

Credentialing:

Certificate of Ordination (COO)



This credential is designed for qualified males who serve in pastoral ministry in the local church whose primary ministry responsibility is preaching and teaching the Word and who currently hold a valid EFCA Vocational Ministerial License. The expectation is, the individual requesting a COO is theologically proficient and in alignment with the EFCA. For requirements, see Ministerial Credentialing in the EFCA.

Required Documents for Certificate of Ordination

(pdf copies to print and mail to your district)

- Certificate of Ordination Application
- Letter from candidate indicating his desire to be ordained by the EFCA
- Letter of recommendation from the church of your membership or a letter from the church or ministry you are serving (See Character Assessment Guidelines below)
- Record of attendance from the dean's office of the Bible school, seminary attended or EFCA GATEWAY Theological Institute. If there has been no formal or non-formal education, please note that (If a previous letter is on file, a second letter is not necessary)
- Certificate of Ordination Paper
- Minutes from ordination council
- Recommendation from the district board or credentialing council
- Updated EFCA Minister's Profile
- Completion of EFCA Required Reading or completion of TEDS History, Theology and Polity course (If a previous form is on file, a second form is not necessary)

MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALING IN THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA (EFCA)



I. Rationale for and Benefits of Credentialing

The rationale for and benefits of credentialing are the following:

- A. recognition of God's calling to and gifting for vocational ministry,
- B. interdependency between the local church, the district and the national office, to ensure a commitment to and alignment of beliefs (Statement of Faith) and ethos,
- C. accountability to the local church and to the denomination, both doctrinally and morally,
- D. development educationally and personally, and
- E. confirmed legal status by the IRS (through EFCA).

II. Concept and Scope of Vocational Ministry in Scripture

Scripture clearly teaches that each believer has been given a grace-gift(s) in order to serve our Lord and His Church (Eph.4:7). In addition, some believers have received the call of God upon their lives for vocational ministry and have been given a grace-gift(s) for the task of preparing God's people to carry out the works of service which build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11,12). It is those in vocational ministry whom God Himself has chosen and appointed, whom the local church affirms, and who are subsequently recognized by the EFCA by the act of the laying on of hands (Acts 13:3, 1 Tim. 4:14, II Tim. 1:6).

III. Authority

- A. The ultimate authority over the credential is the EFCA Conference, with the Board of Ministerial Standing (BOMS) serving as the implementational authority on their behalf.
- B. The Conference has given BOMS the responsibility of carrying out the policies, which is reflected in the structure.
- C. Those credentialed in the EFCA have been approved by a local EFC church, a district council (DBOMS) and the national BOMS. An EFCA credential is a denominational credential and is granted to candidates "in trust." This means the candidate is accountable to the Conference through the local church, and the credential does not belong to the individual.

IV. Requirements for Ministerial Credentials

A. General requirements for candidates serving EFCA Church ministries to be credentialed under the EFCA. A candidate must fulfill the following:

1. Must be a member in good standing of a local EFC church.
2. Must subscribe without mental reservation to the Statement of Faith of the EFCA and agree to reaffirm that conviction every five years.
3. Must be engaged in a vocational or bi-vocational ministry that qualifies for a ministerial credential.
4. Must demonstrate a cooperative spirit with the purposes and policies of the EFCA and a lifestyle consistent with biblical standards of Christian conduct.
5. Must be examined and approved by a DBOMS council or committee under the authority of the Board of Ministerial Standing (BOMS), who gives final approval.
6. Must complete a prescribed course of study on EFCA Church history, theology and polity as directed by BOMS.
7. Must conform to EFCA policy concerning persons with a divorce in their background. The EFCA does not normally issue ministerial credentials to a person who has a divorce in their background. Any person who has been divorced, or who is married to, or anticipates marrying a person who has been divorced, must be granted a Divorce Policy Exception.

B. Requirements for individuals not serving EFCA ministries.

1. Those already credentialed in the EFCA who move to non-EFCA ministries and wish to retain their credentials must fulfill the following four requirements:
 - a. membership in a local EFC church;
 - b. accountability to the District Superintendent (or delegated district staff);
 - c. annual written ministry report to the Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing (representing the Office of the President); and
 - d. attendance at a district or national conference every other year.

Should they fail to do so, they will be requested to submit their credentials to the Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing.

2. While we do not normally offer credentials to those who are not serving in the EFCA, BOMS may approve an exception from time to time. Individuals who are serving non-ordaining bodies (some local churches not associated with a denomination and parachurch ministries) may be granted credentials through the EFCA upon meeting the "Requirements for Ministerial Credentials." They must also fulfill the four requirements listed above (with the possible exception of membership in a local EFC church for those serving in local church ministry).

C. All definitions of language or interpretation of individual cases shall be solely delegated to BOMS.

D. Each credential is the property of the EFCA and is given to the candidate "in trust."

- E. If one is no longer in a qualifying ministry, the credential must be returned to the Office of the President (OOP) to be placed “in trust for personal reasons.” If one deviates doctrinally from the Statement of Faith, the credential must be returned to the OOP to be placed “in trust” and depending on the determination of BOMS, could be listed as “in trust for disciplinary reasons.” If one experiences a moral failure, the credential must be returned to the OOP to be placed “in trust for disciplinary reasons.”
- F. When a person in good standing turns 65, the individual will be considered retired. This means the individual will no longer need to be in a qualifying ministry or reaffirm the Statement of Faith every five years. This person retains the credential for life unless there is doctrinal deviation from the SOF or moral failure.

