



EFCA Statement of Faith: Introduction
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I. Introduction

1. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the only absolute, authoritative, inerrant Word from and of God. A creed or statement of faith is a brief summary of what is true as revealed in the Bible, but it is not the Bible and thus it is not inerrant and it is, and must be, revisable as new errors and heresies arise.
2. A creed (or statement of faith) comes from the Latin *credo*, which means “I believe.” This is not just a body of beliefs (I believe *that*) but a confession of faith (“I believe *in*”). As we gather corporately and confess our one faith in the one Lord, who is Trinitarian, this becomes “we believe.”
3. There are passages of Scripture that appeared to function as a creedal statement, e.g. in the Old Testament the *Shema* (Dt. 6:4-9). In the New Testament there are references to traditions (2 Thess. 2:15), the word (Gal. 6:6), and the proclamation (Rom. 16:25) suggest there was a common message formed that was the focus for faith, while confession of Jesus as Christ (Jn. 1:41), Son of God (Rom. 1:4), Lord (Rom. 10:9), and God (Jn. 1:1) constitute the starting point for the development of creeds in public confession.
4. Three early creeds are the Apostles’ (Apostles, Synod of Milan, 390), the Nicene-Constantinople (381) and the Athanasian (4th-5th centuries).
5. Creeds served a fourfold function: baptismal, instructional (catechetical), doctrinal, and liturgical.
6. There are dangers of writing creeds – they can become formal, complex, abstract, too detailed, superimposed over and replace Scripture. However, understood and responded to properly, creeds “facilitate public confession, form a succinct basis of teaching, safeguard pure doctrine, and constitute an appropriate focus for the church’s fellowship of faith.” (Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “Creed, Creeds,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker))

II. EFCA History of a Statement of Faith

1. Swedish Evangelical Free Church (1884) – one point on the Scripture (cf. appendix 1)
2. Norwegian-Danish Free Church Association (1912) – 12-point SOF (cf. appendix 2)

3. (Swedish) Evangelical Free Church Ministerial Association (1947) – 9 (with a 10th added on the ordinances two days prior to the adoption of the EFCA Statement of Faith) (cf. appendix 3)
4. Evangelical Free Church of America (1950) – 12-point SOF (cf. appendix 4)

III. History of the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*) (cf. appendix 5)

1. Part 1

- 1957 – Approval of Historic Premillennialist for ordination
- 1977 – Decision made by the Committee on Ministerial Standing to broaden our position on the tribulation, yet still requiring a premillennial belief.
- 1981 – The Ministerial Institute addressed the topic of the tribulation, with three TEDS professors presenting the three tribulational positions (Paul Feinberg, Gleason Archer and Doug Moo)
- 1985 – Doug Moo and Don Carson were approved by the Conference for tenure as TEDS faculty members

2. Part 2

- 1987-1989 – President Tom McDill and the Board of Directors begin discussions about the need to revise our Statement of Faith.
- 1993-1995 – With the upcoming 50th anniversary of the merger, it was decided by President Paul Cedar and the Board of Directors that they would do a revision of the Statement of Faith that would correspond with the anniversary.
- 2003-Present – President Bill Hamel and the Board of Directors determined there was a need to pick up again the discussion of a revision of our Statement of Faith.

IV. Rationale

1. This kind of refreshing reminds us that the Bible alone is unchangeable, not a Statement of Faith or Creed, and is thus our ultimate authority. Every doctrinal statement is a human product and should never be accorded the status of authority and permanence that is held by the Bible alone.
2. Every doctrinal statement is written at a specific time in a particular historical context.
3. Our key EFCA principle to preserve evangelical unity in the gospel is at the heart of our identity, and, more importantly, our theology.

4. This provides an opportunity to make a great statement better – to update archaic language, to clarify some theological ambiguities, to seek greater theological precision, to address new issues, to have a SOF that would be better suited to be used as a teaching tool in our churches.
5. It is important that a revision result from a very careful, prayerful, and deliberate process, and not from a reaction to any particular crisis, controversy, or trend.

