

## DISCIPLINE, MINISTRY and HISTORY OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

TEXTBOOK: *The Discipline of the Evangelical Church*

Required Reading: Brian Hotrum, *The Evangelical Story*;

James D. Nelson, "The EUB Spirit: Remembering it Aright";

Video: "5 Minute History of the EUB Church."

<https://united.edu/center-for-the-evangelical-united-brethren-heritage-eub/>

Course Purpose: *To become familiar with the Doctrines, History, and  
Organizational Structure of the Evangelical Church and to  
demonstrate the ability to make application to the local church.*

DUE DATE: This exam is due by September 1 if you plan for it to support your licensing at the Annual Conference.

### APPROACH

The following is an open book examination. **Please indicate the paragraph numbers on which you base the answer to each question.** Be sure to use the latest edition of The Discipline. In your answers, look to convey your thoughts in your own words. You certainly will want to use the Discipline in formulating your answers, but **do not use extensive quotations from The Discipline as your answers.** This only demonstrates that you can copy the Discipline, not your own thinking on the matters at hand.

When completed, send the examination to the examiner. **Please place your name on your examination. Please note: Examinations must be to the examiner by September 1 in order to apply to the current Conference Year.**

### **Affirmation of Reading:**

Please indicate if you have read the Discipline in its entirety. Note that there are two volumes of The Discipline: the primary volume which contains the doctrine and polity of the church and The Book of Ritual, which is revised infrequently. Be sure to read both. (From experience it is not a book you can speed read!!)

### PART ONE: DENOMINATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

- A. As pastor you are conducting membership classes for those who desire to join the church, and you desire is to give them an overview of the Denominational Foundations.
  1. Knowing that various Articles of Faith are interrelated you decide to present them in sub-groupings. What sub-groups would you identify, what heading would you give each, and which articles would you include under each sub-heading?
  2. One class member asks, "What sets the Evangelical Church apart from other evangelical denominations?" How would you answer this?
  3. What articles in the Spiritual Culture and Moral Standards would you stress as related to the pressures of our 21<sup>st</sup> Century American Culture? Why?

NOTES:

4. How would you describe the purpose of the Evangelical Church to these interested individuals?
- B. The day after your first Membership Class session you are in your office mentally reviewing the first class. You decide that it would be helpful to the class to give a brief sketch of the History of the Evangelical Church.
  1. Prepare a chart for your class that tracks the development, mergers, and disassociations which eventually led to the birth of the Evangelical Church of North America.
  2. Include dates and names of primary individuals who were used of God across the denominational history.
  3. To the side of the chart list the foundational concepts which flow like a river through the history of the Evangelical Church.
  4. The chart eventually comes to 1968 and the formation of the Evangelical Church of North America. Make a list of the areas of incompatibility with the Methodist Church and the hallmarks of this newly formed denomination.
- C. You are sitting down for lunch with a fellow ministerial student or a pastor. They begin to share with you some items from the Declaration of Faith and Spiritual and Moral Values which they question, struggle to understand, and even some they question can be supported fully through Scripture. In the openness of discussion
  1. What statements, if any, do you not agree with and why?
  2. What statements do you struggle with accepting? Please explain your answer.

**PART TWO- CONSTITUTIONAL LAW**

- A. Church Membership
  1. As you continue your Membership Class the concept of membership itself becomes an item of discussion.
    - a. A class member asks, "What are the benefits of membership in this church?" How would you reply?
    - b. Another asks, "What does "profession of faith" mean? How would you answer this and what bearing does this have on church membership?"
  2. Two of your potential members have recently moved. Previously they were members of a church in a different denomination. They have completed your application for membership. You have arranged to make a personal visit. In preparation for your visit you have reviewed the procedures to receive them into membership and have considered several important Articles of Faith that you would like to discuss with them. After some brief discussion you begin sharing with them. What Articles of Faith would you discuss and what would you say? Would you emphasize particular Articles of Faith if these potential members were from a Lutheran background? Baptist? Pentecostal? Nondenominational? (Your response to the final question could become very, very long. The long version is not necessary to think well about the question. Look instead to a brief answer that speaks to particular teachings of the Evangelical Church.)
- B. The Ministry of the Church
  1. A young man in your congregation has counseled with you concerning God's call upon his life to enter the ministry.
    - a. Outline the steps of progress from the call to minister, preparation, and advancement to Order of Elder. Remember to make note of options available through the process.
    - b. As you describe the process to him, what would you tell him about the Conference Board of Ministry?
  2. Please answer the above scenario if it were a woman called into the ministry or a man who feels called to be in a supportive, specialized ministry on a church staff.
- C. What duties of the minister and/or standards in the Code of Ethics seem the most challenging to fulfill for you?
  1. In what ways do these speak to you of your need for God's empowerment in ministry?
  2. How does a person's spiritual gifting relate to fulfilling his/her duties?

NOTES:

D. Take a step back reflect on the entirety of Chapter 5, "The Ministry of the Church." Reflect particularly on the concepts of the itinerancy and system of ministerial assignment. Some have said that the core value of the itinerant and assignment system is the Scriptural value of mutual submission. In your response reflect on how you see this value in the itinerant system of ministry and in the assignments of fields of labor. Are there other values that you see in this vision of ministry?

E. Judicial Administration

3. Why is there a section on judicial administration?
4. What is the minister's role in a trial of a layman or of a local elder and probationer not under appointment?

PART THREE: ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION

A. The Local Church

1. What is the Local Church Council and what is its purpose?
2. What is the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations? What function is it to serve?
3. How does one fulfill the position of being "the ranking officer of the local church and as such the leader of its life and program" (¶565) while having the same "attitude that was is Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant?"
4. What is the Lay Leader and what does he or she do?
5. What is the difference between the Financial Secretary and the Church Treasurer?
6. What are Trustees and what are their duties?
7. Who has the authority to call a Congregational meeting? What business is to be conducted at such meetings?

B. The Annual Conference

1. How are lay members elected? What are their rights and responsibilities?
2. What does para. 819(i) teach about assistant/associate pastors?
3. What do you see as the most important duty of the Conference Superintendent?
4. What function does the Board of Ministry fulfill for the Annual Conference?

C. The General Church

1. How often does the General Conference meet? Does it fulfill a legislative function? What does it do?
2. What is the General Church Council?
3. What do you see to be the most important duty of the General Superintendent?
4. What is the role of the Council of Superintendents?
5. How is a change made in the Discipline? What impact can a local church have on the Discipline?
6. Why is there a General Corporation?
7. What is the General Board of Missions and what are the current mission fields?
8. Which missionary organizations are recognized by the Evangelical Church?

PART IV: RITUALS

Obviously, The Book of Ritual is a key part of shaping your answers to these questions in addition to certain Articles of Faith.

- A. What are some of the purposes of rituals?
- B. What sacraments are practiced in the Evangelical Church? What makes a sacrament a sacrament? Who has the authority to administer the sacraments? Where does this authority come from?
- C. What modes of baptism are used in The Evangelical Church? Is one mode preferred above the others?

NOTES:

D. What are the reasons given in the Discipline to support the baptism of infants? How do you anticipate handling this question in your ministry? What are your reasons? (See also para. 112)

PART V: PRACTICE

A. Why have a discipline?

B. Design a sample agenda for a monthly meeting of the Local Church Council. How does a pastor include the concept of planning and dreaming for the future when there are so many “committee” reports to be heard?

C. Describe how the Annual Conference and the Conference Superintendent are to support the ministry of the local church and likewise how the local church supports the ministry of the Annual Conference and the denomination. Interact with the following statement: The Annual Conference and denomination exist for the benefit of the local church.