Committee on Ministerial Vocation

The Standing Committee on Ministerial Vocation convened at 3:25 p.m. on Thursday, June 20, 2019 and met once. Chairman RE Joe Slesinski opened the meeting with prayer.

A. Business Referred to Committee:
   1. Recommendation GA39-09
   2. Recommendation GA39-10
   3. Minutes of the MVC Permanent Committee
   4. Minutes of the Chaplains Work and Care Committee

B. Recommendations:
   1. Recommendation GA39-09: The Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest overtures the 39th General Assembly to amend G. 11-2C, which addresses the examination of candidates for ordination.

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<tr>
<th>Current G. 11-2C</th>
<th>Proposed G. 11-2C Amendment</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Presbytery shall make public examination of the Candidate as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination, and a statement regarding the person’s call to the Ministry.</td>
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Rationale:
Whereas a Candidate for ordination is expected to experience both an “inward call” to the ministry per se as well as an external call to a specific church or agency [BoG 10-1], and

Whereas there are many Christian churches and agencies with a wide range of theology and polity who offer such calls, and

Whereas some who come seeking ordination in the EPC have been previously ordained in non-reformed bodies or unaffiliated churches, and

Whereas even within the bodies of churches and agencies that call themselves Presbyterian and reformed there are significant differences of belief and practice;

Therefore, it is necessary that the presbytery, when considering a candidate to come under its care to prepare for ministry in a church or agency of the Evangelical
Presbyterian Church, carefully consider the candidate’s motivation to not only be an ordained Teaching Elder, but also to be a part of the EPC.

The Standing Committee on Ministerial Vocation Committee recommends that Recommendation 39-09 be approved as submitted.

2. **Recommendation GA39-10:** The National Leadership Team recommends that the 39th General Assembly approve an amendment to *Book of Government* 9-5 that would make explicit that the office of “co-pastor” is not constitutional.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Current G. 9-5 A. 1.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Proposed G. 9-5 A. 1. Amendment</strong></th>
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<td>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: A. Pastor 1. Titles 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.</td>
<td>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: A. Pastor 1. Titles 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. 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.</td>
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**Rationale:**
Background / Justification for NLT-proposed amendment
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 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.

The Standing Committee on Ministerial Vocation Committee recommends that Recommendation 39-10 be adopted as amended above.


C. Additional Recommendations from the Standing Committee:
   1. Per *Rules for Assembly* 9-6, the Committee voted to place the following eligible recommendation(s) on an omnibus consent motion:

   [NOTE: a recommendation amended by the Standing Committee, substitute recommendation or additional recommendation in C.2 are not eligible for the omnibus consent motion.]

   Minutes of the MVC Permanent Committee
   Minutes of the CWCC Permanent Committee

   2. *(Enter any other recommendations here.)*

The Standing Committee commends the members of the Permanent Committee on Ministerial Vocation for their good work during the past year.

RE Joe Slesinski closed the meeting with prayer.
Respectfully submitted,

Joe Slesinski, Chairman

RE Joe Slesinski

Suzanne Zampella, Clerk

TE Suzanne Zampella