



THE EFCC PRESENTS

A Closer Look



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Introduction

Who Are We?

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada is an association of 145 churches and 80 missionaries united by a common commitment to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, a common Statement of Faith, a shared Character and Calling, and a commitment to the Word of God.

We are committed to collaborating with one another in mission and ministry within Canada and around the world. We partner with the Evangelical Free Church of America (of which we were a part until 1984) and with more than thirty members of the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches. The terms “evangelical” and “free” were well understood by Free Church founders; however, words change over time and so a definition of each is helpful.

Evangelical

The word “evangelical” refers to the gospel or “good news” of Jesus Christ. The good news calls us to repent of our rebellion against God and to follow Him. Our spiritual predecessors formed “believers churches” where individuals made a decision to accept and follow Jesus. They served the Lord’s Supper and studied the Bible in their homes. Their first question for others was not “What church do you attend” or “What do you believe about ___?”, but rather, “Do you know Jesus?” Like them, we are people who see the cross and resurrection of Jesus as central to our faith. We feel compelled to know Him, to share of Him, and to follow Him. We value the Bible as the authoritative Word of God and we study and proclaim its truths about Jesus and His redemptive plan.

Free

Our Scandinavian forebears grew up in the state church. The government and the church were inextricably linked. “Free” churches formed as believers’ churches – they wanted to be “believers only”, but open to “all believers.” Our Free Church ancestors believed that freedom to live out their faith could only be limited by the Bible itself. Their cry “Where stands it written?” was a declaration that Christians should be able to practice their faith free from government control. Free churches are self-governing (they own their own property, call their own pastors, determine their budgets and ministries). Free churches value every believer, and local churches are governed by the congregation.

Deeper Reading

More details on how we aspire to live out our motto can be found here:



bit.ly/efcctag

The EFCC's Official Statement of Faith

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada is an association of autonomous churches united in a common commitment to God's evangel—the gospel of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to give us eternal life. To God's glory, the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Our essential theological convictions are vitally connected to this gospel.

God's gospel originates in and expresses the wondrous perfections of the eternal, triune God.

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

God's gospel is authoritatively revealed in the Scriptures.

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavour should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

God's gospel alone addresses our deepest need.

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

God's gospel is made known supremely in the Person of Jesus Christ.

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

God's gospel is accomplished through the work of Christ.

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

God's gospel is applied by the power of the Holy Spirit.

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

God's gospel is now embodied in the new community called the church.

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose

membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

God's gospel compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world.

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

God's gospel will be brought to fulfillment by the Lord Himself at the end of this age.

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ with His holy angels when He will bring His kingdom to fulfillment and exercise His role as Judge of all. This coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

God's gospel requires a response that has eternal consequences.

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace.
Amen.

What Is Our Ethos?

Our ethos is our set of guiding beliefs and ideals that characterize us as a community. The strength of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada is in our united commitment to, and service for, Jesus Christ, and our empowering by the Holy Spirit. This shared priority is articulated in our purpose and vision statements:

Our purpose: We exist to share Jesus and join Him in His work of transforming lives.

Our vision: The EFCC desires to be a unified family of churches and individuals with Christ like leaders who live out the Free Church motto as we join His redemptive work in every part of Canada and the world.

This unity of purpose is then lived out through the shared ethos that directs how we serve together, treat each other, and stand as a testimony to the world. That ethos is best summarized in our Statement of Character and Calling.

Our Character And Calling

Our Character

The Kingdom of God is His eternal possession, and is present in part but not in fullness in the world today. By God's decree, under His direction, and empowered by His grace, the universal Church is responsible for the care and expansion of that Kingdom. Every local church, denomination, and ministry organization is a part of that Kingdom and carries some responsibility in the work of the Kingdom.

As a part of that Body of Christ the Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC) desires to understand and fulfill its particular calling in the work of the Kingdom. The EFCC will seek to live out our calling to be a New Community in Christ, reflecting the fullness of His vision for the Kingdom of God "on earth as it is in heaven". We will do this by putting aside the prevailing values of our time and replacing them with the radical demands of the gospel of God's grace.

Our Calling

The EFCC Motto:

In essentials, unity.
In non-essentials, charity.
In all things, Jesus Christ.

In Essentials, Unity...

Essential Truths: We are called to embody and proclaim the essential truths of Christianity as articulated in the Word of God, expressed through the centuries in the great creeds of the church and defined for us in our Statement of Faith. We continue in the tradition of our EFCC forefathers who said; "Where stands it written?" These truths have led us to Jesus Christ who said "he is truth" and that the "truth would set us free."

In Non-Essentials, Charity...

Generosity of Spirit: We are called to a generosity of spirit that frees us to embrace a wide variety of Christian brothers and sisters - "simply believers" - some with whom we

will not agree in matters that are outside our Statement of Faith. Our spirit is one of warm welcome to all believers who share our commitment to our Statement of Faith and who seek to follow Jesus' command to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves.