V. Types of Ministerial Credentials

There are five types of credentials for ministry issued by the EFCA: Ministry License (Vocational), Certificate of Christian Ministry, Certificate of Ordination, Transfer of Ordination, and Ministry License (Non-Vocational).

In the credentialing process, there are four key matters ascertained of the candidate: calling, character, biblical/ theological (SOF) competency (according to the requirements for the appropriate credential), and pastoral capability.

Credentialing is an important way in which the EFCA comes alongside local church leadership and helps with alignment, doctrinal fidelity, moral purity and accountability of their pastoral staff.

A. Ministry License (Vocational). This credential is designed for those involved in a qualifying ministry and who desire to be aligned with and accountable to the EFCA.

A ministry license may be issued to candidates who are involved in a qualifying ministry. The requirement is that the candidate has the appropriate theological understanding of the Statement of Faith and alignment with the EFCA. Being approved for a license grants the candidate all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of an EFCA credential.

The license is the required credential for all pursuing further credentialing in the EFCA. It is intended, first and foremost, for those directly involved in local church ministry of teaching and preaching the Word and, secondly, for those who are indirectly involved in the ministry of teaching and preaching the Word, who engage in a ministry that is supportive of the ministry of the Word. In addition to pastoral ministries in the local church that are Word based and Word supporting in the local church (e.g., senior pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors, children’s pastors, administrative pastors, pastors of music/worship, etc.), there are others that are also eligible to pursue a license engaged in ministries outside the local church: seminary professors, chaplains, church planters, missionaries [church planters or teachers], institutional ministries, parachurch ministries, etc.

A ministry license will be issued for five years and, thereafter, is renewable (five-year renewable). One is not required to pursue the Certificate of Christian Ministry or the Certificate of Ordination, but can renew the ministry license every five years, in conjunction with the five-year reaffirmation of the Statement of Faith.

The ministry license is also required prior to being granted a Certificate of Christian Ministry or the Certificate of Ordination, which can be pursued within the third year, or anytime thereafter.

A ministry license is valid as long as the holder remains active in a qualifying ministry. If one is no longer in an EFCA qualifying ministry, then the ministry license expires. Should this person re-enter the ministry at a later date, BOMS will request re-examination before returning the credential.

B. Certificate of Christian Ministry (CCM). This credential is designed for qualified individuals serving in local church ministry whose primary ministry is in support of teaching and preaching the Word. It is also fitting for some whose primary ministry is directly related to the ministry of preaching and teaching the Word. In addition to ministries in the local church that are Word supported and Word based (e.g., senior pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors, children's pastors, administrative pastors, pastors of music/worship, etc.), there are others that are also eligible to pursue a CCM engaged in ministries outside the local church: seminary professors, chaplains, church planters, missionaries [church planters or teachers], institutional ministries, parachurch ministries, etc.

1. Requirements for Certificate of Christian Ministry: This credential may be issued to candidates who
 - a. are involved in local church ministry, with some exceptions,
 - b. have been called and gifted for ministry, which has been recognized and affirmed by the local church,
 - c. are within the third year of having been granted a Ministry License, or anytime thereafter,
 - d. have attained the level of theological competency, whether through formal or non-formal means,
 - e. have been approved by a district council (DBOMS) and BOMS, and
 - f. have been publicly and corporately recognized in a church service, in which the service consists of laying on of hands and praying over by the leadership of the local church and the District Superintendent or representative as the credential is presented to the candidate.
2. Preparation for Certificate of Christian Ministry: The candidate for this credential must have a Ministry License, and be within the third year of ministry after obtaining it, or anytime thereafter.
3. Tenure of Certificate of Christian Ministry: The Certificate of Christian Ministry is a bestowal of a trust upon those who are called by God to public ministry. This trust remains with the person as long as he/she continues in ministry and fulfills the standards of ministry as outlined in the pertinent sections above.

An individual who has a Certificate of Christian Ministry can pursue a Certificate of Ordination within the third year, or anytime thereafter, following the requirements for the Certificate of Ordination.

If a person leaves an EFCA ministry or an EFC church and transitions into a **non-EFCA** ministry, the person may retain the EFCA credential.

Should the person leave vocational ministry or cease to be a member in good standing of an EFC church, the certificate must be placed in trust with the EFCA Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing (representing the Office of the President). Should this person re-enter the ministry at a later date, BOMS may request re-examination before returning the credential.

C. Certificate of Ordination (COO). This credential is designed for qualified males who serve in pastoral ministry in the local church whose primary ministry responsibility is preaching and teaching the Word (e.g., senior pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors, children’s pastors, pastors of music/worship, etc.). There are others that are also eligible to pursue a COO engaged in ministries outside the local church: seminary professors, chaplains, church planters, missionaries [church planters or teachers], institutional ministries, etc.

