

Keeping up with the EFCA!

By Pastor Tim Pietrogallo

On June 26, 2008, delegates at the Evangelical Free Church of America National Leadership Conference approved a revised version of the EFCA's Statement of Faith, replacing the old statement which had served our denomination well since 1950!

This much needed revision addressed several "loop holes" that had come to exist in our old statement of faith. For example, the old statement did not specifically affirm our belief that God knows all things, including future things. This was never in question back in 1950 but has since become a point of debate that now must be addressed specifically by the revised statement which says: "Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself..." Another example of a closed loop hole was our old statement's failure to specifically mention the reformation formula that we are saved by God's grace *alone* through faith *alone*. The revised statement now reads, "We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone."

But who cares? What's the big deal? Well, first of all, this document will form the basis for our doctrinal requirements for membership. Our Elders are charged with the task of determining if a person has "a believable profession of faith" which most certainly must include embracing our church's statement of faith. What is more, this statement articulates what we believe about the Good News that secures for us salvation! Our church's doctrinal statement of faith must become a living document.

Here is where you fit in. Our church constitution commits us to alignment with the EFCA and the Forest Lakes District (both of whom have adopted the revised statement). Article IV of our church constitution reads, "The Statement of Faith of this organization shall be the same as that of the Forest Lakes District and the Evangelical Free Church of America, which reads as follows..." What follows right now is the old statement of faith which was adopted back in 1950.

In order to make a change to our church constitution requires action at three consecutive congregational business meetings. First, the Elders must make a formal proposal. This was made at our September meeting. Secondly, we must present the new constitution to the congregation for discussion at the next congregational meeting. Copies of the new constitution including the revised statement of faith will be made available in the foyer as well as a special adult Sunday school opportunity to allow everyone to participate in the discussion and to learn first-hand what the new revised statement of faith

is all about. On the third congregational business meeting we will take a vote to amend our church constitution. The motion will pass on a two-thirds vote.

I believe this process will be informative and helpful for all of us. Let me encourage you to go to www.efca.org/about-efca/statement-faith and read the revised statement for yourself. This revised statement of faith was lovingly and carefully crafted by members of our own EFCA family. Literally hundreds of credentialed EFCA pastors and lay-leaders voted to adopt it. And I whole-heartedly embrace it and feel we should add our own “Amen” to their fine work.

Your Under-shepherd,

Tim Pietrogallo