

# Credentialing:

## Ministry License – 3 Year Renewable



This credential is designed for those involved in a qualifying ministry 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 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 for those directly involved in local church ministry of teaching and preaching the Word, and 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.

A ministry license will be issued for three years and, thereafter, is renewable (three-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 three years, in conjunction with the three-year reaffirmation of the Statement of Faith.

### Required Documents for Ministerial License – 3 Year Renewable

(pdf copies to print and send to your district office)

- License Application
- Letter from candidate indicating his desire to be licensed by the EFCA
- Completed [PSCQ](#) Forms (Personal, Spouse/Friend and Elder Board).
- Written paper
- Minutes from council
- Recommendation from the district board or credentialing council
- EFCA [Minister's Profile](#)
- Completion of EFCA Required Reading or completion of EFCA History, Theology and Polity course

# MINISTRY LICENSE – 3 Year 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. 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/MINISTRY): \_\_\_\_\_

MINISTRY ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICANT CHECKLIST OF MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- ☐ Letter of intent from you indicating your desire and reason for EFCA License
- ☐ Completion of Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications (PSCQ) - self, spouse/friend, elder board
- ☐ Written paper (recommend you send electronically)
- ☐ Completed EFCA Minister's Profile.
- ☐ Completion of EFCA *Required Reading* or EFCA History, Theology and Polity course
- ☐ **Thoroughly** read *Ministerial Credentialing in the EFCA* (link)
- ☐ **Final Step: Send this application and all the above to your district office.**

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

- ☐ Minutes of council
- ☐ Recommendation from the District Board of Ministerial Standing (DBOMS).
- ☐ PSCQ Fulfillment form

**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**  
**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.

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.

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.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

Single

☐

Divorced

☐

Married

☐

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 - Please Include GATEWAY

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: \_\_\_\_\_

|                                             |                                              |                                           |                                      |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Force          | <input type="checkbox"/> Army                | <input type="checkbox"/> Navy             | <input type="checkbox"/> VA Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air National Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> Army National Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> 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 \_\_\_\_\_

# HISTORY, THEOLOGY AND POLITY REQUIREMENT FOR CREDENTIALING



*This is to be included with the other  
credentialing material sent to the 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](mailto: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., *What it Means to be Free*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(mm/dd/yyyy)

2. EFCA Spiritual Heritage Committee, *Evangelical Convictions*

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Olson, Arnold T., *The Significance of Silence*

\_\_\_\_\_

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., *What it Means to be Free*

\_\_\_\_\_

2. EFCA Spiritual Heritage Committee, *Evangelical Convictions*

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Olson, Arnold T., *The Significance of Silence*

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Olson, Arnold T., *Stumbling Toward Maturity*

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Olson, Arnold T., *The Search for Identity*

\_\_\_\_\_

EFCA 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> St.,  
Minneapolis, MN 55420

# MINISTRY LICENSE 3 YEAR RENEWABLE 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.

Ministry License 3 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 three years, in conjunction with the three-year reaffirmation of the Statement of Faith.

The ministry license is required prior to being granted a Certificate of Christian Ministry or the Certificate of Ordination. The district, in consultation with the candidate, will determine when and which credential will be pursued following this Ministry License.

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LICENSING**

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 license is to identify theological understanding and alignment with the EFCA. A ministry license will be issued for three years and, thereafter, is renewable (three-year renewable).
3. You will defend the biblical foundation of the Statement of Faith by responding concisely to the specific questions under the various articles under the “Doctrinal Section.” This will also be done under the “Pastoral and Personal Section.”
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 fifteen (15) to twenty (20) pages in length, double-spaced, full justification, 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://go.efca.org/resources/document/efca-statement-faith>
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 2-3 pages; the “Doctrinal Section” should include about 15 pages. For example, a general breakdown for a 20 page licensing paper would be the following: 2 pages “Biographical Section; 15 pages “Doctrinal Section”; 3 pages “Pastoral and Personal Section.”
4. Be concise and precise. Substance is more important than volume. It is expected that the thesis will demonstrate competency 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 either responding directly to the questions (using GATEWAY’s guidelines, “How to Write a Paper”) or using the questions as a guide to write what you believe about each article. In either approach, do not supply cursory, bullet point answers or responses to the questions.
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.

EFCA.credentialing.licensepaperrequirements(3yr renewable)

EFCA, 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420, (952)854-1300, [credentialing@efca.org](mailto:credentialing@efca.org)

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 begin the licensing process.
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 (cf. *Council Make-up*). Licensing councils generally last about one and one-half 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 married, the conversion experience of your spouse to faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Briefly give an account of your call to ministry and, if married, your spouse'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 (15-16 PAGES) - 2019 EFCA STATEMENT OF FAITH**

In this section of the thesis, you are required to relate your personal doctrinal convictions about the various elements found in the Statement of Faith of The Evangelical Free Church of America. As stated above, though the "thesis requirements" are in a question format, do not include the questions in your paper. Write your paper in prose, not outline form. You are not merely to answer the questions. Please include Scripture references that support the biblical and theological statements made in your paper, and list the references canonically (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).").

