



## “WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN EFC”

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 accept 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. Involvement in healthy church multiplication 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 non-essentials.
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 or senior directional leader(s).
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 local EFC's, the district, and national, intercultural and international ministries. This commitment is evidenced by:

Locally:

- Willingly cooperating with other EFC's for local ministry initiatives.

District:

- Intentionally sharing resources with other district churches.
- Being actively involved in district ministries.
- Annually sending representation to district conferences.
- Communicating district initiatives to the church.
- Receptive to interaction with district staff.

National:

- Bi-annually sending representation to the EFCA Leadership Conference.
- Endorsing and promoting Trinity International University and Trinity Western University as quality schools when recommending students and the calling of pastoral staff.

International:

- Endorsing and promoting ReachGlobal when encouraging members to serve in missions.

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 through Fair Share.
3. Recognizing ReachGlobal missionaries, Trinity International University and Trinity Western University as part of our EFC family when considering support.

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