



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

COMMITTEE REPORT

**Ad Interim Committee
on Ministerial Education**
Report to the 38th General Assembly



Fred Lian
Chair

Summary of Work, 2017-2018:

1. The Interim Committee on Ministerial Education (ICME) recommended that TE Kent Matthews (Great Plains) be designated Director of the Mentored Apprenticeship Program (MAP) and that he report directly to the Ministerial Vocation Committee (MVC).
2. ICME continued its study and evaluation of the current Commissioned Pastor (CP) description in the Book of Order in preparation for a recommendation to General Assembly.
3. ICME presented MAP and CP updates to Ministerial and Care of Candidates Chairs.
4. ICME proposed CP ministry description changes.
5. ICME proposed that Presbyteries and churches of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church become funding partners to provide support for the MAP Director/program.

Summary of Recommendation to the 2018 General Assembly:

1. RECOMMENDATION 38-04

The Interim Committee on Ministerial Education (ICME) is recommending to the 2018 General Assembly 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.

Work of the Committee in 2017-2018:

The Interim Committee on Ministerial Education (ICME) met by videoconferencing in September 2017 to hear updates from TE Kent Matthews (Great Plains) about the Mentored Apprenticeship Program (MAP) and to begin dialogue regarding the role of Commissioned Pastor (CP).

The Chair of ICME met with the Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Chairs of the Ministerial and Care of Candidates Committees in October 2017 to reinforce the role of the Director of MAP and to make an initial presentation of the possible changes to the position of Commissioned Pastor, as well as to receive suggestions, insights, and feedback from these committees.

ICME met in Orlando in January 2018 for two specific tasks: (1) to debrief the Mentored Apprenticeship Program. The Committee also made a unanimous recommendation to encourage each Presbytery to consider contributing \$5000 per year for the next two years to ensure the program is fully and properly launched. The benefits to the future Candidates for Ordination, as well as to the Presbyteries, include: decreased costs for seminary classes that need to be taken to fulfill the EPC's academic requirements for the MDiv degree, each course is ATS approved and transferable to any seminary a student is attending, the cost is half the normal cost of tuition, the commitment of a mentor who regularly meets with the student throughout the semester, and an EPC Teaching Elder to ensure the MAP meets denominational standards.

(2) to evaluate the Commissioned Pastor (CP) call and propose changes that will clarify the role of the CP, and present that as a recommendation to the 2018 General Assembly.

Recommendations to the 2018 General Assembly:

RECOMMENDATION 38-04:

<p align="center">Current <i>Book of Government</i> 9-11</p>	<p align="center">Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 9-11 amendment Additions in <i>bold italics</i></p>
<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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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>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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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?
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² G.9-11C ratified by the 33rd General Assembly (2013). *[renumbered from current 9-1 fn. 1]*

<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>

<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>

Committee Members:

TE Fred Lian (Chair) Presbytery of the West
TE Nate Atwood, Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic
TE Bill Dudley, Presbytery of the Southeast
RE Robert Howard, Presbytery of the Great Plains
TE Mark Toone, Presbytery of the Pacific
RE Ed Wedin, Presbytery of the Gulf South
TE Luder Whitlock, Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean

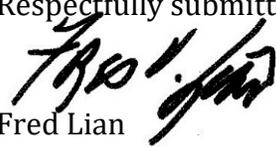
Ex Officio members:

Stated Clerk Jeff Jeremiah, Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest
Assistant Stated Clerk Jerry Iamurri, Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean

Committee Meeting Dates:

September 19, 2017 -- videoconference
January 11-12, 2018 in Orlando, FL

Respectfully submitted,



Fred Lian
Chairman

June 2018