



The Evangelical Network

The Evangelical Network is a network of Bible believing churches, ministries, Christian workers and individuals bound together by a common shared faith, united in purpose and witness and established as a positive resource and support for Christian lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.

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The Evangelical Network

is incorporated in Arizona & recognized as a legal non-profit religious organization.

Our History

The Evangelical Network (TEN) was founded by Fred Pattison in 1988 in Phoenix, Arizona. This is the story of our founder and the history of the organization.



Fred Pattison, the then pastor of Casa de Cristo Church in Phoenix Arizona founded The Evangelical Network (TEN) in 1988. Fred's life journey began in Westchester County in New York's Hudson Valley, then on to Brooklyn and finally to Long Island where he grew up. His parents were Protestants and always saw to it that he attended whichever church they were attending. They moved several times always finding and attending a mainline Protestant church in the community where they were living at the time. As a young child and youth he always loved going to church. In fact from his earliest recollection he wanted to enter the ministry for his life's work. Upon coming into a personal relationship with Christ, this desire to serve God intensified. He first heard the Gospel at a small independent fundamentalist Baptist church located on Long Island. It was while attending this church that he opened his heart and life to Jesus Christ. He came into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in November 1947 as a 15 year old teenager. Attending that independent Baptist church on Long Island drastically changed Fred's life and molded his belief system for the rest of his life.

Fred immediately plunged into serving God as best as he knew how. He became president of the youth group in this church, began carrying his Bible with him to school each day, became actively involved in a group in the metro New York area known as High School Evangelism Fellowship (Hi-BA) and became an avid reader of Holy Scripture. At that point in his life Fred not only devoured Scripture but he committed to memory many Bible verses. As a zealous newly born again teenager he began passing out Gospel tracts and witnessing not only to his classmates in school but also on the streets, in restaurants, and wherever anyone was willing to listen to his testimony. When he was 16 years old, Fred began preaching. The majority of his preaching in those early days was in small African-American Baptist and Pentecostal churches. During this time he also formed a youth group at his home church that was a Gospel Team named: Christ's Crusaders. Upon graduating from high school Fred became a student at Bible College.

Fred began his first church during his junior year in Bible College. He began a Sunday School close to his home on Long Island. They met in the basement of one of the homes of this diverse community. There was only one church in this community and it did not welcome the black residents. Their Sunday School sought to reach the

African-American residents and their group began to grow. It soon organized into a church. This congregation continues to exist having observed its 50th Anniversary. It continues to be a predominately African-American congregation with a few non-black attendees and members.

In Fred's mid-twenties his life changed again when he moved out of the New York area. In 1957 Fred pastored and worked with the New York Billy Graham Crusade. Then in 1958 he believed that it was time to move on, so he relocated to Tucson where he founded Faith Baptist Church. He remained pastor of Faith Baptist Church until 1970.

In 1970, Fred finally accepted the fact that he was indeed gay. All through those many years of ministry he had struggled with his sexuality. Growing up as a rigid, strict and legalistic fundamentalist Christian intensified this struggle with his sexuality. This struggle became so unbearable that he finally came to the belief that he had to leave pastoring. At that point in his life Fred was unable to reconcile his Christian Faith with his sexual orientation; although as a Baptist he never doubted that he was a child of God. Fred says that he floundered in his faith from 1970 to 1976. Leaving Tucson and moving to Phoenix he attended various churches but vowed that he would never again get involved in a church. However, he could not just walk away from his faith totally. In December 1972 he met Joseph, the man who in May 1973 became his lover, companion, and partner in life. Joseph, was a lapsed Catholic who professed to be an agnostic and here Fred was a backslidden fundamentalist Baptist. What a pair they were.

In 1976, Fred and Joseph discovered the Phoenix Metropolitan Community Church. They began attending that church. Joseph liked it and persuaded Fred to continue to attend the services with him. After attending for a short time they both became members of the church. The pastor of the Phoenix MCC was house bound due to illness from Christmas 1976 to Easter 1977. Since Fred had pastored other churches, the MCC District Coordinator appointed Fred as the Worship Coordinator of the Phoenix church. The church's pastor returned to the pulpit on Easter Sunday of that year and gave his resignation. By this time the congregation had gotten use to Fred as their pastor. On the first Sunday of October 1977 Fred was officially installed as senior pastor of the Phoenix MCC. The very next Sunday the old building that the congregation had purchased was firebombed. Two years later the church erected a new building at a different location – a building they owned. Joseph headed up the building of the new structure. At that time they were the very first gay-oriented outreach to build its own building.

Fred, at this time, had come to the point of understanding that one can truly be a Christian and be gay. He studied the so-called 'clobber passages' of Scripture and came to the reconciliation of his faith with his sexual orientation. There are two individuals who greatly influenced him to come into this understanding. The first one was Troy Perry, founder and head of the UFMCC. The other individual was Ralph Blair. Ralph had founded a group known as Evangelicals Concerned. For Fred, as an evangelical, it was exciting to finally come to know of two evangelical Christians who were also homosexuals.

As pastor of an MCC related congregation Fred became involved in the denomination. However, as he states you must keep in mind that he was from a very rigid separatist fundamentalist background and being part of a denomination was new to him. He hates to admit it but Fred states he "became a thorn in the side of the leadership of MCC." He had carried over with him his fundamentalist mindset as well as his Baptist emphasis on autonomy and sovereignty of the local church. In retrospect he says, "I created problems that I should not have." Fred is thankful to God for leading Bro. Troy Perry to have the vision to launch out to the gay and lesbian community, when he was a lone voice like the prophets of old. Fred says publically, "I am truly sorry for the discomfort and trouble that I caused my brother in Christ."

