

# The four standards of CE

The **MOTTO** for the Christian Endeavour Movement is – ‘For Christ and the Church’. This motto reflects the desire of the member to be committed to Christ, their life being surrendered to their Saviour and dedicated to His service. It also reflects the Movement’s commitment to supporting the visible Church.

The four **STANDARDS** were set out by the founder of the Movement to amplify the motto. These standards are to be interpreted and applied throughout all the Movement’s activities:

- a) Confession of Christ
- b) Service for Christ
- c) Loyalty to Christ’s Church
- d) Fellowship with Christ’s people

Christian Endeavour places considerable emphasis on an individual’s personal allegiance to Christ and his/her responsibilities towards the local church. In this way, Endeavourers of many different denominations are able to come together for fellowship and activities whilst each individual society remains firmly attached to a particular local Church with its own traditions and theological viewpoints.

Christian Endeavour has never attempted to impose a Doctrinal Basis on its members, but members are guided by the four standards of the Movement.

## CONFESSION OF CHRIST

**Scripture Readings:** 1 John ch.1:1-2, 5; Proverbs ch.14:1-5; John ch.1:1-14; Acts ch.14:8-18; Acts ch.20:17-27; 1 John ch.5:1-12; Hebrews ch.1:1-13.

The dictionary says that confession is admission, avowal, acknowledgment.

## **1. It is the duty of Christ's followers to do these three things concerning Him.**

It is something which no one who claims to be His can escape. This is what He called them out from the world to do. It is a task committed unto them by their Master Himself. Confession is not left to a person's own desire whether they do it or not. Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Master also means acceptance of this duty. If a person is His, they must willingly take up their Cross, their duty and follow Him.

## **2. It is the example of Christ**

He came to this world with a strict sense of duty. He came to reveal God, His majesty, His power, His holiness, His love, His care for people. He confessed God and His example is that His followers should do the same. Men saw God in Jesus Christ and they knew that he was different. Christians should be such that people see Christ, see God in them. This is confession. It is not merely a matter of talking but mostly of living. It is possible to confess Christ without even saying a single word.

## **3. This is a test of a real Christian**

The world is very critical and very shrewd. Non-Christians know whether a person is a true Christian or not. It is of no use professing to be a Christian if one is not living the life which acknowledges Him. It is a full time job, it takes the whole of a man, the whole of his time to be a Christian. So confession is not confined to certain times or parts of a person's life. True confession is seen at home as well as at Church, in work and in leisure, on Monday as well as Sunday. The test is that one lives confession in all spheres of life. It *is* one of the tests which Christ Himself put when He said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which *is* in heaven".

## **4. Confession must be spontaneous**

Confession should be a natural instinct of life as normal as breathing, something which is an actual part of life. This was how the early apostles saw it when they said, "We cannot help telling the things which we have seen and heard". If one knows Christ it must be a delight to reveal Him.

## **5. Another word for confessing is witnessing**

It comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word "witan" which means "know". A witness in a court of law is not required to say what they themselves think about the matter on which they are giving evidence but to tell what they know. What they think does not matter but what they have seen and heard is important. Too often those confessing Christ want to give their opinions and so obscure the real Christ or fail to show Him.

# **(2) SERVICE FOR CHRIST**

**Scripture Readings:** Matthew ch.25:31-46; Romans ch.12:6-13; Joshua ch.24:14-25; I Chronicles ch.29:1-5; Romans ch.12:1-21; Galatians ch.5:7-18; Ephesians ch.6:1-13; Colossians ch.3:12-25.

## **1. Jesus Christ demands the complete commitment of the lives of those who would follow Him.**

Those who do so must be prepared to leave all for His sake. This is the essential of all true service and is the reason for failure in service when it is missing. The One who gave Himself entirely for mankind and who died as a living sacrifice on a Cross has a right to expect the same willing service from His servants.

## **2. Service is sacrificial**

It may mean hardship, suffering, the giving up of something very dear. "The dearest idol I have known." It requires the putting away of anything which would hinder. Anything which comes between Christ and the giving of all must go. This is why the Christian life is not easy. Dr. Francis Clark realised

this when he sought to develop a movement to train his young people in service. It is expressed very clearly in the words of the Covenant "I promise Him that I will strive to do whatever He would like to have me do". The important word here in service is "whatever".

### **3. Counting the cost**

It is important to face up to the cost of service and what it means to promise "whatever," anything, everything, the surrendering of all. This is not an easy thing to do.

### **4. Service for Christ**

This is the motive, it is for Christ. This 'lifts it above the realm of self. It makes the sacrifice noble. The driving force behind it is love, it is the power which a great affection gives. Love for Christ compels the willing giving of all for Him. It was because of this that the first disciples gave themselves in the abandonment of service; that martyrs went gladly to their death, that Paul suffered cheerfully imprisonment, scourging and all manner of abuse. Service done for Christ takes on a new quality so that even the meanest task is exalted to something great, it uplifts the person who serves to a new dignity. "For Christ" is like a banner flying over a victorious army.

