

Evangelical Free Church of America: Ministerial Credentials
Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications
Questionnaire for Candidate

Dear Candidate:

The Evangelical Free Church of America is committed to the biblical standards of life and conduct spelled out in the New Testament for pastors and elders (and, by implication, other ministry leaders). The purpose of this questionnaire is to remind you of some of the basic personal qualifications for receiving a ministerial credential in the EFCA and to help the family of Free Churches uphold the biblical standards that are implied in the credential.

This step in the credentialing process grows out of a serious and comprehensive policy approved by the EFCA Conference: Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications related to the granting of Ministerial Credentials within the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA). That policy is included with this questionnaire for your perusal.

This questionnaire will review several areas of your life and ministry. The aim of your district leaders is to support you as you continue to aim at the biblical standards for church leaders. We are confident of many good character qualities and ministry competencies in you! We also recognize that all of us are fallen in the sight of God and not one of us arrives at the point of being ready to be credentialed without sin and without some degree of brokenness. Our ultimate goal in asking these questions is not to disqualify a person but to provide the opportunity to proceed in a healthy manner. We stand ready to assist you in your credentialing path, giving encouragement, counsel, and resources as may be helpful.

There are three options for proceeding with this review of your qualifications. If you are married, we ask that you and your spouse complete the forms. If you are single, we ask that you and a close friend complete them. (1) You and your spouse/friend can complete the written questionnaires and submit them. (2) You and your spouse/friend can interact with your district superintendent (or his representative) in a personal interview that explores the questions in the questionnaires. (3) If you are an associate pastoral staff member, you and your spouse/friend can hold a personal interview with your senior or executive pastor.

The EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing understands that many of these questions are deeply personal and may be difficult to answer. Moreover, depending on one's personality and temperament, some individuals will tend to be overly sensitive to these matters, while other individuals will tend to be insufficiently sensitive. Understand that answering "yes" to any question does not necessarily mean that you will be refused ministerial credentials. You also have the freedom not to answer any particular question in writing. This does not mean, however, that you will not be expected to discuss those questions in a follow-up interview.

If you choose the written option, your district superintendent and/or district credentialing committee will read your questionnaire and follow up with you if necessary. Our aim—through these questions, through supportive encouragement, and through practical resources for healing and change—is to help you be fully qualified for an EFCA credential.

Please return this form to your district office. It will be reviewed only by your district superintendent (or district credentialing representative) and/or the appropriate district credentialing committee. This step must be completed before you meet with the district credentialing committee for your oral credentialing examination. The affirmation of your qualifications for an EFCA credential will be included in your credentialing examination and sent with your file to the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing. After your credential is issued, this questionnaire (both electronic and any hard-copy versions, along with those supplied by your spouse and your church leaders) will be destroyed.

We warmly invite you to contact your district superintendent or a member of your district credentialing committee so that we can answer questions, clarify uncertainties, and assure you of our support in this part of your credentialing process.

Your district superintendent, district credentialing board, and
the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing

Note: if you answer Yes to any of the Yes/No questions in this questionnaire, please explain briefly on a separate page.

General Character (*requires a written response up to two pages*)

1. Biblical qualifications for church leaders include a vital spiritual walk with Christ, fruitfulness of life, a good reputation with outsiders, and relational skills and health. Writing a maximum of two pages, please comment on these qualifications in your own life and ministry.

Ethical Issues

The EFCA requires its credentialed leaders to be above reproach and exhibiting the full-orbed mature character described by the Biblical qualifications for elders. This includes purity of both heart and actions in matters of relationship, of self-control, of sexual purity, and beyond.

