

Document

Credentialing: Ministry License – Five Year Non-Renewable

This credential is designed for those pastors, ministers, and staff who have been involved in an EFCA qualifying ministry for less than 10 years, and who desire to be aligned with and accountable to the EFCA. The requirement is that the candidate has the appropriate theological understanding of the Statement of Faith, character worthy of a minister of the gospel, and alignment with the EFCA. Being approved for a license grants the candidate all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of an EFCA credential.

This Ministry License is non-renewable, with no exceptions, and will be issued for five years and will expire at the end of the 5th year after its issuance. A renewable Ministry License, Certificate of Christian Ministry or Certificate of Ordination (for qualified males) must be obtained within the five years for ministry credentials to continue uninterrupted. The district will determine, in consultation with the candidate, which credential will be pursued following this Ministry License.

For those who are credentialed (ordained) in a local church or in another denomination, once credentialed in the EFCA, the former credential would be considered inactive. We do not recognize or approve dual credentials (ordinations), which means the person's primary alignment and accountability is with the EFCA.

Required Documents for Ministry License (Five Year Non-Renewable)

(PDF copies to print and mail to your district)

- License Application
- Letter from candidate indicating his/her desire to be licensed by the EFCA
- Completed [PSCQ](#) (Personal, Spouse/Friend and Elder Board).
- Affirmation of requirements
- EFCA Minister's Profile
- Theological alignment expressed in 3-page paper responding to questions provided

After the district office receives your required documents for this Ministry License, and before finalizing approval, a district staff representative or a member of the District Board of Ministerial Standing (DBOMS) will schedule a phone call with you to discuss the following questions:

1. Why is pursuing this EFCA Ministry License important for you and the church where you serve?
2. What did you learn as you read *Evangelical Convictions* and wrote your 3-page paper?
3. What do you appreciate about our Statement of Faith, and what do you perceive its strengths to be? Do you think there are any weaknesses?
4. What doctrines do you need to study further as you prepare for either the Ministry License Three-Year Renewable or one of the Certificates?
5. Is there any help or input you need for your next steps?



MINISTRY LICENSE – Five Year Non-Renewable APPLICATION

1. Before completing this application, please contact your district office for full info about the district credentialing process: <http://go.efca.org/resources/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.*

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

HOME ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL 1: _____ Email 2: _____

HOME: _____ CELL: _____

PRESENTLY SERVING (CHURCH/MINISTRY): _____

MINISTRY ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ POSITION: _____

APPLICANT CHECKLIST OF MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- ☐ Letter/email of intent indicating your desire and reason for EFCA License
- ☐ Completed Affirmation of Requirement form
- ☐ Completed Minister's Profile
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications ([PSCQ](#))

Final Step: Send this application and the above to your district office.

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

- ☐ Above Paperwork
- ☐ PSCQ Fulfillment form (do not send full PSCQ, only the Fulfillment form)
- ☐ Follow up phone call with candidate with district staff representative or DBOMS member

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

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. **Please write an essay and comment on these qualification in your own life and ministry, with a maximum of two pages.**

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. Please complete follow-up questions (link to 4E))**

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 2020

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
Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications
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 board representative 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: _____



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

(mm/dd/yyyy)

Divorced

Widowed

DOB

Children

DOB

(mm/dd/yyyy)

(mm/dd/yyyy)

(mm/dd/yyyy)

(mm/dd/yyyy)

(mm/dd/yyyy)

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/yyyy)

Name of School: _____ City/ State: _____

(Do not abbreviate)

Degree _____ Major _____ Date Completed _____

(mm/yyyy)

Name of School: _____ City/ State: _____

(Do not abbreviate)

Degree _____ Major _____ Date Completed _____

(mm/yyyy)

(continued on next page)

Ministry History

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

Chaplain Yes No Serving at: _____

Active Reserves Current Rank: _____

Air Force

Army

Navy

VA Hospital

Air National Guard

Army National Guard

Civil Air Patrol

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

(Electronic Signature Accepted)

Dated _____

Affirmation of Fulfillment of Requirements for EFCA Ministry License – Five Year Non-Renewable

Candidate: _____

- ☐ Thoroughly read *Evangelical Convictions*
- ☐ Affirm the EFCA Statement of Faith without mental reservation
- ☐ Alignment with EFCA ethos:

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://go.efca.org/explore/who-we-are>
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 proscribed process, cf. the next question.) Please see the following link: <http://go.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])?

