



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries
Ray Kinat
Ken Van Kampen
Ronald Meyer
Bob Garment
Kermit Oppriecht
Mike Herin
Dexter Kuhlman
Howard Shockley
John Manon
Ron Bengelink
Paul Heidebrcht
Bill Dudley
Marc Huebl

FROM: Jeff Jeremiah, Stated Clerk

DATE: August 15, 2017

RE: **DESCENDING OVERTURES FROM THE 37th GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Please find enclosed the Descending Overtures, sent to the presbyteries by the 37th General Assembly. Copies should be made for all your commissioners, both ministers and ruling elders, and distributed for information at your fall presbytery meeting.

In forwarding this to you now, I am providing ample time for reflection and discussion prior to a vote at your winter presbytery meeting. Remember, presbyteries may debate the substance of a descending overture as to adoption or non-adoption, but may not amend the overture in any manner. I encourage you to distribute the overtures at your fall meeting and mail them to churches or ministers not in attendance.

A copy of these overtures will be posted on our web site so that you or the churches can access it there.

A ballot for the vote count of your commissioners is also enclosed. This should be certified and returned to the General Assembly Office immediately following your vote. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Please remind your commissioners that the **38th General Assembly** convenes at **Hope Church, Memphis, Tennessee** on Tuesday morning June 19, 2018, and adjourns Saturday afternoon, June 23rd. Pre-assembly programs will again be planned for Monday, June 18th.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Descending Overtures from the 37^h General Assembly
Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

Descending Overture 17-A

To amend *Book of Government* 9-6A and 10-8B.2a to specify the term of service for an out of bounds call to be for a renewable term of up to three years, bringing consistency to the two sections.

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 9-6A	Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 9-6A Additions in <i>bold italics</i>
<p>9-6 Teaching Elders serving outside of presbytery bounds</p> <p>A. Whenever a Teaching Elder is called to one of the positions provided for under G.9-5 by an agency that is outside the jurisdiction of a court of the Church and after being fully satisfied that the ministry is consistent with the calling to the ministry of the Word, the Presbytery may grant permission for the Minister to labor outside of its jurisdictional bounds. Such permission is renewable annually. The Teaching Elder shall make an annual report to the Presbytery of faithfulness to the gospel. The Teaching Elder serving out of bounds shall be diligent to serve actively in the Court. If the particular call prohibits such service, the Teaching Elder should seek Associate Member status.</p>	<p>9-6 Teaching Elders serving outside of presbytery bounds</p> <p>A. Whenever a Teaching Elder is called to one of the positions provided for under G.9-5 by an agency that is outside the jurisdiction of a court of the Church and after being fully satisfied that the ministry is consistent with the calling to the ministry of the Word, the Presbytery may grant permission for the Minister to labor outside of its jurisdictional bounds Such permission is renewable annually. <i>for a term of up to three years. After the expiration of that time, the Minister must receive further Presbytery approval to continue.</i> The Teaching Elder shall make an annual report to the Presbytery of faithfulness to the gospel. The Teaching Elder serving out of bounds shall be diligent to serve actively in the Court. If the particular call prohibits such service, the Teaching Elder should seek Associate Member status.</p>

Current Book of Government 10-8B.2a	Proposed Book of Government 10-8B.2a Changes in <i>bold italics</i>
<p>a. If a Teaching Elder desires to accept a call outside the jurisdictional or geographic bounds of the approving Presbytery, the Teaching Elder shall present a call from that body to the Presbytery, indicating the nature of the work and the terms of the call. If the Presbytery approves the nature of the work as appropriate to the gospel ministry and requiring ordination, it may approve the call for a definite period of time. After the expiration of that time, the Minister must receive further approval to continue.</p>	<p>a. If a Teaching Elder desires to accept a call outside the jurisdictional or geographic bounds of the approving Presbytery, the Teaching Elder shall present a call from that body to the Presbytery, indicating the nature of the work and the terms of the call. If the Presbytery approves the nature of the work as appropriate to the gospel ministry and requiring ordination, it may approve the call for a definite period of time <i>term of up to three years</i>. After the expiration of that time, the Minister must receive further <i>Presbytery</i> approval to continue.</p>

Descending Overture 17-B

To amend *Book of Government* 21-2D.2e and f, expanding areas of ongoing authority that may be given to the Ministerial Committee at the discretion of the Presbytery”

Current Book of Government 21-2D.2e, f	Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 21-2D.2e, f Additions in <i>bold italics</i>
<p>21-2 The Ministerial Committee</p> <p>D. Authority and Responsibilities</p> <p>2. With regard to local churches</p> <p>e. Presbytery may authorize this Committee to dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss Teaching Elders according to the Book of Order when both the congregation and the Pastor concur in the dissolution.</p> <p>f. The Committee may be appointed by Presbytery to serve as a Judicial or</p>	<p>21-2 The Ministerial Committee</p> <p>D. Authority and Responsibilities</p> <p>2. With regard to local churches</p> <p>e. Presbytery may authorize this the Ministerial Committee to dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss Teaching Elders according to the Book of Order when both the congregation and the Pastor concur in the dissolution. serve as a Judicial or Administrative Commission. The</p>

Administrative Commission. The Committee may be appointed as an ongoing Administrative Commission to approve temporary relationships.

