

# *Welcome*

Welcome to the credentialing site of the Midwest District of the Evangelical Free Church of America. These pages contain explanations, requirements and other pertinent information necessary for people in various levels of ministry within the Free Church who desire to obtain a ministerial credential with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA).

## **The Purpose of a Credential in the EFCA**

A credential in the Free Church is recognition of a candidate's qualification for ministry within our denomination. It also provides for legal status when it comes to tax and various other issues in the ministry. In some places one must register their credentials within the state they serve in order to officiate at weddings.

What does credentialing say about a person in our denomination? First of all it says that a local body of believers has agreed with the candidate that he or she has been called to a certain ministry within that local congregation. It says that they recognize that God has gifted them for that call and that the candidate's life is above reproach and fit for ministry. Secondly, the credentialed individual is viewed as being fit for ministry in the EFCA. This is achieved through a successful defense of the current doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA). A person may be called of God to full time ministry, but that does not necessarily mean that the person is a good fit with the EFCA. Obtaining a credential in the EFCA tells others that the person is not only called, but is in line with and qualified to minister in the EFCA.

The credentialing process goes through three basic phases. A candidate must be recognized and recommended for credentialing by a local Free Church. The candidate must write a paper on the doctrinal statement and successfully defend it orally at the District level to a committee known as the District Board of Ministerial Standing. Finally the candidate must be approved by the national Board of Ministerial Standing. Once approved, the candidate is given a certificate which remains the property of the EFCA. Thus, all credentialed ministers in the EFCA are held accountable to the entire denomination. Discipline of a credentialed minister is used when a minister somehow fails to hold to the standard of God's Word for those who serve Him in this capacity.

A credential in the EFCA means that the minister is recognized as having been called of God into ministry and is a good doctrinal and ethical fit for ministry within the EFCA.

## **Types of Credentials**

There are six different credentials available in the EFCA.

### 1.> *Ministry License:*

- This credential is open to both males and females.
- It is a temporary credential lasting three years.
- The license provides all necessary legal status for ministry as far as State law is concerned.
- It is required for those seeking a permanent ministry credential in the EFCA, unless one is entering with a previous ordination from another church or denomination.

### 2.> *Certificate of Christian Ministry:*

- This is a permanent credential that may be held by males and females in various ministry settings (such as, associate pastors, music ministers, Christian Education ministers, directors of children's or women's ministries and others.)
- The requirements for this credential are less stringent than for ordination, but the candidate must successfully complete the 3-year licensing period.

3.> **Ordination:**

- Ordination is reserved in the EFCA for those who are male in gender.
- This credential is obtained only after completing a 3-year licensing period.
- Ordination is desirable for those in full time ministry as pastors of local congregations.

4.> **Transfer of Ordination:**

- This is a permanent credential open only to males in the Evangelical Free Church.
- It can be obtained by all those men who meet the qualifications and who desire to join in ministry in the EFCA; also those who come to us with ordinations from other denominations or independent churches.

5.> **Lay Ministry License**

6. > **Student Ministry License**

### **How Does a Person Obtain a Credential in the Free Church?**

At the current time, we in the EFCA are transitioning to work under a newly approved doctrinal statement. This statement can be viewed at <http://www.efca.org/about-efca/statement-faith>. Because this new statement was adopted in the summer of 2008, the National Board of Ministerial Standing has been working on rewriting and reviewing the process for credentialing in the EFCA. Therefore, we are operating under old guidelines with the new statement of faith until such time as the new documents are ready. For now, a person can get a good idea of the requirements by reviewing the information at, <http://www.efca.org/about-efca/joining-efca/credentialing>.

When the final guidelines become available from the National office, we will post those on our site. In addition to the national guidelines, the Midwest District of the EFCA will have specific requirements.

### **How Do I Proceed at This Time?**

The first step is to send in the preliminary application or contact our district office by email (a link is provided on this site) or by contacting Nancy at 308.234.5400. She has all the necessary forms and instructions. We will be happy to mail/email those instructions to you.

Please be aware that there are changes coming to the credentialing process from the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing. We will implement them as soon as they are available. If you have further questions, please contact the Midwest District Director of Theology and Credentialing, Rev. Greg H. Hubbard at 785-282-3924.