

Revision to Article 9 of the EFCA Statement of Faith

A History on Eschatological Views:

A-1. Christian church

Century	Premillennial	Amillennial	Postmillennial
1 st – 4 th	Chiliasm – J. Martyr	Cyprian	
5 th – 16 th		Augustine, Luther, Calvin	
17 th – 18 th			Edwards, Puritans
19 th – 20 th	Dispensational - Darby	Vos & Hoekema	Until WWI
21 st	Historic – Ladd, Hamilton	Riddlebarger & Storms	

A-2. EFCA

1912 Norwegian-Danish Free Church Association affirms general eschatology:

“9. We believe that Jesus Christ who ascended into heaven, shall come again in great power and glory.”

1950 Premillennialism in original EFCA Statement of Faith

““We believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this ‘Blessed Hope’ has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.” ”

1957 Room for posttribulation view

1977 Room for *all* tribulation views (pre, mid, post)

1985 Room for *historic* premillennialism

2005-07 Revisions to Statement of Faith

B 2019 Revision to EFCA Statement of Faith

2019 June Revision to Article 9, Statement of Faith

“9. We believe in the personal, bodily and ~~premillennial~~ **glorious** return of our Lord Jesus Christ. 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.”

C EFCA Ethos

C-1. Significance of Silence

““Once [the early Free Church leaders] began to put in writing what was commonly believed among them, they were silent on those doctrines which through the centuries had divided Christians of equal dedication, Biblical knowledge, spiritual maturity and love for Christ.’ This ‘significance of silence’ reflected our strong concern for Evangelical unity in the gospel.” [Arnold Olson, *The Significance of Silence*]

- “Unity in essentials, dialogue in differences.”
- “Major on the majors, minor on the minors.”
- “An association of churches of *believers only, but of all believers...*”

C-2. Unity in the Gospel

- Insistence on premillennialism conflicts with our higher value of unity in the gospel.
- Desire for all believers to unite in expecting the GLORIOUS return of Christ

Matt 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Matt 19:28; 24:30; Luke 21:27; Matt 25:31; Col 3:4; 2 Thess 1:10; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:7; 4:13; 5:1, 4; Mark 10:37; 2 Thess 2:14; Jude 24

D Concerns about Revision

D-1. Hermeneutics

Q: Isn't there a danger of letting a new hermeneutic into the Free Church?

A:

D-2. Slippery Slope to Liberalism

Q: Doesn't denial of the literal hermeneutic behind premillennialism threaten inerrancy?

A:

E Rationale for Revision

The following major reasons for supporting the “Motion to Amend Article 9” of the EFCA Statement of Faith at the national level come from our EFCA President, Kevin Kompelien:

“Here are ten critical reasons why we affirm the motion to amend, not in order of importance:

1. Revisits and completes the discussion begun in 2005 of broadening the acceptable views on eschatology within the EFCA.
2. Does not require anyone to change their own personal view on the millennium but does allow for a few more differences within the EFCA.
3. Acknowledges the various views of eschatology and the millennium throughout church history, and recognizes the temporal specificity of Christ’s return is not a doctrine “of first importance.”
4. Responds to various views on the millennium in the same way we handle other doctrines that are of the same level of importance.
5. Relieves the tension between our distinctive millennial view and our distinctive approach to recognizing various levels of doctrine in favor of majoring on the majors while being centered on the gospel.
6. Emphasizes what the Bible emphasizes about the return of Christ, namely that it will be wonderfully glorious.
7. Does not change our commitment to the Bible's inerrancy, to our consensus hermeneutic, or to the major linchpins of our shared eschatology.
8. Strengthens our doctrinal integrity as a movement as now everything in our Statement of Faith is of a similarly high importance which makes it easier to be consistent in its application for the church, districts, and EFCA related ministries.
9. Answers the increasing number of requests to address this issue from many pastors, missionaries, churches, districts, and missions leaders over the years.
10. Positions us for the future as many of the highly qualified and otherwise EFCA doctrinally aligned candidates for new pastors, church planters, adoptee churches, and missionaries are unsure of or uncommitted to premillennialism.”

For more resources go here:

<https://www.efca.org/resources/document/resources-and-references>