I affirm that I have completed and agree to the above.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Church: _____

Date: _____

Paper Guidelines - Five Year Non-Renewable License

This document contains the following:

1. EFCA Statement of Faith
2. “Summary of the Gospel in the EFCA Statement of Faith”
3. “Our EFCA Convictions Relate to the *Evangel*, the Gospel”
4. Paper Requirements
5. Doctrinal Questions

EFCA Statement of Faith

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association and fellowship of autonomous and interdependent churches united around the same Statement of Faith.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious 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.

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.

SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL IN THE EFCA STATEMENT OF FAITH

This is an excerpt from *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America*, pp. 234-236, 256.

The Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America is an exposition of the gospel—God’s gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ. And what is the gospel? It is the evangel, the good news that God has acted graciously to save a people for himself through his Son Jesus Christ. The gospel is the simple message that Jesus died for our sins and rose again so that we might have eternal life. This message of good news can be stated as concisely as this: “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Our Statement seeks to unpack this gospel by organizing the essential doctrines of our faith—our critical Evangelical convictions—around this central theme.

The gospel, and our Statement, begins with God and his saving purpose, which flows out of the wondrous perfections of his nature. He is the Creator of all things and is holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This one God, all-knowing and all-powerful, has, in love and grace, purposed from eternity to redeem a people for himself and to restore his fallen creation for His own glory.

But how do we know this good news? We know it only because God himself has revealed it to us. Our second Article affirms that God’s gospel is authoritatively announced in the Scriptures. Through the words of its human authors, God has spoken in his Word, the Bible, without error. The Scriptures are the complete revelation of his will for salvation, and the ultimate authority that stands over every realm of human knowledge and endeavor. Therefore, the Bible is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

This gospel revealed in the Bible is important to us because it alone addresses our deepest human need. Our central problem is not a lack of education, inadequate healthcare or a terrorist threat. It is our alienation from God. We have sinned, all of us, beginning with our first ancestors. We are fallen in our nature before we take our first breath. By our own volition we go our own way in defiance of God’s rightful rule, refusing to allow God to be God in our lives. This cosmic rebellion is evil, and God will not stand for it. As a result we now stand under his wrath, and we can be rescued, reconciled and restored only through God’s gracious work in Jesus Christ.

In the Person of Jesus Christ the gospel is revealed in history. As Israel’s promised Messiah, Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man. He was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He was buried and arose bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of God the Father, he is now our High Priest and Advocate.

God’s gospel is not only revealed in Jesus Christ, it is also accomplished through his work. For when he died on the cross, Jesus acted as our representative and substitute as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. He was raised from the dead as a foretaste of his victory over all the forces of sin and death. What Jesus did then, two thousand years ago, is now applied to our lives by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit glorifies Christ as he works within us to convict us of our guilt and to grant us new spiritual life as we are born again into a new union with Christ. We are joined to him in his death and resurrection. The indwelling Holy Spirit now empowers us to live in a new way, so that we might become like Christ.

When we are joined to Christ by faith, we become a part of a new family, the family of God. We become a part of a new body, the body of Christ. God's gospel is now embodied in a new community, the church, which is manifest in local churches. In the fellowship of the church and through its ordinances, our faith is nourished and strengthened.

In the grace of the gospel, God justifies us, accepting us just as we are. But in his grace, he does not leave us just as we are. This gospel also changes us; it sanctifies us, compelling us to Christ-like living and witness to the world. We are to grow in our love for God and for other people who are created in his image. We are to show the same compassion we have received toward others who are in need. We are to do battle with the forces of evil in this world, in fellowship with one another, in dependence on him, using all the resources he has given us. And in all we do, in word and deed, we are to bear witness to this glorious gospel among all people.

We believe that one day God will bring his saving purpose in the gospel to fulfillment, when Jesus Christ comes in glory with his holy angels to establish his kingdom fully and completely and to exercise his role as Judge of all. Jesus Christ is coming again. That is our blessed hope—a hope that spurs us on to remain faithful to our Lord to the end.

This is the gospel—God's saving purpose in Jesus Christ. We might well ask, does the saving work of Christ apply to everyone whether they want it to or not? Is everybody automatically forgiven and reconciled to God simply because Jesus died and rose again? Will everyone be saved in the end?

What does it mean to be saved? Doesn't it mean that we are rescued from the self-centeredness of our sin and brought into a relationship with God in which he is worshiped and adored and given all glory and honor? Do all people really want this kind of salvation? They may want to be free from pain or sickness or death, but do they really want to enter into a realm in which God rules supreme? Would God force such people into his kingdom against their will?

