

## Overture from New River Presbytery

### Proposed Amendment to Book of Government 9-3

Current Language	Proposed Language Changes in <i>bold italics</i> or <del>strikethrough</del>
<p><b>9-3 Life and character of officers</b></p> <p><b>A.</b> According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.<sup>52</sup></p> <p><b>B.</b> As the law of love places certain duties upon each Christian, Church Officers are especially bound by their calling to fulfill them and to be an example to all.</p>	<p><b>9-3 Life and character of officers</b></p> <p><b>A.</b> According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.<sup>52</sup></p> <p><b>B.</b> As the law of love places certain duties upon each Christian, Church Officers are especially bound by their calling to fulfill them and to be an example to all.</p> <p><b>C.</b> <i>Men and women who identify as homosexual, even those who identify as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy in that self-identification, are disqualified from holding office in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.</i></p>

**Rationale:** Scripture clearly identifies homosexual practices as sin. The EPC Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality further specifies that: “Those who make their SSA [Same Sex Attraction] tendencies their primary identity are not comprehending and embracing their full identity as image bearers of God.” The additional wording in **G9-3.C** incorporates that understanding in assessing the life and character of those being considered for holding office in the church.