

## **History of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) & Christ Community Church (CCC)**

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### **1. The EFCA has its roots in the Scandinavian countries of Europe.**

- a. In the 1500's the Protestant Reformation helped the church return to the biblical foundations of the faith.
- b. By the mid 1800s many believers in the Lutheran church of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark were becoming dissatisfied. Why?
  - i. The dominance of the state (government) over the church. (Churches were more concerned about the government's authority than the Bible)

The government told the churches what to believe and how to worship. The law required people to attend communion and the church could not refuse it to anyone, even if they were not believers in Christ.

- ii. The deadness of the church. As a state church all citizens were members but some of these people were not genuine Christians.

Many church services were nothing more than religious ceremonies with no spiritual life or vitality.

- c. As a result a grassroots movement began in which people desire to return to the Bible and have an experience with God that touched their hearts as well as their heads.

Believers began to develop unofficial and informal gatherings within the larger state church.

- d. But the state church authorities pressured them to abandon their ways or withdraw from the established church.

They chose to withdraw and began establishing "Free Churches" – churches which were "free" from the control of the state (Lutheran) church.

- e. These Free Churches emphasized:
  - i. Church membership of "believers only, but all believers."

Only believers in Jesus Christ could join but no one should be rejected if they were a genuine believer. Baptism and Communion were only for those who professed personal faith in Christ.

- ii. The key question regarding doctrine: “where stands it written\_\_\_\_\_?”

What they believed and what they practiced was based only on the Word of God rather than tradition. There was a return to Bible study, prayer, witnessing, and active involvement of each person in the work of the church. The work of missions also began to grow.

## **2. Immigration brought the Free Church movement to the U.S.A.**

- a. A few years after this movement began these Scandinavian people started coming to the United States.
- b. Ironically, in the same year, (1884\_\_\_\_\_) two different free church bodies were formed into associations for the purpose of fellowship and ministry:
  - i. The Swedish\_\_\_\_\_ Evangelical Free Church began in Boone, IA.
  - ii. The Danish\_\_\_\_\_ -Norwegian\_\_\_\_\_ Evangelical Free Church Association began in Boston, MA.
- c. In 1950\_\_\_\_\_ these two groups combined to form the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) in Minneapolis, MN.
  - i. At that time they had a combined total of 275\_\_\_\_\_ churches in the U.S. and Canada.
  - ii. Today there are about 1,300\_\_\_\_\_ E-Free churches in the U.S. alone.
  - iii. The international and national offices of the EFCA remain in Minneapolis, MN still today.
  - iv. The first president\_\_\_\_\_ of the EFCA was E.A. Halleen.

d. The EFCA today:

- i. In June of 1997, William J. Hamel was elected as the fifth president of the EFCA and still holds this position.
- ii. International Missions: currently, 554 full-time missionaries serve in 45 countries with *Reach Global*.
- iii. Education: Trinity International University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS) are both located in Deerfield, IL. Trinity Western University is located in British Columbia, Canada.

3. **The EFCA is currently divided into 18 districts**\_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Ours is the Central district, which consists of Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and southeastern South Dakota.
- b. In our district there are 129 churches, church plants, planting projects, and associate churches.
- c. Our district office is located in Boone, IA.
- d. Our district staff includes:
  - i. Superintendent: Dr. Cal Swan
  - ii. Associate Superintendent & Church health: Larry Austin
  - iii. Church planting missionaries: Richard Schumacher and Mark Doss
  - iv. Multicultural Ministries Director: Luis Martinez
  - v. Associate of Leadership Encouragement: Dr. John Stanford
  - vi. Our camp is called Hidden Acres in Dayton, IA and the director is Earl Taylor.

**4. Christ Community Church began as a small Bible study in 1989.**

- a. The first public worship service was held in January of 1990.
- b. CCC was shepherded by church planter Arlyn Abrams through the first year and in April of 2002 our current Pastor, Randy Widbin, responded to God's call and became the Preaching and Teaching Pastor at CCC.
- c. August 26, 2001 CCC held our first service in our newly constructed building.
- d. In July of 2005 CCC sent 12 of its own to partner in ministry and outreach with Vida Abundante, a small body in Valencia, Venezuela.
- e. In July of 2006 CCC hired Tyler Parson as Pastor of Student Family Discipleship.
- f. Current attendance at CCC is about 240 people.
- g. Our purpose statement is: "Confessing our brokenness, we are committed to loving Christ, to loving one another, and to sharing Christ's love and God's Word with our community."