

GA38-04
FROM AD INTERIM COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

Recommendation

That the 38th General Assembly approve a change in the ministry description for the Commissioned Pastor (CP). The role and function of the CP has been clarified, including an extension of ministry opportunity in the local church.

Current Book of Government 9-11	Proposed Book of Government 9-11 amendment Additions in <i>bold italics</i>
<p>9-11 The Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor</p> <p>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>9-11 The Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor</p> <p>A. A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized <i>by the presbytery and given the authority of a Teaching Elder in the following situations:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>For a congregation when there is no Pastor¹, to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals and provide pastoral care;</i> 2. <i>In ministries such as mission groups, mission churches, and church plants;</i> 3. <i>In chaplaincy positions in hospitals, hospices, prisons or other institutions;</i> 4. <i>To serve in a church where there is a Pastor:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Where the church needs additional pastoral leadership but not the full services of another Teaching Elder, or</i> b. <i>Where the church identifies a Ruling Elder with demonstrated spiritual gifts for pastoral ministry and church leadership who desires to serve but lacks the full educational and vocational training required of Teaching Elders.</i>

¹ Note G.10-7A, which requires approval by the Presbytery or the Ministerial Committee acting as a Commission, and G.18-3M, which does not require such approval. G.18-3M is applicable to an occasion when a church has an installed Pastor, but he is absent on a particular Lord's Day to call the people for worship. On this occasion, a Ruling Elder may oversee the church service to allow it to take place.

<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. A Ruling Elder previously commissioned as a lay pastor by another Reformed body may become a Commissioned Pastor as deemed appropriate by the Presbytery and subject to the same requirements of the EPC Commissioned Pastor.</p> <p>D. Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder to each Commissioned Pastor as supervisor to act as mentor and to assist the Commissioned Pastor in writing an annual report to Presbytery.</p> <p>E. Presbytery may terminate the authorization to serve as a Commissioned Pastor at any time prior to the expiration of the commission.</p> <p>F. Upon authorization of a Commissioned Pastor, Presbytery shall administer the vows of commissioning below either immediately or through an administrative commission at a designated time.</p> <p>1. Do you now reaffirm the vows you took upon your ordination as a Ruling Elder and do you recommit yourself to them in the discharge of your obligations as a Commissioned Pastor?</p>	<p>A. B. 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. C. 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. D. A Ruling Elder previously commissioned as a lay pastor by another Reformed body may become a Commissioned Pastor as deemed appropriate by the Presbytery and subject to the same requirements of the EPC Commissioned Pastor.² <i>(note include fn.1 in final version)</i></p> <p>D. E. Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder to each Commissioned Pastor as supervisor to act as mentor and to assist the Commissioned Pastor in writing an annual report to Presbytery.</p> <p>E. F. Presbytery may terminate the authorization to serve as a Commissioned Pastor at any time prior to the expiration of the commission.</p> <p>F. G. Upon authorization of a Commissioned Pastor, Presbytery shall administer the vows of commissioning below either immediately or through an administrative commission at a designated time.</p> <p>1. Do you now reaffirm the vows you took upon your ordination as a Ruling Elder and do you recommit yourself to them in the discharge of your obligations as a Commissioned Pastor?</p>
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² G.9-11C ratified by the 33rd General Assembly (2013). *[renumbered from current 9-1 fn. 1]*

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<p>2. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account?</p> <p>3. Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as Commissioned Pastor whether personal or relative, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before this congregation of which God will make you an officer?</p> <p>4. Are you now willing to take responsibility in the life of this congregation/in this ministry as a Commissioned Pastor, and will you seek to discharge your duties relying upon the grace of God, in such a way that the entire Church of Jesus Christ will be blessed?</p>	<p>2. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account?</p> <p>3. Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as Commissioned Pastor whether personal or relative, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before this congregation of which God will make you an officer?</p> <p>4. Are you now willing to take responsibility in the life of this congregation/in this ministry as a Commissioned Pastor, and will you seek to discharge your duties relying upon the grace of God, in such a way that the entire Church of Jesus Christ will be blessed?</p>
<p>ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS AFFECTED BY PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO 9-11</p>	<p>ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS</p>
<p>G 10-7 Temporary Pastoral Relationships</p> <p>A. When there is no Pastor, a Session may invite a lawfully ordained Minister in good standing or a Commissioned Pastor to enter a temporary pastoral relationship. Although this invitation is not a call as defined in G.9-5, <i>fn 78</i> the invitation and authority to preach the Word, to administer sacraments, and to moderate Session must be approved by the Presbytery or by the Ministerial Committee acting as a Commission. <i>Fn 79</i></p>	<p>See footnote 1 added to 9-11</p>

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<p><i>Fn.78 When an Associate Member serves in a temporary pastoral relationship, the TE is placed on the active roll (G.19-2B.1c). If retired, the TE remains retired but as an active member has both voice and vote in Presbytery and General Assembly.</i></p> <p><i>Fn.79 G.21-1C; G.21-2D.2f</i></p>	
<p>BOG 18-3 Authority and Responsibilities of the Session</p> <p>In maintaining the spiritual supervision of the local church, the Session has the following authority and responsibilities: <i>fn135</i></p> <p>...M. When there is no Pastor, to convene the people for worship on the Lord’s Day, offering prayers, praise, reading the Scriptures and teaching thereof. It is also appropriate for a Ruling Elder to preach or to read a sermon by some Minister of the Word of the Church.</p> <p><i>Fn.135 In addition to the responsibilities listed here, note also the Session responsibilities for instructing, examining, and ordaining/installing Ruling Elders and Deacons (G.11-3B; G.12-6; G.13-1B).</i></p>	<p>See footnote 1 added to 9-11</p>

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Referred to THE FLOOR

The Ministerial Vocation Committee Recommends that the 38th General Assembly **ADOPT** the proposal by ICME to expand the allowable uses of the Commissioned Pastor designation.

Permanent Judicial Committee Recommends, that the 38th General Assembly **ADOPT** the Interim Committee for Ministerial Education’s Proposal to Amend **G.9-11**.