6 (ESV)
[1] Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" [2] And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, [3] but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' " [4] But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [5] For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

John 8:44 (ESV)
[44] You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Romans 5:12-14 (ESV)
[12] Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— [13] for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

Romans 16:20 (ESV)
[20] The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)
[3] But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

1 Timothy 2:13-14 (ESV)
[13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

C. We believe all human beings are in union with Adam (Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; John 3:6; Romans 3:12; 5:12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:22a; 1 John 1:8), and are thus sinners by nature and by choice (Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 6:5; Romans 5:15; 8:5-8; Ephesians 2:1-2; 4:17-19).

   All human beings

   Union with Adam – Though the Bible declares that both Adam and Eve sinned, Paul attributes the lasting impact of sin upon the human race to Adam in particular (cf.

Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22). This union is how Adam's sin affects us, and it provides a parallel with our union with Christ stated below.

Sinners by nature and by choice – This spells out what that lasting effect of our union with the sinful Adam is. The "and" in this clause means "as well as", "in addition to." In other words, both of these are true: human beings are sinners by the nature they inherit and they are sinners by the choices they make. This is not meant to declare that humans are sinful only when the sinful human nature is confirmed by some conscious human choice.

Job 14:4 (ESV)
[4] Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one.

Psalm 51:5 (ESV)
[5] Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

John 3:6 (ESV)
[6] That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Romans 3:12 (ESV)
[12] All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

Romans 5:12-14 (ESV)
[12] Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— [13] for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

1 Corinthians 15:22 (ESV)
[22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 John 1:8 (ESV)
[8] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Genesis 6:5 (ESV)
[5] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)
[9] The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Isaiah 6:5 (ESV)
[5] And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Romans 5:15 (ESV)
[15] But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

Romans 8:5-8 (ESV)
[5] For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. [6] For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. [7] For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. [8] Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Ephesians 2:1-2 (ESV)
[1] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

Ephesians 4:17-19 (ESV)
[17] Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. [18] They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. [19] They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

D. We believe every human being is alienated from God (Romans 5:10), and under His wrath (Romans 1:18; 2:5; 3:9-19; 3:23; Ephesians 2:3).

   Alienated from God

   Under his wrath

   These two statements strengthen the 1950 statement in the assessment of the human condition, further defining what it means to be "lost". Sin is not simply an impersonal cause and effect reality, but sin incurs the wrath of God. This means that not only do human beings need to be saved from sin, but they need to be saved from what sin incurs: the wrath of God. This is a doctrine being questioned by some today.

Romans 5:10 (ESV)
[10] For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Romans 1:18 (ESV)
[18] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 2:5 (ESV)
[5] But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

Romans 3:9-19 (ESV)
[9] What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, [10] as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; [11] no one understands; no one seeks for God. [12] All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." [13] "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." [14] "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." [15] "Their feet are swift to shed blood; [16] in their paths are ruin and misery, [17] and the way of peace they have not known." [18] "There is no fear of God before their eyes." [19] Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

Romans 3:23 (ESV)
[23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Ephesians 2:3 (ESV)
[3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

God's Saving Work

E. We believe it is only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5) that we can be rescued (1 Thessalonians 1:10), reconciled (Romans 5:1, 2, 10; Colossians 1:20) and renewed (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

   Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ

   Rescued, reconciled, renewed – This includes both the negative and positive aspects of God's saving work in Christ, and, implicitly, its past, present, and future dimensions in the life of the believer as well: we have been rescued (1 Thessalonians 1:10) from the consequences of sin (including legal condemnation and moral captivity), we are reconciled into a new relationship of peace with God as our Father (cf. Romans 5:1, 2), and we will ultimately be renewed into the image of God (which is the image of Christ) when we are glorified with Christ at the resurrection (Romans 8:29, 30; Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2). Reference to the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit which is mentioned at this point in the 1950 statement is reserved for statement #6.

Acts 4:12 (ESV)
[12] And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV)
[5] For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (ESV)
[10] and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Romans 5:1, 2, 10 (ESV)
[1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. . . . [10] For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Colossians 1:20 (ESV)
[20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Romans 8:29 (ESV)
[29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)
[18] And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:24 (ESV)
[24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Philippians 3:21 (ESV)
[21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

1 John 3:2 (ESV)
[2] Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Summarizing connection to the gospel: *"God's gospel alone addresses our deepest human need."*

IV. Specific ways the Article on the doctrine of the human condition has been strengthened, or new issues addressed.

- Specific reference to Adam and Eve, not just “man.”
- Reference to Satan.
- Recognition of our union with Adam.
- Sinners by nature and by choice (over against the weaker, “fell into sin”).
- Alienated from God (further explaining what it means to be “lost”).
- Under God’s wrath (emphasizing the biblical truth of what our sins incur).

V. Importance of reaffirming the biblical/doctrinal truths of the human condition today (which also carries with it denials)

- God created Adam and Eve—historical particularity of creation of mankind
- Created in the image of God—human worth and dignity, bioethics
- In union with Adam, sinned and sinners by nature and choice—anthropology
- Satan—historical figure as opposed to myth
- Alienated from God and under his wrath—sin incurs God’s personal wrath, this is not simply a cause and effect, God is both loving and holy, not just loving.
- God’s saving work in Jesus Christ—God’s initiative, exclusivity of Jesus Christ to rescue, reconcile and renew