V. Principles Guiding the Revision

1. It should focus on the Gospel.
2. It should strengthen our commitment to biblical authority.
3. It should reflect our Evangelical tradition.
 - First, we are committed to the Bible as the touchstone of truth.
 - Second, we have been shaped by the Trinitarian and Christological Creeds of the early church.
 - Third, we have been shaped by the Reformation of the 16th century.
 - Fourth, we have been shaped by the Evangelical Revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries.
 - Fifth, we have been shaped by the Modernist/Fundamentalist debates of the early 20th century.
 - Finally, we have been shaped by a more recent debate between fundamentalists and evangelicals in the 1940s, a call to move away from separatism and isolationism.
4. It should address some new issues.
 - Denial that God knows the future exhaustively (open theism)
 - How do we know anything – postmodern relativism (epistemology)
 - Reality of the spiritual world
 - Ministry and mission among all people
 - God-centered
5. It should increase theological clarity.
6. It should be brief.

- Without being minimalist
- Without being maximalist
- Remembering the purpose of our SOF in the EFCA – ordination, tenure of faculty, missionary candidates, those serving in an officially approved capacity in a national ministry.
- Local Churches and Membership?

7. It should embody a key principle of our EFCA heritage – unity in the Gospel.

- We are a believers’ church with a strong commitment to Evangelical unity in the gospel.
- We are a church for “believers only but for all believers.”
- We “major on the majors and minor on the minors.”

VI. General Themes of the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*)

1. Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology – note the headings, the order of the articles and the actual articles themselves.
2. God’s Glory – the SOF begins (“for His own glory”) and ends (“to the praise of His glorious grace”) with an emphasis on God and His glory.
3. Theology and doxology – all theology is doxological, i.e. it is the context of worship. This is how the SOF ends: “to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.”
4. Orthodoxy and orthopraxy – doctrinal statements are made along with the practical implications of those truths in our lives as the people of God. In any given day in the life of the church, certain truths are necessary to emphasize to ensure that the faith once for all entrusted to the saints is being upheld.
 - Article 2: The Bible: “Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.”
 - Article 7: The Church: “The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s Supper”
 - Article 8: Christian Living: “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.”

- Article 9: Christ's Return: "The 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."
 - Article 10: Response and Eternal Destiny: "We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ."
5. Logical and Theological Statement (coherent whole) – each phrase will make sense in the context of the article, in the context of the whole SOF.
 6. Builds to Response – the only appropriate response to this great God and what He has done is to believe the gospel: "We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ."
 7. Themes: theology (an emphasis on God in all His fullness: Father, Son and Holy Spirit), epistemology (the basis of how we know), soteriology (salvation in its broadest biblical sense)

VII. Key changes in the Statement of Faith (*Draft Revisions*) from the 1950 SOF

1. Essentialist Statement emphasizing the essentials of the gospel
2. Structure around the gospel
3. Soteriological essentials, without overly emphasizing or downplaying or denying either Arminianism or Calvinism
4. Autonomy of the local church (placed in the preamble, though it is important to know that our present SOF does not state we are congregational, but it is stated in our Articles of Incorporation)
5. Eschatology broadened, premillennialism removed
6. Key Changes Rooted in the Bible and Our Key Free Church History/Heritage

Eschatology

"XI. We believe that Jesus Christ who ascended into heaven, shall come again in great power and glory." The (Norwegian-Danish) Evangelical Free Church Association (1912) Cf. article 11 of the 1950 SOF, article 9 of the Drafts and the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*).

Soteriology

"IV. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men of sin, regenerate the unbelieving sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service." The (Swedish) Evangelical Free Church Ministerial Association (1947) Cf. article 4 of the 1950 SOF ("regenerate the

believing sinner”), and article 6 of the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*) (“regenerates sinners”).

Christian Living

XII. We believe that the sole duty of the Christian Church is to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, and to assist charitable institutions, to work for righteousness and temperance, for unity and cooperation with all believers, and for peace among all people and nations on the whole earth.” The (Norwegian-Danish) Evangelical Free Church Association (1912) Cf. article 8 of the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*).

VIII. Key changes in the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*) from the Draft Revisions (cf. appendix 6)

1. Gospel structure removed, though headings remain and gospel references remain in articles 7, 8 and 10.
2. Premillennialism reinserted
3. Tension between essential and non-essential, ideal and real – major on majors and minor on minors, unity in the essentials and charity in the non-essentials

IX. EFCA Statement of Faith – (*adopted June 2008*),

1. Credo – we believe
2. It is intended as a statement or confession for believers, not unbelievers.
3. It consists of explicit and implicit truths.
4. It states what we affirm and what we deny.
5. It determines who is in and who is out.
6. It also affirms the “significance of silence”
7. It consists of what must be true to be saved, but not what must be believed to be saved.
8. Purpose – essentials and identity, theological triage, viz. distinguishing between essential soteriological matters, secondary matters, and tertiary matters.

