

EFCA Hawaii District  
Church Planting Policies  
**Church Affiliation**

Approved by the Board on February 23, 2005

EFCA Hawaii District Board

The purpose of this document is to establish the criteria for the acceptance of an already existing church as an affiliated church of EFCA Hawaii District and to establish a process for affiliation.

Criteria for Church Affiliation in EFCA Hawaii District:

1. The church must approve the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) as its own statement of faith without additions or omissions, and require all pastors and board members to accept all of the articles of the Statement of Faith as their own position without reservation.
2. The pastor and the board of the applying church must be conversant with the document What It Means to Be an Evangelical Free Church and demonstrate their commitment to fit into the framework of that document.
3. The church's leaders must understand and appreciate the fact that other EFCA churches may hold different positions from them on peripheral issues not addressed by the EFCA Statement of Faith. It is necessary to understand the appropriate nature of the grace that allows freedom to differ on the nonessentials just as it is essential to have a proper theological framework.
4. The church must clearly demonstrate a willingness to enter a partnership with other EFCA Hawaii District and EFCA churches in the work of the ministry. This commitment is shown by participation in EFCA corporate events and a financial commitment to the region's ministries of service and expansion. They must participate fully in the Fair Share Program at least at a 2% of budget (1% to EFCA Hawaii District and 1% to EFCA).
5. The pastor(s) at the time of application for affiliation must meet the pastoral qualifications that would make them eligible for placement within the EFCA Hawaii District region. In addition, the lead pastor must be "ordainable" with the EFCA, as well as it can be determined without going through the full ordination process. He must also be willing to be licensed or ordained with the EFCA, or to transfer his ordination to the EFCA.

We are hopeful that the growing reputation of the EFCA is that of a family of Bible-centered churches where Jesus Christ is loved, exalted, obeyed, and proclaimed. Because we want to treat other groups as we desire to be treated, EFCA Hawaii

District will not consider for affiliation any church that is currently affiliated with another denomination. In the event that a church begins to believe that their affiliation is a mismatch, we would prefer that they work through the issue very carefully and prayerfully on its own merit. We request that before a church pursue affiliation with us, that it settle its issues with its prior denomination.

6. The church must participate in the EFCA Hawaii District church health assessment process and workshop prior to a decision about affiliation.
7. The church must be willing to thoroughly discuss any past conflicts or difficulties and must show evidence of having reached biblical resolution of past troubles in relationships or ministry.
8. The church must be willing to include the words “Evangelical Free Church” in its corporate name. This is not necessarily its public name. The church could, for example, include “Evangelical Free Church” in the public name, or they could have a name like Faith Church, an Evangelical Free Church.

#### Process of Affiliation:

1. The EFCA Hawaii District Board will have primary responsibility to engage the church in discussions of the requirements and opportunities of affiliation with EFCA Hawaii District.
2. The church will submit the following to the EFCA regional office for consideration by the District Board:
  - An application for affiliation with EFCA Hawaii District.
  - Congregational meeting minutes showing approval of affiliation by the congregation.
  - Congregationally approved governing documents of church (Constitution and By-laws) which have the new name of the church and include the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America. These documents must clearly provide for congregational authority.
  - Complete financial records covering the past three years of the church’s history.
3. Upon approval by the Hawaii District Board, the church will become a probationary affiliate church of EFCA Hawaii District and the Evangelical Free Church of America. This approval is to be presented to the next EFCA Hawaii District Conference for affirmation of approval. Disapproval at the conference level would occur, for example, if a church did not make satisfactory progress in meeting the requirements listed above under “Criteria for Church Affiliation” during the intervening period. When

the conference approves the church's affiliation, the church will be welcomed publicly as a permanent affiliated church at that conference.

**National Ministry Team**  
**Evangelical Free Church of America**  
**“WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH”**

This document describes foundational principles that the EFCA movement has as expectations for the individual churches within the movement. While this is not an exhaustive list, for the unity and mission fulfillment of the movement, it is important that there is alignment in the following descriptive areas:

#### THEOLOGY

An EFC accepts and adopts without reservation, revision, deletion or addition, the Statement of Faith of the EFCA as its Statement of Faith. EFC Pastors and elected leaders believe and communicate without reservation the Statement of Faith, and the membership accepts and lives in harmony with the Statement of Faith.