### **5. Everyone can be a servant**

It is not the lot of everyone to be a great scholar, an outstanding writer or philosopher, it is not everyone who has the skill to paint glorious pictures or compose noble music which moves the Soul, but everyone can be a servant. This is all that Christ asks of his followers that they may be willing to serve in whatever way possible or in whatever sphere He places them. One of the greatest examples Christ gave was that of service. He was the suffering servant. He said, "I am among you as one who serves".

## **(3) LOYALTY TO CHRIST**

**Scripture Readings:** Ephesians ch4:1-6; Deuteronomy ch.6:1-10;  
Matthew ch.10: 32-42; Matthew ch.11:25-30; Romans ch.6:1-14;  
Philippians ch.2:1-11; Revelation ch.2:1-7.

This one of the four Standards is central and the most important of all. Confession of Christ, Service for Christ, Fellowship with Christ's people, all spring from loyalty to Him. This loyalty is the motive for the other three and it is this relationship to Him which is the source of power for carrying out the others. It is when this loyalty grows cold or is forgotten that the other three Standards are neglected and are not carried out in the perfect way which the Master expects. When Peter forgot his loyalty to Christ he denied Him, when Judas Iscariot was disloyal he betrayed His Master. It would have been better to have put this one of the four Standards first on the list. Do you agree? There are seven ingredients in loyalty. They are like seven strands running through a tapestry giving it colour, depth and beauty.

### **L. The first is Love**

All true loyalty springs from this. It is, "loving Him who first loved us". It is love for Christ which inspires loyalty to Him and for His cause. This loyalty is "the drawing power of a great affection".

### **O. Obedience**

This love causes a person to be willing to do His will whatever that may be, ready to do anything and everything for Him, any time and any place.

### **Y. Yielding**

This means giving up all for Christ. It is the complete surrender of self and all selfish desires and aspirations. It requires a willingness, to be obedient without question at the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Many fail in the Christian life because they do not give Him all but want as well some of self or of the world.

### **A. Always**

Man is fickle in love and can forget so easily, the intensity of his passion sometimes fails. Christ demands full service. His followers cannot take up

their Cross and then leave it down as they carelessly wish. He who takes up a Cross must be ready to bear it to the end. Because it is for always, it requires counting the cost.

### **L. Living**

Loyalty requires living. It is not merely lip service; it is not only words but deeds also. Loyalty to Christ should be seen in daily living. A life lived for Christ is the greatest illustration of loyalty.

### **T. Trust**

The standard is so high that it is impossible to live a life of loyalty by human strength; it requires the power of the Holy Spirit. It is possible to be faithful by trusting in God for strength.

### **Y. Yoke**

The final secret is by being yoked to Christ. A yoke is something which binds two together. With Christ as 'yoke mate' loyalty becomes possible.

## **(4) FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST'S PEOPLE**

**Scripture Readings:** Ephesians ch.2:1-22; Acts ch.2:38-47;  
1 Corinthians ch.1: 1-9; Galatians ch.2: 1-9; Philippians ch.1:1-11;  
Philippians ch.3:1-14; 1 John ch.1.

The thing which distinguished the early Christian Church was the fellowship of its members; they had all things in common, they shared with one another, they gave to each other. The thing which so often has distinguished the Church in later days has been its lack of fellowship. Hurtful divisions have come which have brought controversy and bitterness. Social distinctions have even divided single congregations.

It was said of a couple, who went every Sunday to Church and bowed in their pew in prayer and then went out without speaking to anyone, that they were on better speaking terms with God than with their neighbours. Is this attitude right? Surely knowing God should give a desire for better relationships with other people? How sad it is when members of one family do not speak to each other but how much sadder this is when it happens to members of the Christian Church.

Fellowship requires better understanding and a desire to see the other person's point of view and a realisation that one's own point of view is not always the best or the right one.

These are days when the horizons of the universe are getting smaller and so Christian people cannot hold aloof from one another.

Fellowship requires a common bond. How can two be united except they be one? So there must be a unity of spirit among Christ's people. While it is a Christian virtue to love all God's children whom He has created, this is very different from the affection which unites those who are His own people by spiritual re-birth.

Fellowship with other Christians is a means of strength. Meeting others who are servants of the Master helps to build up the faith of Believers. It is also a witness to the world, of Christ. As Christians come together they show to others the solidarity of the Church.

Fellowship with other Christians springs from fellowship with Christ Himself, without this there can be no true unity. The example of the One who came to share this life is an incentive.

In Christian Endeavour this fellowship is shown in its three "Inters", International, Inter-racial and Inter-denominational. Again there are the three "E's" of Christian Endeavour, Educational, Evangelical, and ecumenical. This is the greatest ecumenical youth movement in the Church. Members of Endeavour already have a Church union. This is evident in its rallies, National and World Conventions. This ecumenical Slide of Christian Endeavour is one of its great contributions to the cause of Christ.