Ordination in the EFCA was defined by the 1990 Conference in the following way: “Ordination in The Evangelical Free Church of America is the act of publicly setting a person apart for Christian ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands by others in ministry and the leadership of the local church; thus recognizing God’s call upon his life; his gifts and training for ministry; his commitment to teach and preach the sacred Scriptures.”

1. Requirements for Certificate of Ordination. This credential may be issued to male candidates who
 - a. are involved in local church ministry, with some exceptions,
 - b. have been called and gifted for ministry, which has been recognized and affirmed by the local church,
 - c. are within the third year of having been granted a Ministry License, or anytime thereafter,
 - d. have attained the level of theological proficiency, whether through formal or non-formal means,
 - e. have been approved by a district council (DBOMS) and BOMS, and
 - f. have been publicly and corporately recognized in a church service, in which the service consists of laying on of hands and praying over by the leadership of the local church and the District Superintendent or representative as the credential is presented to the candidate.
2. Preparation for Ordination: The candidate for this credential must have a Ministry License, and be within the third year of ministry after obtaining it, or anytime thereafter.
3. Tenure of Ordination: The Certificate of Ordination is the bestowal of a trust upon those who are called by God to public ministry. This trust remains with the person as long as he continues in ministry and fulfills the standards of ministry as outlined in the pertinent sections above.

If a person leaves an EFCA ministry or an EFC church and transitions into a **non-EFCA** ministry, the person may retain the EFCA credential.

Should the person leave vocational ministry or cease to be a member in good standing of an EFC church, the certificate must be placed in trust with the EFCA Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing (representing the Office of the President). Should this person re-enter the ministry at a later date, BOMS may request re-examination before returning the credential.

D. Transfer of Ordination (TOO). This credential is designed for qualified males who serve in pastoral ministry in the local church whose primary ministry responsibility is preaching and teaching the Word (e.g., senior pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors, children’s pastors, pastors of music/worship, etc.), and who have a valid Ordination from another ordaining denomination or local church.

Transferring one’s ordination to the EFCA reflects an alignment with and a commitment to the EFCA theology and ethos. It also puts one under the authority of and makes one accountable to the EFCA.

1. Requirements for Transfer of Ordination: A candidate seeking a transfer of ordination to the EFCA shall meet the “Requirements for Ministerial Credentials” (from the first page of this document). This credential may be issued to male candidates who
 - a. are involved in local church ministry, with some exceptions,
 - b. have been called and gifted for ministry, which has been recognized and affirmed by the local church,
 - c. have been in ministry in the EFCA one year,
 - d. have attained the level of theological proficiency, whether through formal and/or non-formal means, and
 - e. have been approved by a DBOMS council and BOMS.
2. Preparation for the Transfer of Ordination: The candidate for this credential must have an ordination from another ordaining body or a local church, and be able to provide the written paper, minutes and council decision for his ordination. An EFCA Ministry License is not a prerequisite.
3. Tenure of Transfer of Ordination: The Transfer of Ordination is the bestowal of a trust upon those who are called by God to public ministry. This trust remains with the person as long as he continues in ministry and fulfills the standards of ministry as outlined in the pertinent sections above.

If a person leaves an EFCA ministry or an EFC church and transitions into a non-EFCA ministry, the person may retain the EFCA credential.

Should the person leave the ministry or cease to be a member in good standing of an EFC church, the certificate must be placed in trust with the EFCA Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing (representing the Office of the President). Should this person re-enter the ministry at a later date, BOMS may request re-examination before returning the credential.

E. Ministry License (Non-Vocational). This credential is designed specifically for those who are serving in a non-vocational ministry who require a credential to serve in that capacity (e.g., some chaplaincies, marketplace ministries, etc.). The candidate must meet the requirements set forth in “Requirements for Ministerial Credentials” (A., with the exception of 3,” must be engaged in a vocational or bi-vocational ministry”). The holder of this License may qualify for legal status to perform the ministries and functions of the pastor/teacher.

This license is valid for five years and is renewable for as long as the holder remains in active, non-vocational ministry. It does not lead to either the Certificate of Christian Ministry or the Certificate of Ordination.

If a person with a ministry license serving in a non-vocational ministry transitions into a vocational ministry, BOMS may request re-examination before transitioning to the ministry license (vocational).

VI. Process, Policies, Procedures and Accountability

- A. The specific process, policies and procedures pertaining to credentialing in the EFCA will be determined and implemented by BOMS, under the authority of the Conference.
- B. A credentials update will be given to the delegates during regularly scheduled Conferences.

Board of Ministerial Standing, April 30, 2013

EFCA CHURCH RECOMMENDATION LETTER



One of the requirements of the EFCA in our credentialing process is to have a clear letter of recommendation from the local church of which the minister in question is serving or attending. We firmly believe that recognition of a minister's call to service begins in the local church. In the EFCA we ask you to affirm the following in your letter for recommendation for a ministry credential, whether it is for a Ministry License, Certificate of Christian Ministry, Certificate of Ordination, or Transfer of Ordination. Believing that the local church is best suited to recognize a person's character and call to ministry, we are looking for a recommendation that confidently affirms this call of God.

