

FAITH FACTS: EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA

The Basics

The **Evangelical Free Church of America** is an association of some 1,300 autonomous churches united by a mutual commitment to serve the Lord Jesus Christ with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the Word of God. They are committed to cooperate with one another in ministry and fellowship as they seek to fulfill the Great Commission which Christ has entrusted to His Church. The growing ministry of the EFCA currently extends to some 45 countries of the world.

History

The **Evangelical Free Church of America** was formed in 1950 by the merger of two church bodies: the Swedish Evangelical Free Church and the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Free Church Association. Both groups had been birthed in the revival movements of the late nineteenth century.

The Swedish group had its formal beginnings in Boone, Iowa, at a conference held in October of 1884. In that same year, two Norwegian-Danish groups began to worship and fellowship together in Boston, Massachusetts and Tacoma, Washington. By 1912, both the Swedish Evangelical Free Church and the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Free Church Association had been formed.

Those two associations, representing 275 local congregations, were formally joined together as they gathered for a merger conference in June of 1950 at the Medicine Lake Conference Grounds near Minneapolis, Minnesota. The international and national offices of the EFCA have been located in Minneapolis since the merger took place.

Statistics

- Total number of churches 1,270
- Average weekly attendance 339,000
- Church plants (new churches) 159
- Districts 20
- Primarily non-English speaking/non-Caucasian churches 153
- Primarily non-English speaking/non-Caucasian weekly attendance 18,802

What does “evangelical” and “free” mean?

The term **Evangelical** refers to our commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel and to the authority of Scriptures as being inerrant in the original writings and the only safe and sufficient guide to faith and practice.

The term **Free** refers to our form of church government as being congregational. Evangelical Free Churches depend upon the active participation of lay people in the decisions and directions.

What Makes Them Distinct?

- The Evangelical Free Church of America is inclusive not exclusive. There is allowance for legitimate differences of opinion in some areas of doctrine.
- The Evangelical Free Church is evangelical but not separatistic. Do not advocate for being separate over minor differences.
- The Evangelical Free Church of America is ecumenical in spirit though not in structure.
- The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in liberty with responsibility and accountability.
- The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in both the rational and relational dimensions of Christianity. Sound Christian doctrine needs to be combined with dynamic Christian experience.
- The Evangelical Free Church of America affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs.

20 Districts help to:

- Connect congregations with one another in order to share ministry ideas and strategies
- Support pastors in their ministries and personal spiritual growth
- Provide congregations with tools for church health
- Provide a strategy for church planting within the district
- Intervene in church conflict situations to bring godly resolution
- Help congregations find pastors
- Ensure high pastoral standards through licensing and ordination councils
- Give leadership to support ministries such as Christian camps and homes for senior citizens
- Provide training and encouragement to pastors and church leaders