The gospel is a declaration of what God has done to rescue us, but it does not benefit us whether we want it to or not. No, God's gospel requires a response. The gospel certainly proclaims something God has accomplished outside of us, without our help, but God's saving work is not effective apart from our personal involvement. In any biblical understanding of the gospel, the objective work of God in Christ requires a subjective response, a response of faith.¹ We are called, indeed we are commanded, to believe the gospel. By faith in Christ, and by faith alone, this gospel becomes ours. By faith we become recipients of God's saving work.

The gospel message comes to us as a declaration of fact—God has acted to save us through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. But that declaration also issues in a command—we must repent and believe that good news. The New Testament presents the gospel not simply as a helpful suggestion to implement or even an invitation to accept, but as a command to obey (cf. 2 Thess. 1:8; Rom. 10:16; also Acts 5:32; 6:7; 17:30; Rom. 6:17; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 4:17). The proper response to this command however, is faith, the sole means of receiving God's saving grace (cf. John 6:29).

¹ We do not specify to what extent our response of faith is enabled by God through the Holy Spirit. Here, as throughout our Statement, our intention is to include a spectrum of Evangelical views, including, in particular, both Arminian/Wesleyan and Reformed understandings. On the notions of effective and prevenient grace, see Article 3, sec. III.A.2, n. 40.

When God's saving purposes have been fulfilled and his people are redeemed, reconciled and restored in the transformed creation, they will gather in joyful celebration and adoration as a great multitude that no one can count. Coming from every nation, tribe, people and language, they will stand before the throne and in front of the Lamb and exclaim: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (Rev. 7:10). Because salvation is a gift of God's grace, no one will have cause to boast and God alone will be exalted. The unfolding of God's saving purpose in the gospel of Jesus Christ will be "to the praise of his glorious grace" (Eph. 1:6).

All theology, because it is truth about God, is to be doxological, a prayerful profession, a joyful declaration, an act of worship. In the end, all that we can do is offer our hearty and heart-felt affirmation of God's glorious gospel revealed in Jesus Christ—So be it! We began our Statement by declaring that in all that God does, he acts "for His own glory" (Article 1). We now close with the word which ends the Bible itself: Amen.²

² Rev. 22:21. For other biblical doxologies, see, e.g., Rom. 11:36; Eph. 3:21; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 13:20-21; 2 Pet. 3:17-18; Jude 24-25.

OUR EFCA CONVICTIONS RELATE TO THE EVANGEL, THE GOSPEL

This is an excerpt from *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America*, “Introduction,” pp. 20-21.

Quite simply, our goal in formulating this Statement was to set forth “sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God,” which he has now entrusted to us (1 Tim. 1:10-13). We believe that our essential theological convictions are vitally connected to this gospel.

What is the gospel? The Apostle Paul describes this good news concisely as the declaration that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4). This certainly is the heart of the message, but when we proclaim this message, we say much more than this. In a sense, the ten articles of our Statement unpack this simple message of good news by setting forth our central theological convictions in a way that follows the logic of the gospel itself.

First, we recognize this as God’s gospel³, inasmuch as it comes from God and not from any human source. This message begins with God’s eternal purpose to redeem a people for himself, a purpose flowing from his own nature.

Second, this gospel is “according to the Scriptures,” as Paul declares, and it comes to us authoritatively through God’s Word in the Bible.

Third, because it deals with our sin, God’s gospel alone can address our deepest need.

In Articles four through six we contend that this gospel is revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ, is accomplished through the work of Christ⁴ and becomes effective in and for us through the application of Christ’s work by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Seventh, in our union with Christ by the Spirit we are joined to a new community of fellow believers in the body of Christ, the church.⁵

As asserted in Article 8, the new life which the gospel imparts to us compels us to live in a new way. We are to love God and our neighbor and bear witness to the gospel in word and deed.

This is our calling until God’s saving purpose is fulfilled in the glorious return of Christ (Article 9).

Finally, in Article 10, we affirm that this coming of Christ will bring with it not only the judgment of the world but also our bodily resurrection and the renewal of all things in the new heaven and the new earth. This is God’s gospel, and this good news requires a response. We are to turn to God in repentance and faith, receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Thus, the various topics covered in our Statement—God, the Bible, the Human Condition, the Person of Christ, the Work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Christian Life, the Return of Christ, and the Response and Eternal Destiny—reflect this logical unfolding of the gospel.

³ For this expression, cf. Rom. 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Thess. 2:8-9; 1 Tim. 1:11; 1 Pet. 4:17.

⁴ Significantly, here at the center of our Statement we have the core of the gospel.

⁵ In sum, we emphasize the gracious initiative of God the Father in revelation, of God the Son in redemption and of God the Holy Spirit in restoration. Thus, the gospel is thoroughly Trinitarian.