Your recommendation should include statements to each of these points:

- that this individual is a member in good standing of your church and that this person is engaged in a ministry that qualifies for a ministerial credential.
- that this individual currently demonstrates the church leadership qualities found in the pastoral epistles of Titus and 1 Timothy and that your local church body affirms God's call on this individual life for Christian vocational or non-vocational ministry and can recommend them with confidence to other churches in the EFCA family. (If you desire a tool to aid in this recommendation, please see the following document: "Character Assessment Guides for Credentialing for an EFCA Ministerial Credential.")
- that to your understanding this individual's doctrinal beliefs and practices would fit into the boundaries established by the Statement of Faith of the EFCA and clear orthodox evangelical theology.
- that to your understanding this person has demonstrated that he will actively support the EFCA and will demonstrate the interdependent spirit desired in the EFCA.
- that your leadership board is sufficiently aware of this person's ministry history and character to state they are not aware of any moral failure in this individual's past history that would, if revealed, bring dishonor to the local church being served or to the EFCA as a denomination.
- that reflects the marriage status of the individual and (if married) their spouse. While a past divorce in either partner does not necessarily preclude credentialing, it is essential that the marriage status is known to the Board of Ministerial Standing so a proper review can be ensured and a divorce exception be granted if it meets the policy of the EFCA.

A clear letter of recommendation is required to be sent to the District Office before we can set a date for this individual's oral credentialing examination. This letter should be **sent by the chairman of your primary leadership board** and also **signed by each member of the leadership board**. Some might view this as a perfunctory role, but believing in the importance of the local church and its authority, I ask you to take the responsibility very seriously. I wish to remind you that this letter or recommendation is of vital importance in the credentialing process. Your understanding of and confidence in this individual's call to ministry will be part of the initial basis upon which a credential is given. When a credential is eventually issued, the name of your church will be on the credential in addition to that of the EFCA. It will be a recommendation to all others that we have together affirmed this person's call to ministry as an approved EFCA pastor. If you have any questions about this required letter of recommendation, please contact me at your convenience by letter, phone, or email.

CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION APPLICATION



1. Before completing this application, please contact your district office for full info about the district credentialing process. www.efca.org/districts
2. Send this application and the materials on the checklist to your district office to initiate the credentialing process. Items may be sent electronically. This is an electronic form (a pdf file that you can complete and save for emailing or print and mail).

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

HOME ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

PRESENTLY SERVING (CHURCH OR OTHER MINISTRY): _____

MINISTRY ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ POSITION: _____

APPLICANT CHECKLIST OF MATERIALS REQUIRED:

~~AAA~~ Letter of intent from you indicating your desire and reason to hold a certificate of ordination from the EFCA.

~~AAA~~ Letter of recommendation from the church of your membership or a letter from the church or ministry you are serving.

Record of attendance from the dean's office of the Bible school, seminary attended or EFCA GATEWAY Theological Institute. *(If a previous letter is on file, a second letter is not necessary)*

Written ordination thesis (recommend you send electronically)

Update your EFCA Minister's Profile.

The form indicating completed EFCA *Required Reading* or TEDS History, Theology and Polity course

Á **Final Step: Send this application and all of the above to your district office.**

DISTRICT CHECKLIST (to be completed by the your district and forwarded to the EFCA)

Minutes of the ordination council

Recommendation from the district board of ministerial standing (DBOMS).

Certificate of Ordination

2008 EFCA Statement of Faith



Paper Requirements

Overview

This provides information to assist you in preparing for the required thesis. Papers are to conform to the format or they will be returned for modification.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION

1. These requirements are an attempt to have more standardized papers with responses to the most critical issues given by all candidates.
2. The primary purpose of the Certificate of Ordination (COO) is to affirm theological proficiency. (This expands on the License, which focuses on theological competency and alignment with the EFCA, and is distinguished from the Certificate of Christian Ministry, which focuses on theological proficiency.)
3. You will defend the biblical and theological foundation of the Statement of Faith by responding concisely to the specific theological items listed under the various articles in the “Doctrinal Section.” It is not required that you interact with all the questions listed, but you will be responsible to respond to the questions if asked by the council. This will also be done under the “Pastoral and Personal Section,” in which you are required to respond to each listed item.
4. You are expected to demonstrate that you can interact faithfully with the text of the Bible, both in the written paper and the oral defense.
5. Unless arrangements are made for an alternative process, the paper will be presented in English.

SPECIFICS OF THE PAPER

1. The paper should be thirty-five (35) to forty (40) pages in length, double-spaced, full justification (one inch margins), using a twelve point font, Times New Roman.
2. Please quote each article of the Statement of Faith in the paper, single-spaced and bold, just prior to your written support. Please see the following link:
<http://efca.org/resources/document/statement-faith-scripture-references>
3. The majority of the paper will focus on the “Doctrinal Section.” The “Biographical Section” should include 1-2 pages; the “Pastoral and Personal Section” should include 4-6 pages; the “Doctrinal Section” should include about 30-32 pages. For example, a general breakdown for a 40 page ordination paper would be the following: 2 pages “Biographical Section; 32 pages “Doctrinal Section”; 6 pages “Pastoral and Personal Section.”
4. Be concise and precise. Substance is more important than volume. It is expected that the thesis will demonstrate proficiency in both theology and the use of language to communicate truth about God and the world. Please exercise care with regard to gender references and seek to avoid unwarranted exclusive language. It is recommended that you seek out a mentor who can help with both the biblical and theological content and the writing style and grammar of the paper.

