

## **EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE ETHOS STATEMENT**

The ethos of the Evangelical Alliance stems from the Alliance's basis of faith, its evangelical relationships commitment and its values of being Christ centred, servant hearted, relational and wholehearted. It is committed to prayer and to mission and from a desire and motivation to express Christ's love to those whom we serve outside the organisation and to reflect this internally in our relationships with one another.

The motivation of most of those who work at the Alliance comes from and flows out of the context of Christian faith and is seen as an expression of that faith which:

- States that God is the sole Creator
- Determines that each individual is uniquely made in the image of God although is also fallen.
- Declares that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who came to save humankind from sin
- Provides for a relationship with the living God in the person of Jesus Christ that defines what being a Christian means
- Equips the Christian to live life through the power of the Holy Spirit and grow in holiness
- Finds authoritative expression of its doctrine and moral character in the Bible

Moreover, the expression of that Christian faith:

- Honours, obeys and glorifies God, acknowledging God's sovereignty
- Nourishes the spiritual life and is fully committed to developing it
- Believes that the love of God in Jesus Christ reaches out to all people.
- Knows God through the person of Jesus and seeks to follow His way of life, modelling love, peace, justice and forgiveness in attitude and behaviours
- Embraces the power of the Holy Spirit as the source of strength for living

Colossians Chapter 3:1-17 amongst many other Biblical passages, gives us a clear biblical outline of how we might express that Christian faith as a disciple of Jesus and how we relate to one another.

*Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature; sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these; anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word, or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

The Christian's motivation to express the love of Christ in his/her life affects not just the nature of the work he/she chooses to do but also the way he/she behaves and relates to others. This should lead to a vocational and relational lifestyle characterised and driven by faith in God, touching the lives of others through the work of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to our values of being Christ centred, servant hearted, relational and wholehearted the following values are also fundamental to the ethos of the Evangelical Alliance:

- Biblical – submitting all that we do and are to the authority of the Bible
- Faithful – holding fast to the God-given perspectives we have inherited through the historic creeds and the reformation, while working out our faith in today's world
- Prayerful – depending on God to guide and empower us
- Recognising diversity of convictions among evangelicals on secondary issues Consultative – listening to the hopes and concerns of our members
- Enabling – as the servant of our members, working through them wherever possible, and helping them to be more effective
- Forward looking – constantly pressing forward to face the issues and challenges of tomorrow
- Excellent – seeking the highest standards of integrity, financial accountability and stewardship
- Focused – giving priority to the issues which maximise the impact of our available resources

The ethos of the Evangelical Alliance is integral to it being effective as a Christian organisation. We recognise that this relational ethos essentially comes from a relationship with Jesus Christ and therefore it becomes an occupational requirement that most of our staff are committed Christians.

Roles which have significant leadership or representative responsibilities, or that are central to fulfilling the aims and purposes of the Alliance both internally or externally or developing and maintaining our Christian ethos, will always be held by committed evangelical Christians. This is further developed in our equal opportunities justifiability policy. As an internal factor the Alliance will function more effectively and harmoniously as an organisation if all employees work with a common purpose.

Externally, the Alliance is a high profile organisation and needs to model and promote to its members, the wider Christian community and other sectors, its application of Christian faith within its own activities.

There are other roles which have key spiritual elements to them that can only be carried out by those who are committed to a living faith in Christ. Where there are posts which have been identified as not requiring someone to have an expressed Christian commitment, it is recognised that some areas of this policy will not be applicable e.g. commitment and participation in the life of a local church.

However, there is an expectation that every member of staff will respect and uphold all other areas expressed in this policy.

We recognise that it is essential that these attitudes and behaviours mark the work of the Evangelical Alliance and we expect our staff to act in good faith and with loyalty to that relational Christian ethos as part of their evangelical Christian standards of behaviour.

It is our aspiration to employ staff across the spectrum of ethnicity and age and to have a good gender balance.

The code of conduct articulates what we consider to be the principal areas which define our relational ethos and in that context set out a framework for working together. In Appendix A we further indicate how our ethos is governed by an evangelical understanding of the Bible and its interpretation.

## **APPENDIX A: THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE AND THE BIBLE**

The Evangelical Alliance's Basis of Faith affirms 'The divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and its consequent entire trustworthiness in all matters of faith and conduct.' This statement is understood by the Alliance in certain specific senses:

The term 'Holy Scripture' here is synonymous with 'the Bible' and indicates the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as listed in various historic Protestant confessions (e.g. the Belgic Confession (1561), Westminster Confession (1647)). It does not include those books generally known as 'the Apocrypha'. The 'divine inspiration' of Holy Scripture indicates that it has its origin in God, and that it is uniquely God's Word written. While this written Word is given primarily as a witness to Jesus Christ the Word made flesh, and while God used human writers to inscribe it, these writers were moved by God's Holy Spirit in such a way that the Bible is to be regarded as 'God-breathed' (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16). It is thus distinct from all other literature, bearing in its full scope the peerless authority of God himself.

The divine source of Holy Scripture establishes its 'entire trustworthiness', ensuring that it is utterly truthful and reliable in all that it affirms, and is the reference point by which every other claim to truthfulness must be measured. No human opinion or decree can override Scripture. Even creeds and confessions of faith, which attempt to articulate the theology of Scripture, do not possess Scripture's supreme authority. The Alliance's own Basis of Faith is merely a summary of core biblical teaching; our corporate life and ministry is directed by Scripture as a whole.

The supreme authority of Scripture applies alike to 'faith and conduct' - that is, to ethics and lifestyle as well as to formal doctrine. Scripture must be the lens we use to evaluate our lives and the world.

Indeed, Scripture will be of little value to us if it does not govern how we live out our lives, not only as individuals but also in community, and in wider society. The preceding Ethos Statement and Code of Conduct are intended to bear out these practical dimensions of biblical authority. They commit the Alliance to uphold Scriptural standards in respect of human attitudes, behaviour and relationships. In particular, they commit Alliance staff, both individually and corporately, to authentic biblical patterns of Christian discipleship, fellowship and social concern.

While the Evangelical Alliance has historically recognised the rights and responsibilities of the individual believer in the ethical interpretation of Scripture, it has characteristically sought to discern its own rules of conduct on a corporate basis, both with reference to pan-evangelical precedent, and through its various councils, boards, committees and commissions. A key instance of such corporate discernment was the adoption of the Alliance's 'Practical Resolutions' at its founding in 1846. In the form updated in 1996, these resolutions are commended to all staff. Other significant examples of corporate moral discernment are to be found in the reports produced by various commissions of the Alliance - e.g. the Theological Advisory Group (formerly known as ACUTE and TAPPAC). Together, these sources offer a more detailed picture of the Alliance's biblical-ethical worldview.

## **APPENDIX B OTHER POLICIES RELATED TO ETHOS & CODE OF CONDUCT**

Equal opportunities policy

Equal opportunities justifiability policy

Harassment & bullying policy

Grievance policy

Basis of faith and evangelical relationships commitment