Our Statement of Faith is an expanded statement of the gospel. We do not claim that to be saved, a person must understand and believe all that this Statement contains, but we do believe that it contains the truth that makes our salvation possible, and the truth that tells us what our salvation means.

We contend that such a connection to God's saving work in the gospel ought to be the primary means of determining the core doctrines of our faith.

EFCA Five Year Non-Renewable License
Guideline questions for doctrinal paper
EFCA Statement of Faith (2019)

Do you subscribe to and affirm without mental reservation each article of the EFCA Statement of Faith?

Please respond to each of the following questions in approximately 1/3 of a page. The paper should be approximately 3 pages total. Writing must be supported with basic Scripture references. Insert your writing after each question.

Double-space and use Calibri 11-point font.

God

- Explain your understanding of the nature of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, and creation.

The Bible

- What does it mean to affirm the inerrancy of the Scriptures, that they are “without error,” “complete revelation,” and the “ultimate authority” and what are the implications?

The Human Condition

- What does it mean that Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, and what are the results of being in “union with Adam”?

Jesus Christ

- Why is it essential to affirm Jesus Christ is “God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures,” and what makes the incarnation, sinless life, crucifixion and resurrection matters of first importance?

The Work of Christ

- Why is it important for Jesus to be “our representative and substitute,” and what is the significance of the exclusivity of Jesus’ death and resurrection being the “only ground for salvation”?

The Holy Spirit

- Who is the Holy Spirit, when does one receive the Holy Spirit in one’s life, and what is his ministry among believers?

The Church

- What is the nature and purpose of the church, what is the structure of the church, and what is the importance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in the life of the church?

Christian Living

- What does justification mean, how does it relate to sanctification, and what are the implications in the life of Christians and the church?

Christ’s Return

- Why is it essential to affirm Jesus’ return is “personal, bodily and glorious,” how does his return relate to the kingdom, and why does this reality demand “constant expectancy”?

Response and Eternal Destiny

- What is the gospel message, why is it essential to believe the gospel, and what is the meaning and significance of the two final destinies, “eternal conscious punishment” and “eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord”?

Doctrinal questions:

1. Which of these would best characterize your position on “miraculous gifts” (gifts of healing, prophecy, word of knowledge, tongues) of the Spirit?
 - ☐ These gifts ceased with the death of the apostles or the completion of the New Testament canon.
 - ☐ These gifts still exist, but I’m skeptical of the ways they are often expressed, and I do not actively encourage their use.
 - ☐ These gifts still exist; therefore, I encourage people to express them appropriately.
 - ☐ Other (please specify).
2. Which best describes your position on women in ministry in the local church?
 - ☐ Egalitarian: There ought to be no differences in ministry roles based on gender.
 - ☐ Complementarian: There ought to be some differences in ministry roles based on gender.
 - ☐ Other (please specify).
3. All EFCA churches are congregational in their governance (church polity). How congregationalism is lived out varies from church to church. Which model best describes your understanding of congregationalism?
 - ☐ The church is governed by corporate discernment of God’s will through the entire congregation on all matters.
 - ☐ The church is governed by corporate congregational discernment of God’s will led largely by the lead pastor.
 - ☐ The church is governed by corporate congregational discernment of God’s will led largely by a team of pastors/elders.
 - ☐ The elders have the exclusive role of discerning God’s will for the entire congregation.
4. Do you think baptism (of any sort) ought to be required for church membership?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don’t know
5. All are created in the image of God giving every human being dignity, and through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in union with him by faith we have become part of one new humanity, obliterating all racial and ethnic hostility and prejudices, with the church living out this truth with compassion for the poor and justice for the oppressed.
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ No opinion
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree

6. Do you agree with the EFCA's Resolution on Human Sexuality and the Covenant of Marriage, that "God created human beings uniquely in His image as male and female, and He has designed marriage to be a covenantal relationship between one man and one woman"?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
7. Which statement best describes your position on divorce and remarriage for a Christian believer?
- ☐ No divorce or remarriage is permitted.
 - ☐ If divorced under any circumstance, no remarriage is permitted.
 - ☐ If divorced on grounds of the spouse's infidelity or desertion, remarriage is permitted.
 - ☐ If divorced on some grounds other than the spouse's infidelity or desertion, remarriage is permitted. If divorced on any grounds, remarriage is permitted.
8. Do you believe homosexual behavior is always contrary to the teaching of Scripture?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
9. Sex outside of the marriage covenant between a biologically sexed man and a biologically sexed woman is sinful.
- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ No opinion
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
10. Abortion is a sin, the taking of a human life created in the image of God.
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know