2. Is there any area or issue in your life, past or present, which, if it became known publicly, would bring disrepute on the Lord or the Church because it has not been dealt with responsibly and adequately? (Depending on the circumstances, are there one or two mature believers who can attest to this responsible and adequate addressing of the issue?) This would include things in the following list:

- addictions
- child abuse, child molestation, sexual misconduct with a minor, indecent liberties with a minor
- drunkenness/abuse of alcohol or drugs
- felony
- gambling
- marital abuse
- plagiarism
- pornography/sexually explicit material
- racism or prejudice
- sexual sin: premarital, extramarital, homosexual, harassment, other
- use of illegal substances
- other “things like these” (Gal. 5:19-21)

Yes / No

Financial Stewardship

3. Are financial issues such as spending habits, indebtedness, chronic shortfall, or differing perspectives causing undue distress to you (or your spouse if you are married)? Yes / No

Marriage and Family Relationships

(If you are single, answer only the questions appropriate to your circumstances.)

Current Marital and Family Health

4. Are you in any way concerned that the integrity and health of your marriage or family is not a good example to your congregation, or that there are aspects of your marriage or family that may not be consistent with the qualifications for an EFCA credential? Yes / No

Pre-Marital and Marital History

5. Have you ever been in a sexual relationship of cohabitation outside of marriage, and/or do you or your spouse have a divorce in your backgrounds? Yes / No (If yes, we would like to explore with you how this was resolved and how it has shaped your life and ministry.)

Singleness

6. Are you in any way concerned that the integrity and health of your singleness is not a good example to your congregation or that there are aspects of your relational and sexual ethics that may not be consistent with the qualifications for an EFCA credential? Yes / No
7. Do you have one or more friends who have genuine access to your heart and your life? Yes / No

General Ministerial and Personal Circumstances

8. Have you been licensed, ordained, commissioned, or otherwise credentialed as a minister or ministry leader by any religious body other than the EFCA? Yes / No

If yes, explain fully on a separate sheet (identify each denomination or religious body with which you have been licensed, ordained, commissioned, or otherwise credentialed as a minister or ministry leader, and explain the reason for each change).

9. Do you have any other concerns about your personal spiritual and character qualifications for receiving an EFCA ministerial credential? Yes / No

I understand that EFCA ministers and leaders are to exemplify the biblical standards for church leaders and I agree with those standards. I have filled out this questionnaire honestly and I give permission to the appropriate district and national EFCA credentialing representatives to review this questionnaire and discuss it as needed in processing my application for a credential.

Signature

Printed name

Date

January 2018

Evangelical Free Church of America: Ministerial Credentials
Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications
Questionnaire for Spouse of a Married Leader or Close Friend of a Single Leader

Dear Spouse or Friend:

This questionnaire accompanies a longer version that your spouse or good friend will fill out in his or her application for a ministerial credential with The Evangelical Free Church of America. The elders of the church will also complete a questionnaire. These questionnaires seek to review and affirm your spouse's/friend's qualifications for a credential, namely, the biblical standards for church leaders.

The EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing understands that some of these questions are deeply personal and may be difficult to answer. Moreover, depending on one's personality and temperament, some individuals will tend to be overly sensitive to these matters, while other individuals will tend to be insufficiently sensitive. Then, too, some individuals will feel comfortable filling out this questionnaire; others would prefer to interact with someone in person. You have that option. Your spouse's/friend's questionnaire gives further information about the personal interview option.

The district superintendent and/or district credentialing committee will read your questionnaire and your spouse's or friend's and follow up with you if necessary. Our aim—through these questions, through supportive encouragement, and through practical resources for healing and change—is to help this leader be fully qualified for an EFCA credential.

Please return this form to your district office. It will be reviewed only by your district superintendent (or district credentialing representative) and/or the appropriate district credentialing committee. This step must be completed before your spouse or friend meets with the district credentialing committee for the oral credentialing examination. The affirmation of your spouse's or friend's qualifications for an EFCA credential will be included in his or her credentialing examination and sent to the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing. After his or her credential is issued, this questionnaire (both electronic and any hard-copy versions, along with those supplied by your spouse or friend and the church leaders) will be destroyed.

If you have concerns about this questionnaire or the process it represents, we warmly invite you to contact the district superintendent or a member of the district credentialing committee.

