

Imagine a target with three rings. The bulls-eye represents our core beliefs, the non-negotiable center of our faith. The next ring are beliefs we are willing to defend, but are not necessarily shared by all Christians. The outer ring represents beliefs we will discuss, but are not core to our church. This target system can be helpful when we articulate what we believe at EBC.

Beliefs we are willing to die for

The bulls-eye of the target represents our nine core beliefs. We have three core beliefs about God, three about people, and three about the church, the Bible, & Christ's return.

Beliefs about God:

- 1) There is one living, sovereign God who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 2) Jesus was sent by the Father to live on earth; he was fully God and fully human, yet had no sin. Jesus willingly laid down his life and after three days, rose from the grave. In doing this, Jesus fulfilled the payment for the world's sin.
- 3) The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and Son to convict the world of sin and to empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. He lives in every believer and is a constant helper, teacher and guide.

Beliefs about people:

- 4) God created people in his image, and everyone matters to God.
- 5) All people are sinners and need God's forgiveness.
- 6) Those who confess and turn from their sin, trusting in Jesus Christ, will be saved by grace and become children of God, with the promise of eternal life.

Beliefs about the church, the Bible and Christ's return:

- 7) Jesus Christ is the head of the church and all believing people are members.
- 8) The Bible is the inspired word of God and is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- 9) Jesus Christ will return and there will be a final judgment.

Beliefs we are willing to defend

The next ring of the target includes the beliefs that we are "willing to defend." They do not fall into the core category, as beliefs we are willing to die for, but they are very important to us. We are not willing to die for these beliefs, but we will defend them:

- **Communion**—or the Lord's Supper is to be observed by believers to remember the death of Christ, whose broken body and spilled blood was the payment for the world's debt of sin.
- **Followers of Christ**—have the privilege and responsibility to function as ministers and relate directly to God.
- **Women and Men**—should lead and serve according to their gifting, without regard to gender.
- **Baptism by Immersion**—is the public announcement of faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is Jesus brings salvation; baptism follows as a public act of obedience and worship.

Beliefs we are willing to discuss

The outer ring of the target includes our beliefs that are not core to our church and which we agree to disagree. We will not allow these discussions to distract us from the mission of our church.

- The role of supernatural gifts
- Calvinism vs. Arminianism
- The dating of creation
- The specifics of how God used natural processes to create different life forms.
- The details and timing of Christ's return