

South Bay Evangelical Christian Church

Policy Concerning the Charismatic Movement

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect SBECC congregation from doctrines and practices which are inconsistent with biblical teachings and SBECC doctrines and practices [1], [2]. In particular, this policy addresses the Charismatic Movement and states SBECC positions concerning charismatic organizations and activities, as well as practical guidelines for our congregation.

Policy

1. While it is difficult to clearly delineate the Charismatic Movement, there are ways to discern its doctrines and practices, as outlined in the document “Discerning Charismatic Movement” [3]. While recognizing that God performs miracles and signs today, we also recognize that much behavior in the Charismatic Movement has been characterized by excesses which are clearly not Biblical. Among others, one basic problem of the Charismatic Movement is its tendency of interpreting the Bible with experiences, rather than interpreting and discerning experiences with the Bible.
2. We recognize that working along side people of the charismatic persuasion may at times be beneficial to the ministry of the universal body of Christ (e.g., in a Billy Graham crusade, or in a Protect Marriage rally). We also recognize that some organizations and/or churches have extensive involvement in the charismatic movement to the degree that their ministry causes harm to those under their influence. The SBECC elders and deacons, with consultations with the advisers, are responsible to help our congregation discern whether specific organization(s) or activities are charismatic, and will advise our congregation on an as-needed basis.
3. SBECC does not knowingly support any charismatic organizations and activities. We also do not wish anyone in the SBECC congregation to be closely associated with such organizations or be involved in their activities.
4. As Christians, while we may still have friendship with those individuals who pursue or engage in charismatic activities, it is difficult to have close fellowship with them due to differences in doctrines and practices. However, our attitude towards them is one of restoration rather than rejection. Nevertheless, we believe that to love a person is not necessarily to encourage him to do what pleases that person, but to encourage him to do what pleases God. We therefore believe that those who truly love a fellow Christian would not encourage him to continue pursuing charismatic experiences.
5. While realizing that one’s position on the Charismatic Movement is not a primary doctrine essential for salvation, we consider that one’s approach to this issue can significantly impact the long-term effectiveness of ministry. Since the dangers and negative aspects of the Charismatic Movement are significant enough for it to be problematic for Christian growth, SBECC has charted a course and plan of ministry that is non-Charismatic. Thus, while SBECC’s position on this issue is not a primary focus of ministry, nevertheless SBECC will seek to strengthen teachings in this area, and to prevent the negative aspects of the influence of the Charismatic Movement on its congregation.

6. Our church expects each of the members of the congregation to respect and follow our church's policy, and to also avoid leading any of the congregation to participate in charismatic movement activities. Particularly for those in our church having any leadership role, we expect them to be a role model, so that they are using our church's direction as their guideline for their service, and to also avoid causing the congregation to be confused regarding our church's policy and ministry direction concerning the charismatic movement.

In addition, we expect we can effectively build our church together to help our church members grow spiritually, and have a very good testimony for the church and to give glory to the Lord.

To administer this policy, the elders and deacons will use this policy and the principles of the Bible to communicate with individuals and take appropriate actions.

References

- [1] SBECC Statement of Faith (<http://www.sbecc.org/doctrine.pdf>)
- [2] SBECC Bylaws (www.sbecc.org/BYLAWS050416.pdf)
- [3] "Discerning Charismatic Movement" (www.sbecc.org/charismatics.pdf)

Revisions

- 2/21/2009 Drafted and approved by SBECC elders and deacons
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