X. Key References Used in the Statement of Faith (*adopted June 2008*)

God – Three equally divine persons –

One God, Creator, Persons, reference to the Trinity

Father –

God (this name refers both to the Father and the Trinity)

Son/Jesus –

Son, Jesus Christ, God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures, Jesus, Israel's promised Messiah, High Priest, Advocate, Representative, Substitute, Sacrifice, Lord Jesus Christ, Christ, Head, Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ, Judge, Lord

Holy Spirit –

Holy Spirit (Rather than using other names or references, we focus on what He does in an active sense.)

God Has Spoken –

Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, Word of God, Bible, God's Word

Church –

Heirs, family of God, true church, body of Christ, local church, believer

Salvation (broadly speaking) –

Redeem, believed, obeyed and trusted (the Bible), sinned, union with Adam, sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, under His wrath, God's saving work in Jesus Christ, rescued, reconciled, renewed, salvation, perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins, atoning death, victorious resurrection, salvation, convicts the world of its guilt, regenerates sinners, baptized into union with Christ, adopted as heirs, indwells, illuminates, guides, equips, empowers, Christ-like living and service, justified by God's grace, faith alone in Christ alone, united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, believers, genuine faith, confirm and nourish the believer, justifying grace, sanctifying power and purpose, loving God supremely and others sacrificially, live out our faith, God's Word and prayer, combat the spiritual forces of evil, obedience to Christ, make disciples, bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed, constant expectancy which motivates believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission, believe the gospel, turning to God in repentance, receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord

Appendix 1

Swedish Free Church Statement of Faith

Swedish Evangelical Free Church (1884)

This organization accepts the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, as the Word of God, containing the Gospel of salvation for all men and the only perfect rule for teaching, faith and life.

Appendix 2

The (Norwegian-Danish) Evangelical Free Church Association Statement of Faith

Norwegian-Danish Free Church Association (1912)

1. We believe, that the Bible, the Old and New Testament, is the Word of God and is the only infallible rule and guide for faith, life, and doctrine.
2. We believe in the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons, in accordance with the apostolic faith.
3. We believe that all men by nature are sinners, aliens and strangers to God, and as a result thereof under condemnation.
4. We believe that Jesus Christ gave Himself as a Redeemer for all mankind, and those who repent from their sins and believe on Him shall be granted forgiveness and be adopted as children of God.
5. We believe that as many as by faith receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord are born again and are given the witness of the Holy Spirit, and become children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.
6. We believe that Christian churches should be organized in conformity with the teachings of the New Testament, and only those who have the witness of the Holy Spirit that they are children of God, and live accordingly, should be considered eligible to church membership.
7. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and head of the Church, and that every local church has the right, under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs.
8. We believe that the Lord has given His Church two sacraments: baptism and communion. (1) Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Freedom of conscience is given as to age and mode. (2) Communion should be administered only to true believers, in accordance with the Word of God.
9. We believe that Jesus Christ who ascended into heaven, shall come again in great power and glory.
10. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, both the righteous and the unrighteous, and that every one shall give an account to a righteous God for his life and conduct on earth.
11. We believe that there is eternal glory for those who believe on Jesus Christ and faithfully endure to the end, and eternal condemnation for those who die in impenitence and unbelief.
12. We believe that the sole duty of the Christian Church is to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, and to assist charitable institutions, to work for righteousness and temperance, for unity and cooperation with all believers, and for peace among all people and nations on the whole earth.

Appendix 3

The (Swedish) Evangelical Free Church Ministerial Association (1947) Statement of Faith

1. We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life.
2. We believe in one God, creator of all things, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Advocate.
4. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men of sin, regenerate the unbelieving sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.
5. We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
6. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for the salvation and justification of all who believe, and that only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become the children of God.
7. We believe in the personal, pre-millennial, and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that this "blessed hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness with his Lord, and of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting, conscious punishment.
9. We believe that the true church is composed of all such persons, who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the head.
10. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation. [This article was adopted as an amendment by the Ministerial Association on June 13, 1950, two days prior to the adoption of the EFCA Statement of Faith.]

