

HOMOSEXUAL BELIEF AND CONDUCT (BOTH MALE AND FEMALE) AS IT PERTAINS TO CREDENTIALING IN THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA (EFCA)



Basic Biblical Guidelines:

God created male and female in His own image (Genesis 1:27 and 2:22-24). This “good” work, however, was corrupted by human sin (Genesis 3). One of the resulting manifestations of sin is homosexual practice, which is plainly condemned by God (Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13). As with other sinful acts, homosexual lust (male or female) is a degrading and unnatural passion (Romans 1:24-25) that brings grave consequences in this life (Romans 1:26-27), and those who practice a lifestyle characterized by homosexual sin are excluded from the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10).

Despite the controversy among some over the origin of homosexual attraction, the Bible is explicitly clear that *all* sinful lusts and behaviors result from the fall of humanity into sin. All engaged in this sin must seek forgiveness and healing through Jesus Christ. Persons once involved in homosexual lusts and practices who have turned to Christ in repentance are “washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Application of these guidelines to those seeking a credential in the EFCA:

Those seeking a credential within the EFCA are expected to uphold a high standard of holiness and wholeness, which includes beliefs and conduct (1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, and James 3:1). Therefore, the following will be applied:

1. Any person who (a) practices homosexual conduct in any form, (b) believes that homosexual behavior is a Biblically acceptable lifestyle for themselves or others, (c) willfully and habitually engages in conduct grounded in homosexual lust such as masturbation associated with homosexual fantasies or involvement with pornography, or (d) identifies himself or herself as homosexual, is not eligible for any level of credential for ministry within the EFCA.¹ Furthermore, such persons who already have an EFCA credential will have their credential revoked.

Clarification of item 1 (d) above: While tragically, as a result of the fall, believers might experience sexual attraction to those of the same sex, Christ’s followers will not affirm this as part of God’s plan for their lives nor build their identities around such attractions. Therefore, persons will not view themselves, or refer to themselves as homosexuals, but rather define their identity as new creatures in Christ. One may (and indeed, honesty may demand that they must) acknowledge the

¹ Though specifically addressing “homosexual belief and behavior (both male and female),” which consists of Gay and Lesbian, this policy also encompasses other sexual perversions of God’s design for human sexuality such as (but not limited to) bisexual, transgender/transsexual, queer, bestiality and pedophilia (for this last perversion, cf. “the EFCA BOMS Policy on Sexual Abuse of a Minor”). Any such beliefs and behaviors disqualify a person from being credentialed in the EFCA.

reality of same-sex attraction, but must ground their identity in Christ, not in their sexual attractions. Thus, any person who embraces a homosexual identity, even if celibate, acts in rebellion against God's created order of male and female, demonstrating that they have not fully repented from homosexual lust and behavior.

2. Persons who have engaged in past homosexual practices and/or unrestrained same-sex lustful thoughts, yet have fully repented from these practices and lusts, and consistently and successfully resist the temptation to yield to homosexual practices and lusts without a relapse, for a minimum of five years, may be eligible for credentialing for ministry within the EFCA. During this five year period, such persons must clearly demonstrate Christ's victory over same-sex lusts and behaviors to an experienced supervisor or mentor before applying for a credential. The applicant must demonstrate an ability to develop healthy, non-sexual, intimate relationships with people of both sexes. The applicant's reputation for emotional and relational health must be above reproach.

3. To assist the EFCA in determining these matters, a careful and thorough check of personal references, and a professional psychological assessment will be completed. Furthermore, an ongoing accountability relationship with one familiar with the struggles of same-sex attraction will be required. The credentialing process will be similar in principle and process for those applying for an EFCA Divorce Policy Exception. In part that means the "burden and costs of proof" will be upon the applicant for the credential. As demonstrated by the EFCA policy of denying a credential to one convicted of sexual abuse of a minor, credentialed ministry is considered not a right but a high privilege and special calling.

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