TEN Begins

During the mid to late 1980's Fred Pattison, the then pastor of Casa de Cristo Church in Phoenix Arizona and a minister in the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) had begun to put out feelers to find other



evangelicals who were part of the UFMCC. He did this mostly through newsletters and folders that he wrote and mailed out. In 1987 Fred believed that there was a need to network with fellow evangelicals who were part of the denomination. It was at this point that The Evangelical Network (TEN) was born. The original plan and purpose was to reach evangelicals within the UFMCC. However, this never came to fruition. Plans changed because the church that Fred was pastoring, Casa de Cristo, called a special congregational meeting and the congregation voted to

withdraw from the denomination. This decision affected the vision of TEN immediately, because no longer was the original intent and purpose of the network the same. The networking now focused on reaching evangelicals not necessarily affiliated with the UFMCC.

For many years thereafter the TEN Weekend was held the last weekend of February each year in the facilities of Casa de Cristo (the Phoenix church that Rev. Pattison pastored). The original Council consisted of a number of people (nearly all from non-MCC churches) such as the late Sylvia Pennington and the late Jerry Felix Russell. Cornerstone Fellowship, Casa's sister church in Tucson, with their pastor Rada Schaff, were vital in TEN coming into existence. Soon an Annual Labor Day Weekend was held in Vancouver, British Columbia. Some of those ordained to the Gospel Ministry by TEN in its early years included: Rada Schaff of Tucson, Jim Elsbury of Chicago and Rick Morcomb of Vancouver.

During those early years TEN grew but never to the point that it is today. TEN has had a number of churches either officially affiliated with it or supportive of the concept in a number of states as well as in Canada throughout the years. A group of churches in Tanzania, East Africa were also affiliated for a time.

As the founder of TEN Fred believed that there was a need for a school to equip and train others for public ministry. He founded Phoenix Evangelical Bible Institute (PHE-BI) and headed it up until retiring and turning the school over to Dr. Joseph Pearson. The school is no longer located in Phoenix and has changed its name to Christ Evangelical Bible Institute and is a current affiliate of TEN.

In 1997, Fred Pattison retired as the pastor of Casa de Cristo Church and also resigned the presidency of The Evangelical Network. Fred specifically requested that Todd Ferrell, an Elder from Freedom In Christ Church in San Francisco, consider taking over as President. Shortly after Fred's resignation, Todd was elected as President of TEN by the then, current affiliates.

Todd served as President from 1997-2000 at which time he did not seek re-election in order to focus on his business. In 2000, Ronnie Pigg, Casa de Cristo's new pastor was elected to serve as President of TEN. Ronnie served as TEN President from 2000-2004.

In 2004, at the annual conference in San Francisco, California the affiliates voted in a new Board of Directors, with Todd Ferrell back in as President. The organization had decreased in affiliates and funding, so the new board was charged with finding ways to revive the organization in one year and to come to the 2005 conference to decide if the organization was viable and would continue after that.

The 2005 conference was held in St. Louis, Missouri. The affiliates were excited about the new developments taking place and voted unanimously to continue the organization and to seek to re-build. That same year Todd attended the World AIDS Conference held at the Church at Saddleback pastored by Rick and Kay Warren. During that visit he met both Rick and Kay Warren and began a journey of TEN meeting and speaking regularly with the Warrens and Saddleback Church on the issue of reconciling homosexuality and Christianity. This also launched a new facet of the organization of "Bridge Building". Since 2005, TEN has been meeting with evangelical pastors from across the US, Canada, Africa, United Kingdom and Australia in order to have "safe sane conversations" around the topic of homosexuality.

TEN has also has launched out into the social justice arenas with invitations to the United Nations to speak about evangelical pastors exporting homophobia to Uganda, to speak with the U.S. Secretary of Labor on issues about how workplace safety can be implemented for the LGBT community, to speak at numerous events around the country on gay marriage and adoption, as well as at many other organizations, clubs, functions and conferences.

Over the years TEN has been instrumental in the encouragement and establishment of raising up new churches, hosting annual conferences, building bridges and dialogue between LGBT people and the mainline church, and helping the LGBT community reconcile their Christianity and sexual orientation.

Todd Ferrell, President 1997-2000, 2004-2016

Having grown up in the mid-west and coming from an Assemblies of God upbringing, Todd Ferrell felt the call of God on his life to be involved in music ministry while attending college & attending a large charismatic church in the suburbs of St Louis. While struggling to make peace with his inter-struggles, he cried out to God while driving in his car one day and God spoke to him saying, "I Love You, Todd. And if you keep your eyes on me, one day, I will be able to use you."



Years later, Todd has seen that message come true in his life. Todd co-founded Freedom in Christ Evangelical Church of San Francisco in 1991 in order to establish a fellowship for believers from a more Evangelical background. In 1991, he assisted in co-leading worship at the newly founded Freedom in Christ Evangelical Church of San Francisco and became the official Worship Leader of the church from 1994-2011.

In 1996 he was elected to serve on the board of directors for The Evangelical Network and then was elected to serve as the organizations President from 1997-2000. He was re-elected in 2004 & served as board president of The Evangelical Network until December 2016.