Your district superintendent, district credentialing board, and
the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing

General Affirmation

1. Explain briefly your support of your spouse's or friend's application for an EFCA ministerial credential. Include your observations and assessment of how his or her life aligns with biblical standards of character, knowledge, and skills. Is there any pattern of character, attitude, or actions that needs to be addressed in order for this person to flourish?

Family Health

2. Briefly describe how your spouse or friend manages the household well, relative to his or her overall family responsibilities. Include your observations of his or her relationship to you and, if you are the spouse and have children, to the family as a whole. If this person is single, include your observations about his or her balance with wholehearted work in the church family while investing in meaningful personal friendship with others.

Evangelical Free Church of America: Ministerial Credentials
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Questionnaire for Elders

Dear Church Elder Board (or equivalent body of primary leaders):

Your pastor, or another pastoral staff member, or a leader of a Christian ministry who is a member of your church, is applying for an EFCA ministerial credential. We support this pursuit and affirm the character qualities and ministry skills that this individual has exhibited and which have contributed to his or her seeking a credential.

An EFCA ministerial credential, whether a Ministry License, a Certificate of Christian Ministry, or a Certificate of Ordination (and also a Transfer of Ordination), is a formal, denominational commendation of a minister or church leader. It is a public acknowledgement that the individual exhibits the call of God on his or her life; personal integrity, character, and maturity; ministry skills that enable him or her to be competent in ministry; and adequate understanding of the Bible and its theological themes.

One of the requirements of the EFCA in our credentialing process is a clear recommendation from the local church which the credentialing candidate is serving or attending. We firmly believe that recognition of a minister's call to service and integrity in that service begins in the local church. 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.

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Representing the wider family of EFCA churches, we ask you to fill out this examination/recommendation questionnaire thoughtfully, prayerfully, and seriously. Please note that it includes a character assessment inventory. Feel free to interact with the candidate in this process. We intend the questionnaire to be a tool for learning and growth where needed. We ask that this questionnaire be the collective effort of all the members of the elder board. All the elders must sign it. It should be received by the district office before a date can be set for the candidate's oral credentialing examination. (It can be sent hard-copy or scanned and emailed.)

The candidate and his or her spouse, or close friend if single, will also fill out similar questionnaires. The results of all these questionnaires will be reviewed by the district superintendent or his representative and/or the district credentialing committee. The affirmation of the candidate's qualifications for an EFCA credential will be included in the credentialing examination and sent to the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing. After the credential is issued, all questionnaires (both electronic and any hard-copy versions) will be destroyed.

Some might view this task as perfunctory. However, believing in the importance of the local church and its authority, we ask you to take the responsibility very seriously. We wish to remind you that this 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 and gifting for ministry as an approved EFCA pastor or leader. If you have any questions about this required recommendation, please contact your district superintendent.

Thank you for this crucial part in the credentialing process.

Your district superintendent, district credentialing board, and
the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing

(Note: In filling out this questionnaire, please insert your answers after the questions. If you have not had occasion to observe the candidate relative to what is being asked, simply write, “Not observed, can’t comment.”)

Introductory

Encouragement: We are confident of many good character qualities and ministry competencies in this candidate! What are two or three character traits and ministry skills in this candidate that have been a particular blessing to your church?

Time frame: How long has the candidate served in, or attended, your congregation?

Membership: Is the candidate a member in good standing of your congregation?

General character

Spiritual Walk and Fruitfulness

1. Keeping in mind the biblical qualifications for elders in 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4, briefly describe how the maturity and fruitfulness of the candidate’s personal walk with Jesus Christ has blessed your church. If necessary, describe also any reservations you have about the candidate’s spiritual maturity.
2. To help you answer these questions, use the accompanying Character Assessment Guides: For Candidates for an EFCA Ministerial Credential. Optional: you can submit the results of the inventory to the district office with this questionnaire.

