

To amend the *Book of Government* sections **9-5E** and **9-11** concerning Chaplain endorsements.

Current G. 9-5E	Proposed Changes for G. 9-5E Changes in <i>bold italics</i>
<p>G.9.5E Chaplain</p> <p>A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>G.9.5E Chaplain</p> <p>A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. <i>All Teaching Elders serving as Chaplains for institutions requiring Ecclesiastical Endorsement shall be endorsed through the Chaplains Work and Care Committee. Chaplains serving Institutions that do not require Endorsement should normally be endorsed to certify being fully qualified to serve in this specialized ministry.</i></p> <p>(See Rules for Assembly X.10-1.1)</p>

Current G.9-11	Proposed Changes for G. 9-11 Changes in <i>bold italics</i>
<p>G.9-11</p> <p>The Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized by Presbytery as a Commissioned Pastor for a congregation without a Pastor to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals, and provide pastoral care. Presbyteries may also approve and give appropriate powers to a Ruling Elder to serve as a Commissioned Pastor in mission churches, church planting and church revitalization works, or in chaplaincy positions in hospitals, hospices, prisons, or other institutions.</p> <p>A. Authorization shall be for a term up to three years and may be renewed. Such authorization shall specify those powers granted and shall stipulate in which church(es) or ministry contexts those powers are authorized. Such powers shall be exercised only in those contexts.</p> <p>B. Potential Commissioned Pastors shall be examined by Presbytery and found to have sufficient knowledge in the areas in which they will be serving.</p>	<p>G.9-11</p> <p>The Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized by Presbytery as a Commissioned Pastor for a congregation without a Pastor to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals, and provide pastoral care. Presbyteries may also approve and give appropriate powers to a Ruling Elder to serve as a Commissioned Pastor in mission churches, church planting and church revitalization works, or in chaplaincy positions in hospitals, hospices, prisons, or other institutions.</p> <p>A. Authorization shall be for a term up to three years and may be renewed. Such authorization shall specify those powers granted and shall stipulate in which church(es) or ministry contexts those powers are authorized. Such powers shall be exercised only in those contexts.</p> <p>B. Potential Commissioned Pastors shall be examined by Presbytery and found to have sufficient knowledge in the areas in which they will be serving.</p> <p>C. <i>Commissioned Pastors approved by their Presbytery to serve as a Chaplain for institutions requiring Ecclesiastical Endorsement shall be endorsed through the Chaplains Work and Care Committee. Chaplains serving Institutions that do not require Endorsement should normally be endorsed to certify being fully qualified to serve in this specialized ministry.</i> (see Rules for Assembly X.10-1.I) [subsequent paragraphs are to be renumbered accordingly]</p>

Rationale: This recommendation would place the process for EPC endorsement of Military Chaplains (currently found only in Rules for Assembly X. 10-1.I.3) within G. 9-5E and applies the process to non-military chaplaincy positions which require Ecclesiastical Endorsement. The addition of section C to G.9-11 provides a means of Ecclesiastical Endorsement for Commissioned Pastors as well.

Denominational Endorsement has long been viewed as a both required by certain institutions, and expected/desired by others for those Called to Chaplaincy within the EPC. Bob Garment, EPC's Chief Parliamentarian, noted that the Book of Order lacked a statement regarding this even though present in the Chaplains Work and Care Committee and Endorser Handbook and Chaplains Handbook. Following discussions between Bob Garment, Fred Lian (Ministerial Vocation Committee Chairman), and the Chaplain Endorser, the 44th General Assembly is being asked to approve an amendment to the Book of Order, adding Chaplain Endorsement to the Book of Government, amending BOG 9-5.E and BOG 9-11 that Ecclesiastical Endorsement is expected to serve as a Chaplain under the EPC. This has full support of the Chaplains Work and Care Committee as well. Providing this amendment to the Book of Government would alleviate any question about the need for Endorsement, put us more properly in line with other denominations, and address the lack of some Civilian gaining institutions that may not require Endorsement in and of themselves, but yet wanting us to send them individuals who would serve well as Chaplains for their Institution.

Receiving Endorsement provides both an important and critical piece for properly and deeply vetting those TEs, prospective TEs, as well as Commissioned RE's, who are Called to serve in the unique and specialized role of a chaplain, and the secular environments of institutions in which they would be working. The CWCC and Chaplain Endorser go beyond what Presbyteries accomplish in the Ordination process to become a TE or Commissioned RE, by providing a deep and professionally based evaluation of whether an individual is fully Called, suited for, and has the strengths, characteristics, spiritual depth, flexibility, and other aspects of what makes a solid and effective Chaplain.