



ECA MINISTERIAL LICENSURE

INTRODUCTION

In the ECA, we have a national credential for those called to and engaged in pastoral (vocational) ministry. Being congregational (local church autonomy), credentialing begins in the context of a local church, which means that the process of credentialing cannot be done apart from a call to a qualifying local church ministry. In the ECA, once a person is in a qualifying ministry, then they reflect their interdependence by encouraging those in pastoral (vocational) ministry to be credentialed in the ECA.

In one of the Board of Ministerial Standing's documents, they expound the importance and benefits of being credentialed in the ECA. The Board of Ministerial Standing is approved by and accountable to the ECA of the ECA, the congregational authority in the ECA under Christ. Their responsibility is to implement the credentialing process on behalf of the ECA and through this give oversight to the doctrinal fidelity and moral purity of credentialed pastors.

Here, then, are a few statements explaining the importance and benefits of being credentialed in the ECA, both to the candidate and the local church.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO CREDENTIALING IN THE ECA?

The candidate will be affirmed beyond the local church regarding a calling to and gifting for ministry. Through this process, the candidate will have structure to guide the study and processing of biblical/theological truths and the pastoral applications of those truths in the lives of God's people. It will also provide accountability, both doctrinally and morally.

MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS - Our credentials officially recognize a preacher's God-given ministry. These credentials are given that our ministers have equal rights by law and in business of ministers of other religious organizations. We require that our ministers have a proven ministry. We also issue fellowship cards for Christian Workers.

What are the benefits to the local church?

The local church leaders and membership will be assured that their pastoral staff is aligned with the ECA, and is committed to serve within the ECA. As members in a

local church are under authority (of Christ and the leaders and members), so is the pastoral staff under the same authority, and also the ECA. The pastoral staff is saying to the local church that we are all in the ECA.

Why should the local church encourage/require their vocational ministry staff to be credentialed in the ECA?

Because this is a national credential, it provides consistency and uniformity of standards and expectations for all those being credentialed. When a local church has a pastoral staff person who is credentialed in the ECA, they can be reassured of the calling, character, and biblical/theological capacity of this person. This is true of their pastoral staff that has been credentialed while in ministry with them, and it is also true of those they may call at some point in the future.

This is an important way the national ECA serves local churches. Moreover, this is a very important step to ensure doctrinal fidelity and moral purity in lives of those who serve as pastoral staff. If there is doctrinal compromise or moral failure with a non-credentialed pastoral staff person, the local church often has to address it alone. If a person is credentialed, it provides a national resource to the local church to address these matters intentionally, purposefully and redemptively.

This is also an important way in which the autonomous local church communicates their interdependency with other local ECA churches together known as the AECA. This would be the difference between being a pastor of an ECA church and being an ECA pastor. Finally, this is one small step towards the fulfillment of Jesus' high priestly prayer for believers to be one.

How would this help the one who enters into the credentialing process as a means of ministerial and theological growth?

It provides structure for one's study of biblical/theological truth with the ECA Statement of Faith as the foundation. An avenue of further growth would be to teach this material to the local church as you are studying it, either in a sermon series, an adult Sunday school or in a small group.

This has the dual benefit for both the person in the credentialing process and those in the local church to learn more about the ECA and its gospel-centered, Christ-focused, God-glorifying biblical/theological commitments as expressed in the Statement of Faith. As is often the case, the teacher has the profound benefit of learning the most.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE FOR OBTAINING MINISTER'S CREDENTIALS?

The answer may be found in the acronym A.C.T.S.

A – Affirming Ministers and their Calling

The Evangelical Christian Alliance desires to affirm our ministers! One of the ways that we can do that is by helping you identify and clarify your calling! What is your ministry calling—youth, music, church planting, pastoring, etc.? It is important to us to help you navigate through the exploration of your calling.

C – Connecting Ministers with Similar Beliefs and Values.

The Evangelical Christian Alliance desires to connect our ministers together through meaningful relationships. In our current church culture, there is a growing phenomenon known as the “casual credential holder.” The “casual credential holder” is one who desires a credential but doesn’t really desire to be a part of a church family or church organization. We believe that true realized potential can only come through mentoring and coaching.