Relational Issues

3. Describe how the candidate’s ability to relate to other people has blessed your church and served as a good example to the congregation. Include your observations about his or her reputation in the community; relational skills; proper use of authority; reconciling of conflicted relationships; healthy attitudes and actions toward other ethnicities; family-of-origin issues; emotional intelligence and health; connection with non-believers. If you have any concerns about this area, express those also.

Moral and Ethical Failure

4. To the best of your knowledge, are you aware of any misconduct on the candidate’s part, past or present, that is problematic in his or her being above reproach and qualified for an EFCA ministerial credential? This would include matters such as academic, sexual, and financial integrity.

Marriage and family relationships

Current Marital Health

5. Briefly describe how the integrity and health of the candidate's singleness or marriage has blessed your church and served as an example to the congregation. If you have any concerns in this area, mention these as well.

Children

6. To the extent that you have been able to observe, briefly describe how the candidate's home life--overall family order, the relationship between the candidate and his or her children, or the candidate's response to the absence of children—has blessed your church and served as an example to the congregation. If you have any concerns about this, mention these also.

Marital History

7. To your knowledge, is there anything in the candidate's pre-marital and marital history, such as sexual sin, impropriety, divorce, or remarriage, or harassment or abuse, which has negatively affected the candidate's integrity or competence as a church leader? If so, please explain.

Ministry Competence

8. Briefly describe the candidate's overall competence in the skills necessary to his or her sphere of ministry. Are there any deficiencies of skills that call the candidate's ministerial integrity or fitness into question? If so, please explain.
9. Does the candidate exhibit adequate biblical-theological skills? Keep in mind such things as personal love for the Bible, understanding of theological concepts, biblical literacy, and soundness of method in interpreting the Bible.

Overall

10. Does the candidate demonstrate that he or she actively supports the EFCA and demonstrates the interdependent spirit – unity in the essentials of the gospel, charity in the non-essentials – desired in the EFCA?
11. Do you recommend without reservation the candidate for ministerial credentialing by the EFCA?

NOTE: The names and signatures of all the elders or a representative from the board must be included at the end of this questionnaire.

EFCA Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications
Follow-up Questions on Pre-Marital and Marital History

In the questionnaire on the Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications for a ministerial credential, it was indicated that you have a divorce in your background. In order that your district superintendent (or district credentialing committee) might visit further with you about this and its bearing on your present qualifications, please address the following questions. Feel free to create a separate document or intersperse your answers within the questions below.

Your former marriage

1. Briefly describe your former marriage, its beginning, its general course, and its dissolution.
2. State the name of your former spouse, the date of your marriage, and the date of your divorce

Your contribution to the breakdown

3. What was your contribution to the difficulties in your marriage? How well do you think you have seen and repented of “the log in your own eye” (Matt. 7:4-5)?
4. Was it you or your spouse who initiated and/or pursued the divorce?
5. What efforts at reconciliation did you make?
6. Do you regard your divorce as biblically permissible? If so, on what basis? If not, how have you come to terms with that reality?

Your response to the divorce

7. What did God teach you through your divorce?
8. Is there further relational reconciliation that ought to take place?
9. How would you describe your overall repentance and recovery relative to your divorce?
10. How has your divorce affected your present marriage?

Your present outlook

11. Describe your commitment to your present spouse and marriage.
12. How has your divorce and remarriage influenced your views and practice in ministry?
13. List several people, especially spiritual leaders, who could attest to your present spiritual health and wisdom relative to your divorce.

January 2018

**Affirmation of Fulfillment of
The EFCA Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications**

Candidate: _____

Credential applying for: _____

Completed the PSCQ process and submitted questionnaires:

- Self
- Spouse/Friend
- Elders

I hereby affirm that, in keeping with the PSCQ, a review has been done of this candidate's general character and marriage (if applicable) and relationships. The candidate's integrity and fulfillment of the ethical standards implied in an EFCA ministerial credential have been affirmed.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____