### ***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.***

1. What does it mean that God is creator and why is it important? Include your view of creation.
2. Explain your understanding of the being of God and the doctrine of the Trinity, including your understanding of the attributes of God.
3. Why is it necessary, or important, to have a working understanding of the nature and attributes of God?
4. What does it mean that God has "limitless knowledge and sovereign power" and what is its significance?

### ***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.***

1. Explain the terms "revelation," "verbally inspired," "ultimate authority" and "illumination."
2. What do you understand by the term "inerrant" when used of Scripture? How would you distinguish between "inerrant" and "infallible?"
3. How do you defend the canon, the Old and New Testaments, the 66 books of the Bible?
4. How does your view of the inerrancy and authority of Scripture affect specific aspects of your ministry such as study, preaching, teaching, counseling, leadership training, etc.?
5. How do you understand, and what is the implication of the last sentence in this article?

### ***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.***

1. What does it mean that Adam and Eve were created in the image of God?
2. How do you understand the fall of humanity and its effects? What is the significance of being in "union with Adam?"
3. How do you understand "sinners by nature and by choice?"
4. What does it mean to 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.***

1. Explain your understanding of the union of divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ.
2. What is the significance of Jesus being "Israel's promised Messiah," and why are the incarnation, the virgin birth and sinless life essential?
3. What was the nature of Christ Jesus' "emptying" in Philippians 2:7?
4. Explain your understanding of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
5. How do you understand the present role of Jesus Christ?

### ***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.***

1. What does it mean that Jesus is "our representative and substitute?"
2. How does the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ bring about our salvation? Include the concepts of expiation and propitiation.
3. What is meant by "salvation?" Include the concept of atonement.
4. What is the importance of the exclusivity of Jesus' death and resurrection being 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.***

1. What are some specific ways the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ? Include the concepts of regeneration and adoption.
2. How do you understand the teaching about the baptism of the Holy Spirit found in 1 Corinthians 12:13? What is the difference between the baptism, indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit?
3. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit "indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers for Christ-like living and service?"
4. Explain your understanding of the nature, purpose and duration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. What is the fruit of the Spirit, and how does it differ from the gifts of the Spirit?

### ***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.***

1. Explain justification, grace and faith and how they relate to one another. How do these terms relate to "Christ alone" and the "true church?"

2. What does the Bible mean when it describes Jesus as Lord and Head of the Church and the Church as the Body of Christ?
3. What is your view about the necessity for and practice of baptism?
4. What is your view about the necessity for and practice of the Lord's Supper?
5. Explain the importance of the two ordinances of the church in the life of God's people.

***The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:***

1. How do you understand the statement "autonomous but interdependent congregations of like faith and congregational government," specifically focusing on "autonomous," interdependent congregations," and "congregational government."
2. Under Christ, how does the congregation function? What role do leaders have in a congregational form of government?
3. Why is congregationalism significant in the EFCA?

### ***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.***

1. How do you understand the doctrine of sanctification? How is it related to justification?
2. What does it mean "to live out our faith?"
3. What is the church's responsibility towards the poor, aliens, and other disenfranchised persons?
4. How do you understand spiritual warfare, and what is the role of "God's Word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name?"

### ***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.***

1. Explain your understanding of the second coming of Jesus Christ, including the various views of the millennium (amillennial, premillennial, and postmillennial), the various understandings of the tribulation associated with the millennial views, and an articulation of your millennial view.
2. Why do you believe that Christ's return will be personal and bodily, and glorious, and what is the significance of each of those terms in relation to Christ's return?
3. What does it mean to affirm "constant expectancy" in relation to Christ's return?
4. How should views about future things affect the lives of those who believe in Jesus Christ?

### ***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.***

1. What is the Gospel message? What does it mean to receive the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you believe that Christ is the only way to salvation?
2. Explain your views regarding the eternal destiny of those who do not believe in Jesus Christ.
3. What happens to a person when he or she experiences death during this present age?
4. What is the biblical nature of Hell? Will it last forever?
5. How do you understand "the new heaven and the new earth?"

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## ***PASTORAL AND PERSONAL SECTION (2-4 PAGES)***

Under “Current Doctrinal Issues” and “Issues Related to Life-Style,” please respond to each numbered item with 2-4 sentences.

### ***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
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)

### ***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. Moral Purity (Including Pornography)
4. Marriage and Family Priorities

***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 healthy 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))?

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 – July 2009, updated March 2021*