T – Training Ministers to do the Work of the Ministry.

The Evangelical Christian Alliance desires to equip and train our ministers to do the work of the Ministry! Through our credential process, you will be afforded a balanced approach to ministry and future training, and continuing study.

S – Sending Ministers to a place of Fruitfulness.

The Evangelical Christian Alliance desires to send and commission our ministers to a place of fruitfulness! One way that we can help with this is by providing a network of available ministry opportunities.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR OBTAINING MINISTER'S CREDENTIALS?

To receive minister's credentials with the Evangelical Christian Alliance, the following three-step process must be completed.

STEP #1: Obtain and Complete an Application

- Application forms may be obtained from The Evangelical Christian Alliance state office (225 924-9164/225 614-8573) or from Pastor Michelle Mostella (ECA General Secretary) at ecalliance@yahoo.com

STEP #2: APPLYING FOR CREDENTIALS/ Apply for an Interview with the Ministerial Development Committee (MDC)

Qualifications for Ministry

The Evangelical Christian Alliance recognizes the following ranks of clergy ministry: Exhorter, Licensed Minister, Ordained Minister and Ordained Bishop. With each rank and specialization come certain privileges and responsibilities proper to its function in the church. All ranks are bound by the rulings of the General Assembly in matters of faith, practice, and polity. The following qualifications apply to all orders of ministry.

- The applicant must be a loyal member of a local congregation of The Evangelical Christian Alliance.
- The applicant must be faithful in tithing.
- The applicant must have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- The marital status of the applicant and spouse must be above question.
- For further description of qualification and privileges of each rank of ministry, see the Evangelical Christian Alliance Handbook.

Exhorter's License

APPLYING FOR INITIAL RANK OF EXHORTER

The applicant believes he/she is called to the ministry while having no definite direction in mind. It is basically intended for the individual who does not meet all the requirements for Licensing, works in "ministry of helps" positions at their local assembly, who is not in full time ministry, who is just starting out, who does not have a proven ministry.

CHRISTIAN WORKER, credentials may be issued to a person who has a call on his or her life to work for the Lord in some field other than that of preaching, pastoring or evangelizing. This may include Choir Director, musician, Sunday School Superintendent, Sunday School Superintendent, teacher, hospital visitation worker, house-to-house visitation, altar worker, street or jail service worker, or a ministry other than that of preaching

An individual who holds an ECA Exhorter's License must have held that credential for at least one year before being allowed to apply for a regular License.

- Candidate and pastor complete the "Application for New Minister" forms.
- The Exhorter application should be completed by the ministerial applicant and given to the pastor to complete the pastoral

recommendation. The entire application should be given to the District Bishop for his/her signature and endorsement.

- Complete exhorter rank application; identify the particular area of "Ministry Helps"; submit a photocopy to the Evangelical Christian Alliance State Office.
- After the state overseer has approved the application, he will notify the local church to set forth the applicant for the rank of Exhorter.
- Upon authorization by the state overseer, the applicant will request an interview with the Ministerial Development Board.
- If the candidate is approved by the Ministerial Development Committee, a letter of recommendation will be forwarded to the state overseer.
- Upon receipt of the completed application, a Local Church Endorsement Form will be mailed to the Pastor with instructions to hold a church conference to the purpose of setting forth the applicant for the ministerial rank of Exhorter
- The state overseer will issue the Exhorter's License.

Licensed Minister

APPLYING FOR A PROMOTION IN RANK TO LICENSED MINISTER

The applicant believes he/she is called to the ministry and is actively pursuing the development of that call through education and experience. A license allows the minister to perform all the sacraments of the church with the exception of marriage.

An individual who holds an ECA License must have held that credential for at least one year before being allowed to apply for Ordination.

Obtain the recommendation of local pastor and/or district overseer.

- Complete the application forms for the rank of Licensed Minister; submit a photocopy to The Evangelical Christian Alliance state office.
- Upon authorization by the state overseer, the applicant will request an interview with the Ministerial Development Board.
- If the candidate is approved by the Ministerial Development Committee, a letter of recommendation will be forwarded to the state overseer.
- The state overseer will issue the Licensed Minister Certificate.

