

**I'm glad you asked:
What does "Evangelical Free" mean?**

Don Reigstad

Great question! In this day of "salt-free", "fat-free", and "fragrance-free" you could get the wrong idea about "Evangelical Free." We are definitely not "free of Evangelicals!" Allow me to address first things first. What is an evangelical?

"Evangelical", by definition, means pertaining to "good news" and the word "evangelical" in our name speaks to our emphasis upon the authority of the Good News, the Bible, in our lives. We believe that the Bible "trumps" man's authority. Therefore, the question we ask in any difference of opinion, or issue under discussion, is "What does the Bible say?" Sometimes it speaks clearly and at other times it is not clear, still the bottom line is that we want very much to be in close alignment with the Bible.

The word "free" speaks to how we do business. The free churches of Europe were churches that rejected state control of the church in favor of local church control of its own affairs. Another name for "free" is "congregational." It is the most democratic form of church governance. Therefore, unlike certain churches, the Pastor does not "rule" the church; unlike some other churches, our leadership board, the General Council does not rule the church. Rather, our local membership decides the "big issues" like Constitution, budgets and the hiring of our Sr. Staff. Our General Council is delegated by the membership to act on its behalf between quarterly meetings. The General Council, in turn, delegates to the staff the authority and responsibility to lead the ministries of the church.

There you have it. We are "evangelicals" and we are "free" but you could get the wrong idea from our name, "Evangelical Free."

I'm glad you asked.