

CHAPLAINS' MANUAL

Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission
on Chaplains and Military Personnel
(PRJCCMP, also known as the PRJC)

Revised 1984, 1989, 2000, 2007, 2008, 2009

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Constitution.....	3
By-Laws	9
Requirements and Duties	13
Policy and Guidance Handbook.....	23

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I — NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel.

ARTICLE II — PURPOSES

The Commission is an agent of its member denominations (not an ecclesiastical commission in the technical sense). The Commission was created to assist in carrying out their ministries to members of the Armed Forces and other institutions. Since the primary structure of such ministries is through formal chaplaincies, the principal activity and concern of the Commission shall be involved with chaplains.

In carrying out its mission, the Commission functions in the following ways:

1. By maintaining liaison with the appropriate contact point of each member denomination, and through their various presbyteries, to:
 - a. Provide current information regarding criteria, polices and procedures for the appointment of ministers as chaplains.
 - b. Provide a technical service to the presbyteries by recommending qualified candidates to the Chaplaincy.
2. By maintaining cooperative relationships with the Armed Forces Chaplain Board and the leadership of military and other institutional chaplaincies by:
 - a. Certifying to the proper agencies the ecclesiastical endorsements and approvals granted by the member denominations through their various presbyteries.
 - b. Serving as a representative body for problems referred by or concerning chaplains, both individually and collectively.
3. By maintaining contact and liaison with individual chaplains serving in the Armed Forces and other institutions through regular reports, newsletters, written correspondence, and personal visits as authorized by the Commission.
4. By establishing and maintaining methods of liaison with individual congregations of the member denominations to assist them in providing adequate ministry to their members while they are separated from the particular church during periods in the Armed Forces and other institutions.
5. By keeping member denominations informed on significant developments, trends, issues and problems concerning chaplains and members of the Armed Forces and other institutions and to report annually on the activity of the Commission to each member denomination through the proper agencies.

6. By assisting the presbyteries in the promotion of the ministry of the Chaplaincy to the member denominations and their particular churches.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP

The Commission is made up of the following member denominations:

1. Korean American Presbyterian Church
2. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church
3. Presbyterian Church in America
4. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Any member denomination may withdraw from the Commission by act of its General Assembly/Synod. Any denomination seeking membership in the Commission shall:

1. Submit a letter of application for membership to the Commission no later than 1 January of the year in which it desires membership.
2. Be approved by vote of all current member denominations at their General Assembly/Synod.

Each member denomination or its responsible committee shall elect its representatives to serve as voting members of the Commission, with qualifications and terms to be set by the member denominations.

Each denomination shall be entitled to three Commission members for its first fifty thousand members or portion thereof. One Commission member may be added for each additional fifty thousand members or portion thereof.

The Commission may serve as the endorsing agency for applicants of **associate** member denominations that are in doctrinal agreement with the standards of the member denominations. Formal applications from **associate** member denominations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to approval at the next meeting of the Commission.

ARTICLE IV — INCORPORATION

The Commission shall be incorporated under the corporation laws of the State of Colorado relating to non-profit, religious corporations.

ARTICLE V — RULES OF ORDER

The Commission shall regulate its own proceedings in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, By-Laws, and Roberts Rules of Order (current edition). Any portion of the By-Laws and their rules of order, except Article VII of the By-Laws, may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds vote.

ARTICLE VI — FINANCIAL SUPPORT

(This section copied from the 2007 edition, and replaces the proposed changes from 2008, which were not approved by all member denominations as required)

The Financial support of the Commission shall be primarily the responsibility of the member denominations, and shall be on a fair share basis, as recommended by the Commission.

Each denomination will be responsible for all expenses incurred by its representatives at any meetings of the Commission or its sub-committees.

Each denomination shall be asked to contribute a set amount per year per full-time/active duty chaplain endorsed by the Commission.

Each endorsed chaplain both full and part-time, active duty and reserve shall be required to contribute a designated amount per year, if able.

Amounts of contributions will be recommended by the Commission for the approval of the member denominations annually. In addition, the Commission shall be free to receive donations from individuals and churches, both within and without the member denominations.

ARTICLE VII — STAFF

The Commission shall have as its chief operating officer an Executive Director, and may hire such other personnel as it may determine.

ARTICLE VIII — AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended only by written submission of proposed amendment by the Commission to each of the member denominations and by subsequent approval of each member denomination at their annual General Assembly/Synod.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I — THE OFFICERS

The Commission shall have the following officers to be elected annually: chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.

ARTICLE II — MEETINGS

The Commission shall meet each year at a time set by the Commission. The chairman may call special meetings of the Commission by petition of at least one-third of the membership, representing at least two member denominations.

ARTICLE III — FINANCIAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The financial policy and procedures shall be proposed by the Executive Director and approved by the Commission. The Mission to North America (MNA) Chaplain Coordinator provides administrative support to the Executive Director of the PRJCCMP and ensures financial accountability. The fiscal year for the Commission shall be January 1 through December 31.

ARTICLE IV — SELECTION, EMPLOYMENT AND TERMINATION OF STAFF

A. Staff:

1. Executive Director: Selected by the PRJCCMP and approved by the PCA MNA Chaplain Coordinator. (It is understood that the Executive Director is also the MNA Chaplain Coordinator for the PCA. The Coordinator for MNA oversees the MNA Chaplain Coordinator).
2. Associate Directors: Selected by the Executive Director and approved by the PRJCCMP.
3. Associate Director/Administrative Assistant for the PRJCCMP: Selected by the Executive Director and approved by the PCA MNA Coordinator. (It is understood that this person also serves as the PCA MNA “Associate Coordinator for Civilian Chaplains and Administrative Assistant”).

