

The aim of this letter is to summarise my questions and issues about the E.B. It is an appeal for increased understanding and answers in regard to these things.

Obviously, I will have to go over them in greater detail before my current thinking could be changed, if I was to be thoroughly settled and convinced about them.

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Where I am currently at is that I have such questions and issues about foundational EB beliefs, principles and practises that I feel I can no longer belong to the EB church.

However if they can be answered, their reason for existence explained, or if I become convinced some other way that before God I must remain an EB, then I may do so, as I believe the Word of God is law and obedience to Him is highest priority.

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Brief summary of my questions/issues about the Exclusive Brethren:

- I don't understand or agree with the EB application of 'separation from evil'. I don't understand why we must be so *extreme* in our separation, especially
  - Why do we separate so totally from other believers?
  - Why do we separate ourselves so totally that we restrict our capacity to evangelise/do outreach to unbelievers? Or even just to get more involved with 'doing good'?
  - Why do we separate from 'out' family members to the point it is like a death and its a complete cold severance? (Especially how can this be Scripturally justified when they are not wicked and haven't given up the faith?)
  - Why can't we belong to associations/memberships etc?
  - I don't understand the EB application and interpretation of 2 Timothy 2.
  
- I don't understand the EB teaching that they are the 'one divinely accredited position' or the 'best position'.
  - I don't know what the 'light of the assembly is' and cannot see that we have a more special position or more special light than some other assemblies I have come across.
  - I don't understand the teaching that the EB will have some special part in the 'end times' – or that they are the only ones who are Christ's Bride, or that they can claim to be holding some special ground.
  - I don't understand the 'we are exclusive' or 'special' mindset.
  - I don't understand the teaching that the EB assembly as a whole will one day be perfect and sinless while still on earth.

- I don't understand the concept of one elect vessel, one man who leads the entire assembly.
  - I don't understand how his one ministry is all that we should follow.
  - I don't understand why he can be called 'Paul of our day', I struggle to believe every word that comes out of his mouth is from heaven, I struggle to believe he is infallible and that he is God's only representative here on earth.
  - He does a *lot* of good, yet I still see far too many people totally out of his reach and falling through the gaps. It is impossible for one man however great to adequately serve a flock as big as the EB. There is something wrong with this system.
  - I don't understand the teaching about how any human can reach a sinless state, such as is claimed about the 'great men.'
  - How can it be right that the 'great men' and their ministries are quoted and spoken of far more in the EB meetings than Jesus or the Bible is?
  
- I don't understand why the EB do not support or do any missionary work.
  - I don't understand why the only form of evangelising/outreach is the street preaching.
  - I don't understand why we don't advocate Jesus, and the EB position, far more to 'all men' or do more to 'put our light on a hill'.
  
- I don't understand why the EB cannot have jobs other than working for EB businesses. Especially why not service-type jobs (eg. fire-fighter, nurse) and jobs that are essentially doing humankind (and therefore God) good.
  
- I don't understand how the teaching in regard to the Lord's Supper can be right – that the Lord only attends the EB communion. I'm struggling to understand the teaching about our social boundaries being set by those with who we have the EB Lords Supper.
  
- Other things that I cant understand - again, that I cannot see the moral or logical reason for:
  - I don't understand why there is this extremely strong and yet unable-to-be-pinned-down concept among the EB that it is forbidden and immoral to marry anyone who is your 5<sup>th</sup> cousin or 4<sup>th</sup> cousin.
  - I don't understand why there is also this extremely strong concept that marriage between persons who have different skin-colouring is forbidden and immoral.
  - Why we cannot donate blood or organs
  - Why we do not vote
  - Why we cannot adopt or foster children
  - Why if I have a non-Statcom phone, camera or computer I am immoral.
  - Why we cannot have pets

Perhaps it will help you to understand also, if I describe to you a little of what I have found in 'Christendom' out there in *comparison* to the EB.