Appendix 4

Evangelical Free Church of America Statement of Faith

Evangelical Free Church of America (1950)

The Evangelical Free Church of America Believes –

1. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life.
2. In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.
4. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
5. That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
6. That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.
7. That water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.
8. That the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is the head.
9. That only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.
10. That Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.
11. In the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
12. In the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

Appendix 5

EFCA Today (Winter 2006)

Updated and Expanded June 2007

The Route We've Taken

The invigorating process that's still "in process"

By William J. Hamel and Greg Strand

This issue of *EFCA Today* highlights the historic process of "considering and discussing" a possible revision to the movement's Statement of Faith. The goal is that all EFCA leaders would know, follow, pray for and engage in the discussion.

The process of readdressing the EFCA's Statement of Faith has been lengthy, inspiring and challenging. The movement has a rich history of working through theological questions that can help define it, including the areas of baptism (1947), eschatology (1977) and the nature of the resurrection body (early 1990s).

In fact, the EFCA's first president, Arnold T. Olson, recognized the challenge of creating a document that would fully and permanently define a vibrant movement, especially as he was trying to incorporate recommendations from two different congregations. He said the following right before the 1950 merger that birthed the EFCA:

"The Committee has been careful right along to consider all recommendations and insert in the plan all such as may be reasonable and sure of acceptance by the groups in their entirety. Such study and caution has certainly paid dividends. The plan is far from perfect. Constitutions are always being revised and we anticipate changes down through the years until the Lord comes (if he tarries through another year!!!) but the plan is workable as a beginning and a basis for a merger" ("Moving Towards Merger," *The Evangelical Beacon*, March 21, 1950, page 9).

Since then, other significant steps have led to the current discussions about revising the Statement of Faith:

1987: President Tom McDill begins discussions with the board of directors about revisiting the Statement of Faith. With McDill's retirement a few years later (1990), the discussion is put on hold as the board focuses its energies on calling a new president. But a seed is planted.¹

¹ Interestingly, this discussion began shortly after the merger in 1950. In 1957 one embracing a Historic Premillennialism was ordained. In 1977 the Committed on Ministerial Standing gave official approval to all the tribulational positions, viz. pre, mid or post, but one had to be premillennial. This discussion was the focus of the

1993: The EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing submits a report to the Board of Directors, during Dr. Paul Cedar's tenure as president, proposing "that the EFCA appoint a special ad hoc commission, consisting of members of the Board of Directors, pastors, laymen, seminary professors, and superintendents, to study the Statement of Faith, with the intention of reaffirming, strengthening, clarifying, and refining it in light of where the EFCA is today." The report estimates that "this project would take three to five years, but should be completed in time for the fiftieth anniversary of our present Statement of Faith."

1993-1994: The Board of Directors refines the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Standing and introduces it to the 1994 Conference in Louisville. The proposal, as introduced, calls for approval by the 1995 Conference; a process for the nomination of commission members to be overseen by the Board of Directors in 1995-1996, appointment of the commission members by the 1996 Conference, interim reports from the commission to the 1997, 1998, and 1999 Conferences, and the presentation of recommendations for action by the 2000 Conference.

1994-1995: The Board of Directors receives a number of expressions of concern about the proposal. Many of these concerns focus on the 'open-endedness' or "Pandora's Box risks of appointing such a commission without any guidelines on where it might come out. As a result, the Board of Directors announces at the 1995 Conference its recommendation that the proposal not be pursued.

2003: President Bill Hamel and his board of directors begin addressing theological views that are possibly undermining the Statement of Faith.

2004: The board of directors revives the Spiritual Heritage Committee, a gathering of pastor-theologians, to discuss important theological issues not addressed in the current statement. President Hamel informs the Leadership Conference of this decision.

September 2005: The Spiritual Heritage Committee determines that the gospel, the evangel, will be used as the organizing principle (Mark 1:15) around which they will consider suggesting revisions. The initial set of revisions is presented to the board of directors.

December 9, 2005: The board of directors submits the document for consideration and discussion

Midwinter Institute in 1981, and this broader position was given official Conference approval in 1985 with the approval of Doug Moo for tenure at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

by all members—referring to it as a *revision* rather than simply as a *refreshment*.² It is considered the First Draft.