Ordained Minister

APPLYING FOR A PROMOTION IN RANK TO ORDAINED MINISTER

The applicant has developed his/her call to the ministry and other seasoned ministers have recognized that call.

Ordination allows the minister to perform all the sacraments of the church including marriage.

The applicant must meet all the requirements for Ordination as set forth in the Ordination Application Requirements. After the Ordination application has been approved the individual will be listed with ECA as Pending Ordination until the final step in the Ordination process is taken. That step, which MUST be completed before the Ordination becomes official, is the laying on of hands at a scheduled Ordination Service during ECA Scheduled Service or Conference. This must take place within two years of approval of the Ordination application. If this is not done in a timely fashion, the Ordination application is deemed void.

- Obtain the recommendation of local pastor and/or district overseer.
- Complete the application forms for the rank of Ordained Minister; submit a photocopy to The Evangelical Christian Alliance state office.
- Upon authorization by the state overseer, the applicant will request an interview with the Ministerial Development Board.
- If the candidate is approved by the Ministerial Development Committee, a letter of recommendation will be forwarded to the state overseer.
- The state overseer will issue the Ordained Minister Certificate.

Ordained Bishop

APPLYING FOR A PROMOTION IN RANK TO ORDAINED BISHOP

- Obtain the recommendation of local pastor and/or district overseer.
- Complete the application forms for the rank of Ordained Minister; submit a photocopy to The Evangelical Christian Alliance state office.
- Upon authorization by the state overseer, the applicant will request an interview with the Ministerial Development Board.
- If the candidate is approved by the Ministerial Development Committee, a letter of recommendation will be forwarded to the state overseer.
- The state overseer will notify the candidate of the time and place of the commissioning service.

STEP #3: INCLUDING PROCESSING FEES

In as much as this Corporation is without stock, and no shares are to be issued, the interest in the Evangelical Christian Alliance (ECA) shall be in the form of membership only. Those eligible for membership shall be Ministers, Evangelists, Missionaries, Exhorters, Deacons, Lay Leaders, and Church Workers. To accomplish the mission of this Alliance, will take financial support from the membership and the local churches alike.

In Acts 4:32-35, we find a gracious gift of giving to help the poor, and the administration. The Word says that there was none of them that lacked, there was not an needy person, for as many as were owners of fields or houses were selling them and bringing the finance to the church. The Greek here does not mean that everyone sold his property at one time. Rather, from time to time someone would sell a piece of property, then later someone else would as the Lord brought the need to their attention.

Those who sold the property brought the money and laid it at the APOSTLES feet. They gave it over to the Apostles and gave the Apostles full authority to use it as they saw fit. The Apostles were faithful to this responsibility, and they distributed the money here and there to each needy person in proportion to the need.

The distribution of the money was a continuing ministry. As long as there was a need, and as new needs arose, the Apostles were made aware of the need and help was given in proportion to the need. They did not help a person once and then forget him or her. To accomplish the mission of this Alliance, will take financial support from the membership and the local churches alike.

Before Israel became a nation, the law of the tithe was being used as her guidance during the patriarchal period. Tithing, which is older than Israel and antedates the Law of Moses, came to be observed as purely a religious rite. Abram offering the tithe to Melchizedek, the priest king of Salem, gave the tithes of all; Gen 14:18-20. Likewise, Abraham taught his grandchildren to tithe. "And Jacob vowed, saying, if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God. And of all that thou give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee;" Genesis 28:20-22.

In second Corinthians chapters eight (8) and nine (9), we can read the Apostle Paul strongest financial appeal ever made. The bottom line is we see that the local churches had the responsibility of supporting the greater work of the Corporate church.

Annual Fellowship Card Fees

1. The fee for an exhorter's license per year:
 - a. Christian Worker shall be \$ 25.00
 - b. Beginning Ministers shall be \$ 50.00

2. The fee for licensed ministers shall be \$ 75.00

3. The fee for ordained ministers shall be \$ 100.00.

4. The fee for ordained Bishop's shall be \$ 150.00

Note: If credentialing member is a part/member of an ECA Charter Church their fees are included in such church annual fees. The fee for any charter church is \$200.00 annually.