An EFC acknowledges differences in areas of evangelical theology not specifically addressed by the Statement of Faith and embraces with grace those within their fellowship and the denomination who may hold differing views.

#### SENSE OF MISSION

The mission of the EFCA is to glorify God by multiplying healthy churches among all people. An EFC evidences a partnership in this mission by:

1. Annually evaluating and giving attention to increasing its Great Commission health.
2. Multiplying healthy churches among all people, both at home and abroad, in obedience to Christ's call to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

#### ATTITUDE

The EFCA, in addition to a common theology, also has a commitment to a common attitude. This common attitude is characterized by:

1. A unity based on the essentials coupled with freedom and charity in nonessentials.
2. Being evangelical in theology and practice.
3. Cooperating with others who are advancing the cause of Christ.
4. Teaching liberty in Christ with responsibility and accountability.
5. A balanced teaching ministry that engages both the mind and the heart.

6. Interdependence through working with the larger body of the EFCA
7. Respect, appreciation and acceptance of people from different cultural backgrounds.
8. Sensitivity to those in our congregations who suffer from social destitution, and compassionately addressing their particular needs to the best of our abilities.

## POLITY

An EFC has the freedom under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to govern its own affairs in accordance with both the mind of Christ and the Word of God.

An EFC develops a local church polity that fits within the following parameters of congregationalism:

The membership includes only those who have a personal faith in Christ (a believers' church).

The collective membership in a duly-called meeting is the highest authority, under Christ, in the local church, exhibiting both a willingness to be scripturally accountable to the elected leadership and encouraging elected leadership to be mutually accountable to them as the ultimate authority in the local context. Moreover, members and leaders unitedly subscribe to a relationship covenant based on Matthew 18, giving priority to biblical patterns of conflict resolution and exercising biblical discipline within the context of Christian love and cultural sensitivity.

Congregationalism is that form of government wherein the highest authority under Christ in a local church resides in the corporate understanding of the mind of Christ and in which a realistic process and reasonable opportunity exists by which that understanding is determined and carried out, especially as it affects such matters as:

1. Determination of membership
2. Selection or appointment of the principal governing board (elder, deacon, etc.)
3. Selection of the senior pastor
4. Approval or alteration of constitution/bylaws
5. Approval of an annual church budget
6. Approval of any major purchase or dissolution

An EFC has as its local polity a form of congregationalism that fits the size and demographics of the congregation.

An EFC teaches that congregationalism includes the involvement of the entire body in ministry.

An EFC entrusts much of the decision-making to godly leaders who are trained, trusted, and allowed to lead.

## CREDENTIALING OF PASTORS

An EFC calls a pastor who either holds a credential with the EFCA or agrees with the EFCA Statement of Faith and ethos and makes a commitment to obtain an EFCA credential in a timely manner. If a credential is not obtained, the district will inform the local church as to why it has not been granted. This commitment acknowledges the church's alignment with the doctrine and practices of the EFCA.

## COMMITMENTS

An EFC is committed to working interdependently with other EFCs, the district and national, intercultural and international ministries. This commitment is evidenced by:

Locally:

- .. Willingly cooperating with other EFCs for local ministry initiatives.

District:

- .. Intentionally sharing resources with other district churches
- .. Being actively involved in district ministries
- .. Annually sending representatives to district conferences
- .. Communicating district initiatives to the leadership and membership of the congregation. The church leaders will receive district newsletters.
- .. Regularly inviting district leadership to address the leadership and congregation.

National:

- .. Being actively involved in national ministries
- .. Bi-annually sending representation to the EFCA General Conference
- .. Communicating national ministry initiatives to the leadership and membership of the congregation. The church leadership will receive The Beacon, EFCA Leadership Report, and university newsletters.
- .. Endorsing and promoting Trinity International University and Trinity Western University as schools of choice for recommending students and the calling of pastoral staff.

International:

.. Endorsing and promoting EFCM as the mission of choice by encouraging members to serve internationally with EFCM

An EFC is committed to partnering financially in response to the needs/opportunities of the EFCA ministries. This is evidenced by:

1. Adequately paying and caring for their own pastoral staff.
2. An annual financial investment in support of district and national ministries with a yearly review of their participation of the recommended support levels for the district and national ministries.
3. Preferential consideration is given to the support of EFCM missionaries, Trinity International University and Trinity Western University.