5. State your convictions plainly without saying “I believe . . .”; save that for issues of personal opinion.
6. In writing your paper you have the option of writing on the doctrinal themes (noted in the subheadings) in a theological commentary format, responding directly to the numbered questions (using GATEWAY’s guidelines, “How to Write a Paper”) or using the numbered questions as a guide to write what you believe about each article. In any of these approaches, do not supply cursory, bullet point answers. Please note – it is not mandatory to interact with all the questions in your paper, but you need to know responses because you may be asked these questions during the council.
7. Include references to biblical texts in your paper, not direct quotes from those texts of Scripture. References to biblical texts should be included in close proximity to assertions of truth being made. It is expected you will be able to reference key biblical texts from memory in your council.
8. Quotations from other scholars are to be avoided, or used minimally. Though you will consult, read and use sources, this is a paper expounding what you believe. Do not engage in plagiarism, either intentional or unintentional. It is a matter of integrity and truthfulness and speaks to your character. If discovered it will be addressed strongly and will affect your process of credentialing.
9. The paper must conform to these requirements or it will be returned to you for modification before the paper can be submitted to your District Council.

ADMINISTRATIVE

1. It is important that you contact the District Office to complete the credentialing process, to move from the license to the COO.
2. The completed paper is to be sent to the District Office per their instruction. Your District may want both electronic and hard copies. Please check on and follow your District’s procedures.
3. You will be required to defend this paper, including how the doctrine affects your practical pastoral ministry, with members of a council appointed by the District, including members from the local church where you serve (cf. *Ministerial Credentialing in the EFCA* for the make-up of the council). Ordination councils generally last about four hours.
4. If you have questions concerning any part of this process, please call the District Office.

Paper

BIOGRAPHICAL SECTION (1-2 PAGES)

1. Briefly describe your own conversion to faith in Jesus Christ and, if you are married, the conversion experience of your wife to faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Briefly give an account of your call to ministry and, if you are married, your wife’s attitude towards this call.
3. Briefly describe your preparation, both academic and non-academic, i.e. formal and non-formal, for credentialed ministry.

DOCTRINAL SECTION (30-32 PAGES)

In this section you are required to write on each article of the Statement of Faith following the guidelines in the “Specifics of the Paper” as noted above. Please include Scripture references that support the biblical and theological statements made in your paper, and list the references in

canonical order (e.g. “God loves the world (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:8).”) or in order of their strength of support, the strongest supporting verses first (e.g. “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8; Jn. 3:16).”).

Preamble

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.

◆ Creator and Creation

1. What does it mean that God is the Creator? Why is this important?
2. How do you interpret Genesis 1?
3. How does your interpretation of Genesis 1 relate to your view of Scripture?

◆ Attributes

4. Describe the essential attributes of God. Why is it necessary, or important, to have a working understanding of the nature and attributes of God?
5. What does it mean that God is holy? What are the implications of his holiness?

◆ Trinity

6. Describe the doctrine of the Trinity. How do you teach this doctrine from Scripture?
7. What is the importance of the truth that God, as “three equally divine Persons,” eternally exists “in a loving unity?”
8. Describe one contemporary denial of the doctrine of the Trinity. Why is it heretical?

◆ Limitless Knowledge and Sovereign Power (Open Theism)

9. What does it mean that God has “limitless knowledge and sovereign power”? Why is this significant in contemporary debates about God?

◆ Gracious Purpose to Redeem

10. What is the significance of God graciously purposing from eternity to redeem a people for Himself?

◆ Make All Things New for His Glory

11. How does redemption relate to the creation? What impact does your view have for our present stewardship of the earth’s resources?

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.

◆ Old and New Testaments, Canon

1. Explain your understanding of the development of the canon of Scripture.
2. What are the canonical issues involved with Mark 16:9-20? John 7:53-8:11?
3. Describe one modern day canonical dispute. How would you respond to it?

◆ Inspiration

4. How do you understand the process of inspiration and its result? What implications does this doctrine have on your life and ministry?
5. What do the words “verbally inspired” mean?

◆ Inerrancy

6. What is “inerrancy,” and why is it important? What does it mean that this concept is applied to “the original writings”? How do inerrancy and infallibility relate?
7. Are modern translations of the Bible inerrant? How are they reliable?

◆ Complete Revelation

8. What is the difference between general and special revelation?
9. How helpful is general revelation when it comes to knowing God, viz. is it salvific?
10. What does the clarity of Scripture mean and what are its implications?
11. What does it mean, both doctrinally and practically, that the Scriptures are sufficient?

◆ Ultimate Authority

12. In relation to how and what we know, why is it important to state that the Scripture, God’s Word, is “the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged?”

◆ Believed, Obeyed, Trusted

13. Regarding the truth of God’s Word, what is to be your response? What is the implication for your life and ministry?

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.

◆ Adam and Eve, Image of God

1. What does it mean that Adam and Eve were created in the image of God? What are the implications of this doctrine for us today?