- Far better system of care for all ages, stages and needs:
  - Pre-school care, Bible/Christian teaching and provision for help.
  - Primary age kid Bible/Christian teaching and provision for help.
  - Far better teen Bible/Christian teaching and provision for help.
  - Far better Bible/Christian resource, help and care available for adults incl:
    - For pre-marital help
    - For young couples
    - For marriage counselling
    - For husbands,
    - For wives,
    - For at work,
    - For at home,
    - For fatherhood, motherhood – parenting
    - Right through to far better care etc. for the elderly.
  - There is much, much more resource available for young people/adults to help them in the Christian path. There are Bible study courses, groups, teaching and extensive work/resource there to ground, set forward and help Christians. Why is not available amongst us?
  - There are people readily available whom the flock know they can turn to for help and advice – people who are trained counsellors and mentors whom anyone can turn to. This sort of person is seriously lacking among the EB.
  - There are women, available to help women in many ways - priestly, spiritual, emotional, practical etc. This is nonexistent in the EB too.
  - There is support and help ready for almost any type of mental/emotional trouble, either through their own counsellors and flock members, or if that's not enough, then there are links in place to others who can help. For example;
    - Marriage help
    - Alcohol/drug abuse
    - Depression
    - Eating disorders
    - Sexual problems, molestation, etc
    - Other mental disordersThese are just some examples. It is very noticeable that a member of the flock has access to help for these sorts of problems through the church, or are under the umbrella of church care *unlike* in the EB where the individual has to battle on alone without that.
- I have found far more emphasis on practical Scripture teaching directly from the whole Bible including the OT, Jesus, and Paul's ministry etc.
- and far more emphasis on our Saviour Jesus, which I was overjoyed to see as He is my Best Friend and daily Strength and Guide. I struggle in the EB as I only hear talk about Him at the Gospels.
- I found more emphasis on doing good works, putting your 'light on a hill', evangelising and being a Christian part of the community – which I totally agree with, and love to see, and *crave* to be part of.

Also I will include a few examples of things I want no part of that are among the EB:

- I'm frightened of, and never want to suffer religious abuse at the hands of people who rise into power in the EB, who then can have such a lot of control over your life and who can abuse this authority/power - and there is no way of stopping them.
- I can't stand the idolisation of BDH
- I can't stand the social pressure and the pressure to conform to norms of dress code, food, housing, high affluent standard of living & lifestyle etc.
- I want better Christian resource for myself and others whom I care for, than what is available in the EB.
- I want to be part of a fellowship that is more love-centred and demonstrates real practical Christianity, instead of one that claims great light but has not much fruit to show it, and is more concerned about law-keeping than love.

I hope from the above you can understand a little why I am at this fork in the Y.

I have long held that there are only two purposes for life:

1 – *is to get closer to God and to become more like Him*

2 – *is to serve others with the aim of drawing them nearer to Him and to shine His light to those who don't yet have it.*

I have come to the conclusion that while I am in the EB I can't fulfil these purposes as much as I could out of the EB.

I believe that God has given me the passion I have to serve others especially young people for Him, and that I should answer this. Also I want to be part of a Christian fellowship where I get better Christian/Biblical teaching, support and fellowship than I can foresee me ever getting in the EB.

Also, I cannot remain in the EB anymore until I believe in my own heart, the principles and practises they follow. I do not want to live a farce again – conforming to these things just to avoid getting into trouble, when I don't actually understand or agree with them at all. I can't consider getting married and taking those vows for life, I couldn't raise children in the EB unless I really believe in it, and also I couldn't even help other people/young people in the EB path as I would be being totally fake.

This letter is not all-conclusive and there will be more detail/offshoots to the above issues and questions that would need to be worked through before I could commit to the EB fellowship.

Thank you for taking the time to try to understand and help me, thank you for the love and perseverance shown; I do want to do what is right in the eyes of God and I pray desperately that we have the wisdom to see His will and to receive the light, the strength, and the faith to do it.

Kind Regards

Lindy Simmons