



"Yn Eiddo, Aeth ni ddi"
"On Fire, for ever" (1988)
Associating Evangelical Churches of Wales
Cymdeithas o Eglwysai Efroglaidd yng Nghymru

THE PRINCIPLES TO WHICH WE ARE COMMITTED

These principles were formally adopted at the first Annual Assembly of A.E.C.W. on 23 April 1988.

We need to have a clear commitment to the principles on which we agree, and which form the basis for our fellowship and practical co-operation.

1. THE CHURCH IS ONE

"The catholic or universal church which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Westminster, Savoy, 1689)

The unity of the Church is basic and fundamental to our whole understanding of interchurch relationships. We belong to each other as churches and believers because we have been united to Christ.

We must never lose sight of this spiritual reality, and ought to have it consciously in mind in all our affairs.

It is the basis of evangelical unity. It transcends and will eventually supersede all those things in which true Christians differ.

We do not wish to be insular, but to encourage other churches and Christians.

2. THE INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that local churches are free, under the authority of Christ, to order all their affairs without interference.

Our associating does not establish any authority to rule or govern over associating churches.

Our associating is voluntary and analogous to the relationship between individual Christians and the local church.

3. INTERCHURCH RELATIONSHIPS

We want to promote the fullest possible co-operation in fellowship and witness between all churches and fellowships which embrace the evangelical faith.

We recognize the freedom of each local church to associate with other local churches without loss to their chosen level of autonomy.

The New Testament also gives principles which may be applied to interchurch relationships.

Matthew 18:15-20 outlines a procedure which may guide churches in difficult matters affecting their relationships.

In such situations the basis for action must be the local churches involved not any hierarchical structure.

4. WE ASSOCIATE ON THE BASIS OF SCRIPTURE AND GOSPEL TRUTH

We seek to be united in the truth. We formally adopt the Doctrinal Belief of the EMW as a minimal statement of scriptural truth which all member churches are required to confess.

We recognize that the doctrinal position of Associating Churches Council with regard to the doctrines of grace is that broadly represented by the classical reformed confessions of faith (e.g. Westminster, Savoy, 1689. 1823)

We believe that the discipline of submitting to the authority of Scripture must characterize our lives as local churches and in association.

We desire to express our essential unity in Christ whilst acknowledging the diversity which characterizes our churches. We recognize value in diversity and do not seek an artificial uniformity.

We respect the differences between associating churches in matters of church order and baptismal practice.

We rejoice in the existence of both Welsh and English language churches in the land, and are committed to the furtherance of the work of the Gospel in both languages.

5. EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

We are concerned to preach the Gospel and to co-operate so that it will be preached widely throughout the land.

We want to see new Gospel churches established, and to strengthen and encourage pioneer situations.

6. REVIVAL

We are persuaded of the need for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the churches, and are praying to that end.

7. PRACTICAL FELLOWSHIP

We need to encourage means for strengthening the bonds that link us.

- COMMUNICATION:** we need to be aware of one another's needs.
- CONSULTATION:** churches are free to ask for help when needed.
- CO-OPERATION:** we need to identify important areas for joint action.
- CARE:** we need to show practical Christian love for each other.

These aims will be pursued at both regional and national level.

Regional: We need to establish a regional framework to foster fellowship. The churches in each region will be free to decide the level of their co-operation together. They may seek help from either churches outside their immediate area or the associating churches as a whole.

National: We will meet as church representatives annually. Annual gatherings will be chiefly concerned with matters relating to the churches. Provision will be made for churches considering membership of Associating Evangelical Churches of Wales to send observers to the Annual Assembly.

Co-ordinating Committee: A small committee will need to be appointed to act on our behalf in making arrangements for each annual gathering and other matters which may arise during the course of the year. They will also have authority to call special gatherings of church representatives or refer to the churches should any matter arise which warrants this.

We will appoint representatives to the EMW General Committee and the BEC Executive Council.

In all our fellowship as churches we are conscious of our Lord's prayer in John 17, and the vital importance of a visible unity which will make a lasting impression on the world.