Kingdom-Minded

This generous spirit encourages us to joyfully work with those outside our own denomination, those of "like precious faith" who endeavour to expand the kingdom of heaven.

In All Things, Jesus Christ.

The Great Command and Great Commission: We are called to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the Lord God. Through His grace and through His Spirit we seek to fulfill His command to love our neighbour by loving each and every person, especially the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed. We seek to fulfill His great commission by making followers of Him from all people groups.

Godly Living

From the practice and teachings of Jesus, from the present ministry of the Holy Spirit working within us, and from the pietistic model of our forefathers, has grown a spirit that hungers for a closer relationship with Jesus Christ, one that will transform our hearts, our heads, and our hands, and will reveal itself in both a Christ-inspired value system and a holy lifestyle.

As a movement, our ethos directs us to focus on, unite around, and hold firmly to, the "essentials" alone. You will therefore find us to be silent on many issues that may be important to people, but not essential to salvation. You will not find corporate position statements on end-times chronologies, free will vs pre-destination, modes of baptism, miraculous gifts, or even church board structures. While we may hold personal convictions on some of these, and other, issues, we will not divide or exclude because of them. This "inclusive" heart is a foundational part of our ethos, driven by our humble understanding of Scripture and willingness to leave in tension what Scripture appears to leave in tension.

With this shared vision and character, the EFCC remains a movement committed to the local church as God's creation for the work of the Gospel. Therefore, we join together voluntarily as an interdependent network of churches, enabling us to fulfill the mandate of the church more effectively.

Deeper Reading

A deeper dive into the hermeneutics of Unity, Charity, Jesus Christ can be found here:



bit.ly/efccherm

You can read more about our congregational approach to local church governance here:



bit.ly/efcccong

What Is Our Story?

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada is an association and fellowship of self-governing and interdependent congregations of like faith and polity whose purpose is to glorify God.

In the mid 1800's a grassroots movement spread across Europe to break away from the State controlled church, driven by a dominance of state over the church, a spiritual malaise in the church, and the priorities of the Reformation ("Scriptures Alone," "Grace Alone," "Faith Alone"). By the late 1800's this movement had spread to America, with Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish manifestations. These three eventually merged into the Evangelical Free Church of America.

It was as a result of revival movements among Norwegian immigrants in 1911 that the Evangelical Free Church of Canada came into being. These revivals resulted in the establishment of a short-lived congregation in Winnipeg in 1913. In June of 1917, at Enchant, Alberta, a congregation was organized which continues to this day as our longest enduring church and the "official birthplace" of the EFCC.

Through a revival movement in that Enchant church, members of the Fosmark family became followers of Jesus. The Fosmark family, particularly brothers Carl and Lee, gave significant leadership to the early development of the EFCC, resulting in churches being planted across Western Canada in the 1930s and 1940s.

In 1957 the Fellowship of Gospel Churches merged with the Evangelical Free Church, bringing the number of organized churches in Canada to 56. By 2021, Evangelical Free Churches in Canada, extending from the Province of Quebec to the Pacific Coast, numbered approximately 150.

The Evangelical Free Church of Canada was incorporated under a federal charter in 1967, but continued in affiliation with the Evangelical Free Church of America until 1984, at which time it became autonomous, though it still works in strong partnership with the Evangelical Free Church of America.

Rev. Don Kroening served as the EFCC's first President, and contributed much to the organization of the EFCC. In 1985, Rev. Ron Swanson became the second President and brought a strong passion for outreach and evangelism. In 1993, Dr. Rick Penner was elected as the third President and his ministry concluded early in 2001.

Dr. Ron Unruh was elected the EFCC's fourth President in July 2002 at the Conference held in Lethbridge, Alberta. Dr. Unruh

Deeper Reading

There's lots more to read about the EFCC's story and ethos here:



bit.ly/eandfree

retired at the end of July 2008 and was succeeded by Rev. Bill Taylor, who was elected as the fifth President at the Conference held in Edmonton, Alberta. Following Bill Taylor's election, by his choice and with the approval of the Conference, his title was changed to Executive Director to more accurately reflect the structure and ethos of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada.

As the Free Church grew in Canada a small group of Free Church people had an extraordinary vision to establish a Canadian Christian university to prepare leaders of integrity. They purchased land in Langley, B.C., and in 1962 opened the first classes of Trinity Junior College with 17 students. The College grew to 800 students by 1984, when it was granted membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). In 1985, the British Columbia Legislature granted a charter under the name Trinity Western University.

TWU is Canada's largest independent Christian university, with an annual total enrollment of over 5,000. With a broad-based liberal arts and sciences curriculum, the University offers 48 undergraduate majors, including biotechnology, biblical studies, education, music, and nursing, and 19 graduate degrees including business, counselling psychology, theology, interdisciplinary humanities, and leadership.

