
GA39-10
FROM THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

The National Leadership Team recommends that the 39th General Assembly **APPROVE** an amendment to *Book of Government* 9-5A.1 making explicit that the office of “co-pastor” is not constitutional.

Current G. 9-5A.1	Proposed G. 9-5A.1 (proposed amendment is in <i>bold italics</i>)
<p>Within the office of Teaching Elder there are a variety of callings that require ordination. God distributes to each gifts according to the common needs of the Church. These include:</p> <p>A. Pastor</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">1. Titles</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A Teaching Elder may be called by a congregation to be a Pastor or Associate Pastor. Sessions may call a Teaching Elder as Assistant Pastor, Transitional Pastor, or invite a Teaching Elder as Stated Supply Pastor, or Occasional Supply Pastor. Presbytery must approve all such positions. These are the only recognized callings for Teaching Elders in a congregational setting.</p>	<p>Within the office of Teaching Elder there are a variety of callings that require ordination. God distributes to each gifts according to the common needs of the Church. These include:</p> <p>A. Pastor</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">1. Titles</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A Teaching Elder may be called by a congregation to be a Pastor or Associate Pastor. Sessions may call a Teaching Elder as Assistant Pastor, Transitional Pastor, or invite a Teaching Elder as Stated Supply Pastor, or Occasional Supply Pastor. Presbytery must approve all such positions. These are the only recognized callings for Teaching Elders in a congregational setting. <i>The office of the “co-pastor” is not a constitutionally recognized calling in a local church. Except as otherwise provided in the Book of Government, the Pastor of the church shall be the Moderator of Session.</i></p>

Rationale:

The Fifth General Assembly (1985) “sustained the Permanent Judicial Commission’s opinion regarding the office of co-pastor as being non-existent. Relationships between Teaching Elders and EPC congregations sanctioned by the *Book of Government* are



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those of Pastor, Associate Pastor and Assistant Pastor” (**Minutes, 5-40**). The position of the EPC since this 1985 action has remained unchanged.

The reason for the proposed amendment to the *Book of Government* is that churches that have come to the EPC recently have questioned the constitutionality of the prohibition. It has been argued that its “not explicit in the *Book of Government* that co-pastor is prohibited.” This amendment would explicitly declare in the *Book of Government* the position of the EPC since 1985.

Referred to MINISTERIAL VOCATION

www.epc.org/files/ga2019report-nlt



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***GA39-10 (Cont.)
FROM THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION***

Recommendation:

Permanent Judicial Commission Recommends that the 39th General Assembly **APPROVE** the Overture GA39-10.

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