January-February 2006: This First Draft Revision is the focus of the annual Midwinter Ministerial, a historic meeting that more than 400 attend. Based on feedback, the Spiritual Heritage Committee presents a new revision to the board. After its own consideration, the board submits the Second Draft Revision to all members. A Web log is initiated (blogs.efca.org/sof), inviting all comments, as part of the congregational process.

Spring 2006: EFCA members continue to offer feedback during district meetings. More than 2,500 people personally engage in the discussions, with an additional number sending input via letters and e-mails.

June 2006: the Board of Directors presents a resolution at the Leadership Conference—outlining guidelines for how continued input should best be offered. After discussion, a motion is made to amend the resolution and initiate an additional, formal process for gathering feedback. The motion is defeated “by a strong majority via voice vote” (as recorded by the secretary). The resolution is then passed by a strong majority.

January 2007: the Midwinter Ministerial addressed the topic of “Inerrancy, Hermeneutics and Eschatology.” Once again there were well over 400 pastors, leaders and others interested in this topic and the broader discussion.

February 2007: after many more discussions, after receiving a great deal more input, the Spiritual Heritage Committee presented to the Board of Directors a Third Draft. The Board of Directors submitted the Third Draft of the EFCA Statement of Faith for “consideration and discussion.”

April 2007: the Spiritual Heritage Committee presented to the Board of Directors a Fourth Draft. After much discussion, the Board of Directors decided to reinsert premillennialism, and unanimously approved the document as a Proposed Revision to be presented as a motion at the summer 2007 Conference.

² The revision language was due to three key changes in the Statement of Faith: centering the complete SOF on the gospel, and using it as the framework; the removal of the autonomy of the local church; the broadening of our position on eschatology, i.e. removing premillennialism. The reason for these changes were twofold: we desired to draft a SOF that reflects who we are, Evangelicals who center on the gospel, which meant that the SOF was going to focus on the essentials of the faith, not specific and unique identity markers or distinctive. We believed our key distinctive was that we were gospel people, focused on the gospel and that is what united us together in the Free Church.

June 2007: the Transitional Rules for implementation of a Proposed Revision if passed were strongly approved by the Conference. The Board of Directors brought the Proposed Revision to the Conference and presented it as a motion.

June 2008: many discussions will take place at local Free Churches over the course of the next year. At next year's leadership Conference, the Proposed Revision will be discussed and voted upon by the Conference.

This movement-wide congregational "conversation" has been invaluable. Most involved in the discussion have greatly appreciated the process. Some pastors have commented that they are being forced to become better theologians, and for that they are grateful. These statements have been made both by those who affirm the content of the draft and by those who have some specific concerns. The Spiritual Heritage Committee has asked for and welcomed questions, comments, concerns and recommendations, which have been communicated in person, letter, e-mail and the EFCA blog.

This healthy, robust dialogue ensures that the people of God are, together, seeking the mind of Christ through the Holy Spirit as He works in and through His people. This is congregationalism at its best. Regardless of how the EFCA movement votes on these potential revisions to the Statement of Faith, we have modeled how to have a significant, vibrant theological discussion.

Please e-mail your suggestions regarding the SOF or the need for resources to president@efca.org, and join the guided discussion by visiting the Statement of Faith blog (blogs.efca.org/sof).

Bill Hamel has served as president of the Evangelical Free Church of America since June 1997. He and his wife, Karen, are members of South Suburban EFC in Apple Valley, Minn. Greg Strand is the EFCA director of biblical theology and credentialing and serves on the Board of Ministerial Standing as well as the Spiritual Heritage Committee. He and his family attend Northfield (Minn.) EFC.

Appendix 6

**Evangelical Free Church of America
Statement of Faith
Adopted by the Conference on June 26, 2008**

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

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.

The Bible

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 endeavor 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.

The Human Condition

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Christian Living

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.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The 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.

Response and Eternal Destiny

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.

**Evangelical Free Church of America
Statement of Faith**

Evangelical Free Church of America – 2008 Statement of Faith with the 1950 Statement of Faith

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.

2. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Bible

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 endeavor 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.

1. We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.

The Human Condition

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.

5. We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

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.

3. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High He now is our High Priest and Advocate.

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.

6. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.

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.

4. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.

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.

7. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.

8. We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the head.

9. We believe that only those who are thus members of the true church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.

10. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.

Christian Living

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.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The 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.

11. We believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

Response and Eternal Destiny

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.

12. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.