The EFCC serves as the sponsoring denomination for this unique Canadian university. The mission of Trinity Western University is, as an arm of the Church, to develop godly Christian leaders: positive, goal oriented university graduates with thoroughly Christian minds; growing disciples of Jesus Christ who glorify God through fulfilling the Great Commission, serving God and people in the various market places of life.

Trinity Western Seminary grew out of TWU, and is one of a number of seminaries functioning as a consortium known collectively as the Associated Canadian Theological Schools (ACTS Seminaries) that forms TWU's Graduate School of Theological Studies.

Today the Home Office of the EFCC is located in a brand new wing of the Fosmark Centre on the campus of TWU, where a team of servant leaders guide, facilitate, and administrate ministries across Canada and around the world on behalf of our movement of churches.

Further Reading: All books are available through EFCC Home Office

- From Hardship to Harvest, by Calvin Hanson
- The Significance of Silence, by Arnold T. Olson
- From Infancy to Adolescence, by Bill Taylor
- Gospel Truths, by Greg Strand

ServeCanada (formerly National Mission)

ServeCanada is the mission arm of the EFCC that assists churches with gospel sharing, church planting, and developing new ministry opportunities in Canada. It is coordinated by the ServeCanada director.

The early pioneers of the Free Church lived out a deep missionary zeal. They shared the Good News of Jesus and established churches across Western Canada. We want that zeal to live on in a fresh movement of people empowered by God's Spirit and engaged in gospel-sharing efforts as God directs. We serve districts and churches to facilitate the spread of the Good News in Canada.

As districts and local churches work to plant other churches we can come alongside and assist. We can help to coordinate resources such as church planter assessments, basic training for church planters, and church planter coaching.

There are still many areas of Canada that need the gospel. We believe that the call to go to the ends of the earth and make disciples means reaching those areas of Canada as well. As God directs, we desire to form partnerships and explore new ministry opportunities in areas of Canada where the EFCC is not currently present.

ServeBeyond (Formerly EFCCM)

ServeBeyond serves as the international arm of the EFCC. In obedience to the command of Christ, ServeBeyond encourages followers of Christ in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe.

With the primary purpose of sharing the gospel and church planting, our efforts include working among the Muslim unreached people groups in Ukraine and Central Asia. We are ministering among the least reached diverse ethnic minority groups such as the Chinese in Panama and low-German Mennonite people in Bolivia.

ServeBeyond proclaims the gospel in word and deed to demonstrate the reality of the gospel so that people will be drawn to Christ.

Numerous ministry opportunities are available around the world through ServeBeyond for those who are called to Disciple-making, Church Planting and Community Development. Categories of ministry range from short-term to career ministries, internships, professional and bi-vocational opportunities.

A Legacy of Service

The EFCC has renamed its national and international mission departments as **ServeCanada** and **ServeBeyond**.

This does two things for us:

1. It simplifies the naming confusion between "Mission" and "National Mission."
2. It underscores the ongoing importance of service to the EFCC family, wherever our ministries are located.

This change will not affect the EFCC name, or the logo that we've been using for years.

EFCC



Where are we Going?

The EFCC is a mission movement. We exist to share Jesus and join Him in His work of transforming lives. The EFCC works to be a unified family of churches and individuals with Christ like leaders who live out the Free Church motto as we join His redemptive work in every part of Canada and the world.

We pursue this work as a family who grows together as loving communities of believers who follow the Word and serve Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In response to our Lord, we engage, encourage and resource Evangelical Free Churches and individuals to love God entirely, others sacrificially and all peoples redemptively.

The local church is God's idea and is His provision for lives to be saved and transformed from spiritual darkness. By God's grace we hope to unite our EFCC family in Jesus and our motto, build a network of Christ-like leaders, and equip churches and individuals to serve in His redemptive work. Helping our churches and missionaries share the good news and plant churches is the goal of Home Office, the Executive Director, Directors of Mission, and District Personnel.

Out of this heart to serve, they provide vision, support, resources, counsel, and encouragement to our existing churches in Canada and around the world. Inherent to healthy gospel sharing and church planting is a growing sense of family (and unity around our ethos), humble, mature leaders who share good news, and growing churches that will multiply disciples and congregations.

The urbanization of Canada along with shifting cultural values, a growing pluralism and increasing secularization present enormous challenges. Canada is a needy mission field – every major Canadian city needs scores of existing and new loving communities of believers who bear witness to Jesus. Our prayer as the Evangelical Free Church of Canada is that we might be found faithful to fulfill our mission in Canada and around the World. Our Lord and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, modeled the most fantastic demonstration of selfless love the world has ever seen. By His earthly ministries and sacrificial death, He taught us what it truly means to be a servant. It is this example that we seek to emulate.

We pray it may be seen in every Pastor, Missionary, District Superintendent, Church Leader and Leader of the EFCC. We pray it may be sent and shared through our career and short-term missionaries serving overseas. We pray it may be so in every Evangelical Free Church congregation across Canada.



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