◆ Fall

2. How do you understand the fall of humanity and its effects?
3. What does the fall teach us about the nature of sin?

◆ Satan

4. Who is Satan, and what role does he play in the fall of Adam and Eve? What is he working to accomplish today?

◆ Union with Adam, Sinners by Nature and by Choice

5. How do you understand “union with Adam?” What does it mean that we “are sinners by nature and by choice”? Briefly explain these concepts from Romans 5:12-21.

◆ Alienation from God

6. What does it mean that we are alienated from God?

◆ God's Wrath

7. What does the wrath of God mean and what is its significance?

◆ Rescued, Reconciled and Renewed

8. From what are we rescued? To whom are we reconciled? How are we renewed?
9. Why is it important to state exclusively that this work is accomplished only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ?

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.

◆ God Incarnate, Fully God and Fully Man, One Person in Two Natures

1. What is the significance of the incarnation? Why was it necessary for our salvation?
2. Explain your understanding of the Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ. How do you understand Phil 2:7?
3. What were some of the Christological heresies as the early church attempted to understand and explain the hypostatic union?

◆ Israel's Promised Messiah (Relation to Prophecy)

4. Why is it important that Jesus be known as "Israel's promised Messiah?" What is its importance for our understanding of Jesus? What about our understanding of the Bible?

◆ Virgin Birth

5. What is the virgin birth, why is it essential, and what is its significance for our understanding of christology and soteriology?

◆ Sinless Life, Crucifixion

6. What is the significance of Jesus' perfect obedience (both active and passive) for our salvation?
7. Could Jesus have sinned? How do you understand the temptations?
8. Why did Jesus die?

◆ Bodily Resurrection, Ascension and Session

9. What is the importance of Jesus' resurrection?
10. How do you understand the nature of Jesus' resurrection body?
11. What is the significance of the ascension and session of Jesus Christ?

◆ High Priest and Advocate

12. What is the significance of Jesus' ministry as High Priest and Advocate and how does this affect your life and ministry?

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.

◆ Representative and Substitute

1. What is it about Jesus' person and work that accomplishes our salvation?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is "our representative and substitute?"

◆ Shed Blood on the Cross

4. Why was Jesus' shed blood necessary for our salvation?
5. Why is the centrality of the cross essential?

◆ Perfect, All-Sufficient Sacrifice for Sin

6. What is the significance of Christ's sacrificial death being "perfect" and "all-sufficient?" What is the value and necessity of His death?
7. How does the fact that this is the only way in which our sin is addressed compare with those embracing a wider hope of salvation beyond Christ and His work?

◆ Atonement, Propitiation, Expiation, Redemption, Reconciliation

8. What is atonement? Define propitiation and expiation, and explain the difference.
9. Define redemption (cf. article 1). What does it mean to be reconciled to God and what is its significance?
10. What is your understanding of 2 Corinthians 5:21? Explain your view of "imputation."

◆ Victorious Resurrection

11. Why is Jesus' resurrection considered as an element of our salvation?
12. What is the significance that Jesus' resurrection is "victorious?" Who and what did Jesus overcome?

◆ Only Ground of Salvation

13. What does it mean that Jesus' work is the "only ground for salvation?"
14. What does "salvation" mean biblically? Explain your understanding of it.

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.

◆ Person

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

◆ Purpose (in both the Old and New Testaments)

2. How is the ministry of the Holy Spirit similar and dissimilar between the old and new covenants?

3. Why did the Holy Spirit come, viz. why did Jesus send “another?” What does it mean that the Holy Spirit “glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ?”

◆ Convicting the World

4. Why is the ministry of the Holy Spirit essential in the “world?” What is the guilt of which He convicts?

◆ Regenerating Sinners

5. What is “regeneration?” Where in the order of salvation does regeneration occur?

6. How do you understand the teaching about the baptism of the Holy Spirit from 1 Cor 12:13? Regarding the Holy Spirit’s ministry, what are the differences between baptism, indwelling, filling and walking?

7. What does it mean that you are in “union with Christ?”

8. What is the meaning and significance of “adoption?”

◆ Indwelling Believers

9. What are biblical evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit?

10. What role do the gifts of the Spirit play in the body of Christ? Is that role different today than during apostolic times?

11. How are the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit similar? How are they different? How do they function in your life?

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.

◆ Justification

1. How do you understand “justification” (cf. Romans 3:21-26)?

◆ God's Grace Through Faith Alone in Christ Alone

2. Define “grace” and “faith” and explain how grace and faith in Christ are related to justification.
3. What is the significance of the emphasis on “alone?”

◆ Body of Christ, Jesus Christ as Head of Church

4. How are the scriptural metaphors of “the body of Christ,” “the bride of Christ,” and “the Head of the Church” to be understood?

◆ True Church and Local Church

5. What is the relationship between the “true church” and the “local church?”

◆ Local Church

6. What does it mean to be a “believers’ church?” Why is membership important for a local church? What responsibilities do members have in a local church?
7. Address the various types of church government. What is the biblical defense of congregationalism?
8. Within congregationalism, how should the Pastor(s), Church Board (Elders and Deacons), and Congregation function together for effective church ministry?
9. What is your understanding of the statement that the “EFCA shall be an association and fellowship of autonomous but interdependent congregations of like faith and congregational government?” What does “autonomous but interdependent” mean? Why is denominational affiliation important for you and the congregation?