Committee may also be appointed as an ongoing Administrative Commission to:

- 1) Dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss Teaching Elders according to the **Book of Order** when both the congregation and the Pastor concur in the dissolution.
- 2) *Approve temporary pastoral relationships*.*
- 3) *Review terms of call or invitations for all pastoral relationships, excluding out-of-bounds terms of calls, to ensure that the terms meet the minimum established standards.*
- 4) *Ordain and/or install Teaching Elders in accordance with provisions in this Book of Government.*
- 5) *Appoint advisors for Candidates Under Care and mentors for Commissioned Pastors.*

[Note: section f is deleted here, being incorporated in section e above for clarity.]

**If approved, the following footnote will appear in the text of the Book of Government: "The approval of temporary pastoral relationships is limited to the authority provided for in G.10-7. (Footnote approved by the 37th General Assembly."*

Descending Overture 17-C

To amend *Book of Government* 10-7, creating and defining the called position of ‘Transitional Pastor’

<p>Current <i>Book of Government</i> 10-7</p> <p>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, 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.</p> <p>B. Ordinarily, a person currently serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is not eligible to be called as Pastor of</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 10-7 Additions indicated in <i>bold italics</i></p> <p>10-7 Temporary Pastoral Relationships</p> <p><i>A. Temporary Pastoral Relationships may be established with lawfully ordained Ministers or Commissioned Pastors when a church is without a pastor.</i></p> <p><i>1. Transitional Pastor</i></p> <p><i>a. A Transitional Pastor is called by the Session to serve during the period a congregation is seeking a Pastor. The Transitional Pastor intentionally leads the congregation toward greater health and readiness for their next</i></p>
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<p>that church. Should a Search Committee desire to consider any person who has served in a temporary capacity since the pulpit most recently became vacant, it must secure approval by a three-fourths vote of the Session and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee in order to proceed.</p> <p>C. Types of temporary pastoral relationships</p> <p>1. Stated Supply A Stated Supply Pastor is invited to serve for a definite period of time of not less than one month and no more than twelve months. The Stated Supply may be appointed by the Presbytery to Moderate the Church Session during the time of service. Before the end of any invited period of service, the Session may extend the invitation for an additional period not to exceed twelve months with the approval of the Presbytery or of the Ministerial Committee acting as a</p>	<p><i>pastor and will ordinarily be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Session during the time of service.</i></p> <p><i>b. Due to the temporary nature of the call, Transitional Pastors called from another Presbytery in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church will ordinarily maintain membership in their home presbytery.</i></p> <p><i>c. Upon approval of the Ministerial Committee, Transitional Pastors are introduced to the receiving presbytery and enrolled as corresponding members (voice but not vote).</i></p> <p><i>d. If a Transitional Pastor is called from outside the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the presbytery shall examine and transfer the pastor according to applicable provisions of this Book of Government.</i></p> <p>2. Stated Supply Pastor a. A Stated Supply Pastor is invited by the Session to serve for a definite period of time, not less than one month and no more than twelve months. <i>The term of service is renewable. Although this invitation is not a call, the invitation to serve, authority to preach the Word, to administer sacraments, and to moderate Session must be approved by the Presbytery or by the Ministerial Committee,</i></p>
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<p>Commission.</p> <p>2. Interim Supply An Interim Supply Pastor is invited to serve during the period a congregation is seeking a Pastor. The Interim Supply Pastor may be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Session during the time of service.</p> <p>3. Occasional Supply An Occasional Supply Pastor is invited to serve regularly on specified days. Only the Ministerial Committee must approve.</p>	<p><i>if authorized by the Presbytery.</i></p> <p><i>b. Stated Supply Pastors from outside the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are invited by the Session and shall be interviewed and approved by Presbytery or the Ministerial Committee, if authorized by the Presbytery.</i></p> <p>3. Occasional Supply Pastor An Occasional Supply Pastor is invited to serve regularly on specified days. Only the Ministerial Committee must approve.</p> <p>B. Ordinarily, a person currently serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is not eligible to be called as Pastor of that church. Should a Search Committee desire to consider any person who has served in a temporary capacity since the pulpit most recently became vacant, it must secure approval by a three-fourths vote of the Session and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee in order to proceed.</p>
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Descending Overture 17-D

To amend *Book of Government 9-5A.1* for consistency within the *Book of Government 10-7* and to clarify that all calls to Teaching Elders must be approved by the Presbytery.

Current <i>Book of Government 9-5A.1</i>	Proposed <i>Book of Government 9-5A.1</i> Additions in <i>bold italics</i>
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9-5 The office of Teaching Elder

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. These are the only recognized callings for Teaching Elders in a congregational setting.

9-5 The office of Teaching Elder

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 pastoral relationships for Teaching Elders in a congregational setting.

BALLOT FOR DESCENDING OVERTURES

Report of the vote of the presbyteries on amendments approved by the 37th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. **Clerks:** Kindly record the actual number of votes in each category.

1. **Overture 17-A**, amending *Book of Government* 9-6A and 10-8B.2a to specify the term of service for an out of bounds call to be renewable term of up to three years, bringing consistency to the two sections.

YES: NO:

2. **Overture 17-B**, amending *Book of Government* 21-2D.2e and f, expanding areas of ongoing authority that may be given to the Ministerial Committee at the discretion of the Presbytery.

YES: NO:

3. **Overture 17-C**, amending *Book of Government* 10-7, creating and defining the called position of 'Transitional Pastor'.

YES: NO:

4. **Overture 17-D**, amending the *Book of Government* 9-5A.1 for consistency with the *Book of Government* 10-7 and to clarify that all calls to Teaching Elders must be approved by the Presbytery.

YES: NO:

Balloting was conducted at the meeting of the _____ Presbytery, held on _____, 2017 at _____ (location).

ATTEST: _____

Signed – Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Please return the ballot by fax, scanned attachment to email, or by mail to the address below.