◆ Ordinances

10. What is the meaning and purpose of baptism? What are the various modes of baptism?
11. What is the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper? What are the various ways this is understood?
12. How do baptism and the Lord's Supper relate to one another, i.e. is there a biblical order? How do they “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.

◆ Relationship Between Justifying Grace and Sanctifying Power and Purpose

1. How do you understand the doctrine of sanctification? How is it related to justification?
2. What is the purpose and function of “works” in the life of the believer?
3. What is the relationship between a believer’s sanctification and assurance?

◆ Great Commandment

4. Why is love for God preeminent and why is this at the heart of understanding the Ten Commandments and is considered the first and greatest commandment of the whole of the Christian life? How does this relate to other gods and idolatry?
5. How does our preeminent love for God (and God’s prior love of us) serve as the basis for our love for others? Is there an importance to this order?

◆ Living Out Our Faith

6. Why is it important to distinguish between “the faith” understood as a body of truth and “faith” understood as the way in which one lives, viz. having been justified by faith, we live by faith?
7. Living out our faith begins with “the household of faith,” which is evidenced in “care for one another.” Why is this important?
8. What is the biblical teaching of “the poor” and “the oppressed?”
9. How do you understand the local church’s responsibility and role in the world, particularly ministering with compassion and justice?

◆ Combating Spiritual Forces of Evil

10. What is spiritual warfare? How should we combat the spiritual forces of evil?

◆ Christ’s Commission to Make Disciples

11. What is the importance of the command to “make disciples” and what are the God-ordained means of doing that?
12. The scope of this ministry is “all people.” Support this biblically and explain the importance and practical outworking of this in the local church.
13. Why is it important to distinguish between the gospel and the entailments of the gospel? How does the gospel relate to deeds of mercy and compassion? What are the implications of equating them (e.g. the social gospel), and what are the implications of creating an absolute disjunction between them?
14. We are always to bear witness to the gospel in both proclamation (“in word”) and in life (“in deed”)? Give examples of how we can witness to the gospel “in...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.

◆ Personal, Bodily and Premillennial Return

1. Briefly describe your position on the second coming of Jesus Christ. Include your views on the tribulation, the rapture of the church, and the millennium.
2. How is your view different from other positions on the millennium? Please define the other positions.
3. Why is it essential to state explicitly that Christ's return is "personal" and "bodily?"

◆ Israel and the Church

4. What is your understanding of the relationship between Israel and the Church as it pertains to eschatology? Comment on Rom 11:25-27.
5. How do you understand Jesus' teaching of the kingdom and how does the kingdom relate to eschatology?

◆ Effect on the Believer

6. Why is it important to include a statement of humility regarding the exact time of Christ's return, viz. "at a time known only to God?"
7. How do you understand biblically "constant expectancy," and what does it mean to live this way? What is the importance of the word "demands?"
8. How do you define and understand the "blessed hope?" How does the biblical teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ's return bring you hope?
9. How does Christ's return motivate you "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.

◆ God Commands All to Believe the Gospel, Repenting and Receiving the Lord Jesus Christ

1. What is the gospel? Is the gospel a universal message?
2. What does it mean to “believe the gospel,” viz. what is the importance of belief?
3. Define “repentance.” What is the role of repentance in conversion?
4. What does it mean to “receive the Lord Jesus Christ?”
5. What is the importance of the universal command to believe, the exclusivity of believing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the eternal consequences grounded in ones response to Jesus?

◆ Bodily Resurrection of the Dead and Judgment of All

6. What is the importance of the “bodily” resurrection of the dead (note Jesus’ bodily resurrection and bodily return), and what does this teach us about humanity?
7. What is your understanding of the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20?
8. Will believers face future judgment? Explain the meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:10, cf. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

◆ Unbeliever Condemned to Eternal Conscious Punishment

9. What is the destiny of unbelievers? What is the destiny of the unevangelized? What does it mean that unbelievers are condemned?
10. What is the nature of Hell, and does “eternal conscious punishment” mean?

◆ Believer to Eternal Blessedness and Joy with the Lord

11. What happens to a believer who dies before the return of Christ?
12. How do you describe “heaven” and “life after death?”

◆ New Heaven and New Earth

13. What is the relationship of the “new heaven and new earth” to the millennial Kingdom of Christ?

◆ To the Praise of His Glorious Grace (Doxology)

14. Why is it fitting to conclude a doctrinal Statement of Faith with a worshipful (doxological) note?

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL SECTION (4-6 PAGES)

Under “Current Doctrinal Issues” and “Issues Related to Lifestyle,” please respond to each numbered item with a short paragraph.

Current Doctrinal Issues

Explain your views of the biblical teaching regarding the following topics and how those views affect your practice of ministry.

1. Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage
2. Abortion, Infanticide, Euthanasia (and other bioethical matters)
3. Role Distinctions for Men and Women in the Home and the Church
4. Homosexual Belief and Conduct (and other sexual perversions of God’s design for human sexuality)
5. Theology of Worship

Issues Related to Lifestyle

The candidate will state his views of the Scriptures and personal practices about the following:

1. Spiritual Disciplines
2. Stewardship, Personal Finances, and Debt
3. Sexual Purity (Including Pornography)
4. Marriage and Family Priorities
5. Social Drinking of Alcohol
6. Accountability in Life and Ministry

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA: Please respond to these questions with a yes or no. If it is necessary to clarify your answer, please write a brief explanatory response.

1. The Evangelical Free Church of America purposely allows latitude in significant areas of doctrine (e.g. the age of the universe, Arminianism and Calvinism, the use of the gifts of the Spirit particularly the miraculous gifts, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, the tribulation, etc.). This has been referred to as the “significance of silence,” viz. we will debate these issues, but we will not divide over them. Are you willing to minister alongside those whose views differ from yours on nonessential matters?
2. Are you in harmony with the mission of the EFCA “to glorify God by multiplying transformational churches among all people,” as well as our distinctives? Please see the following link: <http://efca.org/resources/document/efca-distinctives>
3. Are you willing to live in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws and policies of the EFCA? (This does not mean that you may not support a change to any of them through the prescribed process, cf. the next question.) Please see the following link: <http://efca.org/resources/document/bylaws>
4. Are you willing to follow and adhere to the congregational processes at the local church, district and national conference level in seeking changes in the programs or policies of the EFCA?

5. Is it your intention and desire to work in cooperation with the EFCA and the district in which you serve?
6. If at any time you change your doctrinal beliefs and/or find yourself in disagreement with the Statement of Faith and/or policies of the EFCA, would you be willing to surrender your credentials to the EFCA?
7. Is there any area or issue in your life which, if known because it has not been dealt with responsibly in a way that can be attested by spiritually mature believers, would bring disrepute on the Lord or the Church (drunkenness, gambling, plagiarism, pornography, racism, addictions, felony or “things like these” (Gal. 5:19-21))?

Add any additional personal convictions or comments relative to the previous sections that you believe would be helpful or important in the process of securing EFCA credentials.

Approved by the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing –January 2010, updated January 2012 & August 2013



MINISTER'S PROFILE

(Please complete the entire form)

Date: _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Home Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Office Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Cell Number: _____ Email: _____

Married _____ Spouse's Name: _____ Date of Marriage: _____
Single _____
Divorced _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Children	DOB	Children	DOB
_____	_____ <small>(mm/dd/yyyy)</small>	_____	_____ <small>(mm/dd/yyyy)</small>
_____	_____ <small>(mm/dd/yyyy)</small>	_____	_____ <small>(mm/dd/yyyy)</small>
_____	_____ <small>(mm/dd/yyyy)</small>	_____	_____ <small>(mm/dd/yyyy)</small>

Licensed with: _____ Date: _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Ordained with: _____ Date: _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Presently serving (list church or organization and location:

_____ City/State: _____

Present Church Membership: _____ City/State: _____

Education

Name of School: _____ City/ State: _____
(Do not abbreviate)
Degree _____ Major _____ Date Completed _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Name of School: _____ City/ State: _____
(Do not abbreviate)
Degree _____ Major _____ Date Completed _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Name of School: _____ City/ State: _____
(Do not abbreviate)
Degree _____ Major _____ Date Completed _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

(continued on next page)

Ministry History

From(yyyy):	To(yyyy):	Church or Institution (Include City and State)	Position
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Chaplain Yes No Serving at: _____

Branch of Service: Active Yes No Current Rank: _____

Air Force (active)	Army (active)	Navy (active)	Veterans Administration Hospital
Air Force Reserve	Navy Reserve	Army National Guard	Civil Air Patrol
State Military Reserve	Other _____		

The Evangelical Free Church of America (has)(does not have) my permission to release the information contained in this document _____ Dated _____
(Electronic Signature Accepted)

HISTORY, THEOLOGY AND POLITY REQUIREMENT FOR CREDENTIALING



This certificate is to be included with your other credentialing material sent to your district.

Candidate's Name: _____
(please print)

Candidate's Signature: _____
(affirming completion of the above requirements below)

I have completed either (please check one): Option A Option B

Option A: History, Theology and Polity Course including Required Reading

Email (credentialing@efca.org) or contact your district office for information on the next available course. (This is the **RECOMMENDED** option.)

Date Completed

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Hanson, Calvin B., <i>What it Means to be Free</i> | _____ |
| 2. EFCA Spiritual Heritage Committee, <i>Evangelical Convictions</i> | (mm/dd/yyyy) |
| 3. Olson, Arnold T., <i>The Significance of Silence</i> | _____ |

Course Date: _____ Course Location: _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Name of Course Leader: _____

Option B: Required Reading for Independent Study

Books may be ordered from NextStep Resources (<http://www.nsresources.com>) or 800-444-2665

Date Completed

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Hanson, Calvin B., <i>What it Means to be Free</i> | _____ |
| 2. EFCA Spiritual Heritage Committee, <i>Evangelical Convictions</i> | _____ |
| 3. Olson, Arnold T., <i>The Significance of Silence</i> | _____ |
| 4. Olson, Arnold T., <i>Stumbling Toward Maturity</i> | _____ |
| 5. Olson, Arnold T., <i>The Search for Identity</i> | _____ |