B. Terms of Service:

1. The Executive Director: shall be elected by the PRJCCMP for a term of four years.
2. Associate Director(s): shall serve for a period of one year, or less, such service to be approved annually by the PRJCCMP.

3. Associate Director/Administrative Assistant for the PRJCCMP: shall serve in an indefinite status as long as funds are available.

C. Termination of Service:

1. Executive Director: Should the Commission desire, for cause, to terminate the Executive Director's services, or he desire to resign, at least ninety days' notice shall be given unless waived by mutual agreement. In such a case, three members representing all three member denominations of the Commission and appointed by the Chairman will counsel with the Executive Director. It is understood that no action will take place without consultation and coordination with the Coordinator, Mission to North America (MNA).
2. Associate Directors: Can be terminated with the same stipulations as for the Executive Director except with 30 days notice.
3. Associate Director/Administrative Assistant for the PRJCCMP: Can be terminated with the same stipulations as for the Executive Director except with 30 days notice.

- D. Additional staff: Other staff, as proposed by the Executive Director and approved by the PRJCCMP, can be added. Details of funding for a new staff position would be coordinated with the denominational connection of the new staff person.

**ARTICLE V — DUTIES OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The Executive Director shall function as the executive of the Commission and shall give supervision to all other personnel. He shall have responsibility and authority of the general direction and oversight of the total program of the Commission. He shall be responsive and accountable to the policies and actions of the Commission at all times.

ARTICLE VI — QUORUM

For either regular or special meetings of the Commission, a quorum shall consists of more than one-half of the representative members of the Commission, with at least one representative from each member denomination present.

ARTICLE VII — AMENDMENTS

The By-Laws of the Commission may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by a three-fourths vote of the voting representatives present, provided that written notice of such action shall have been sent out in connection with the notice of the meeting at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting.

REQUIREMENTS AND DUTIES

OCTOBER 28, 1983
(REVISED - FEBRUARY 2009)

“The Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel is a ministry of member denominations dedicated to obeying Christ’s Great Commission by providing men to serve as chaplains in military and civilian organizations. The Commission endorses and ecclesiastically supports ordained, qualified chaplains; approves chaplain candidates; and helps presbyteries and congregations in biblical ministry to military personnel and their families.” PRJC Mission Statement

I. PURPOSE AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

- A. Serve as the liaison between the member denominations and the offices of the Chiefs of Military Chaplains, of the Chief of the Veterans Administration Chaplains, and of the other agencies or organizations to which our chaplains are assigned. (Commission Constitution II.2.)
- B. Keep these offices appropriately informed as to the developments in, and growth of, our denominations. (Commission Constitution II.2.)
- C. Keep member denominations informed concerning the Chaplaincy programs, and to encourage prayer support for chaplains. (Commission Constitution II.1a, and II.4, 5, 6.)
- D. Assist with the recruitment of well-qualified individuals in order to meet various chaplain procurement goals, such as those established by the Department of Defense. (Commission Constitution II.2.)
- E. Provide the official technical endorsement necessary for an applicant approved by his presbytery, providing he meets all of the necessary requirements of his denomination and of the Chaplaincy to which he is being endorsed. (Commission Constitution II.1b. and II.2a.)
- F. Encourage and assist our chaplains by every means possible, such as by maintaining contact, by serving as a liaison and representative body, by promoting the ministry of the Chaplaincy, etc. (Commission Constitution II.2.b. and II.3, 4,6.)
- G. Meet at least once per year and at other times when needed for the purpose of transacting the business of the Commission. (Commission By-Laws II.)

II. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION

- A. Members are elected by each denomination’s General Assembly/Synod or by its authorized committee. (Commission Constitution III.)

- B. The Commission annually elects its own Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary. Its chief operating officer, the Executive Director, is also elected by the Commission every four years. (Commission By-Laws I; IV. and Commission Constitution VII.)

III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Chairman: The Chairman shall preside at all Commission meetings and regularly communicate with the Executive Director between meetings. At his request, the Vice-Chairman shall preside.
- B. Secretary: The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Commission meetings, making them available to the members.
- C. Executive Director. The Director shall:
1. administer the affairs of the Commission, with the assistance of the Commission members, in accordance with our Constitution and By-Laws.
 2. process all applications for endorsement, working as much as possible with the Commission members. He shall attempt to interview each applicant personally, and if this is not possible or feasible, he shall designate another person to conduct the interview, such as a member of the Commission or a chaplain (full-time, part-time, or retired) endorsed by the Commission. Upon full satisfactory completion of the application, and with the approval of the applicant's presbytery, and the approval of the person conducting the personal interview or, if the interviewer's report is negative, the full Commission, the Executive Director shall prepare the official endorsement of the applicant.
 3. keep in touch with each endorsee by correspondence, telephone, and personal visits.
 4. keep accurate files and records of all chaplains holding Commission endorsement.
 5. prepare an annual report for the member denominations and shall provide information and news releases on Chaplaincy programs as desired by our churches, denominations, agencies, and publications.
 6. be the primary representative of the Commission, particularly in meetings of the endorsing agents in Washington or elsewhere, and in the offices of the Chiefs of Military Chaplains, or the Chief of the Veterans Administration chaplains, and of the other agencies or organizations to which our chaplains are assigned.
 7. keep a record of all expenses of the Commission, and he shall provide an annual written report of these expenses.
 8. recruit and supervise any Associate Directors who assist in the task of keeping in contact with all endorsees.

IV THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CHAPLAINCY ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT

A. The Applicant shall:

1. meet all the requirements of his presbytery for membership as a man under care, a licentiate, or fully ordained member, and he must be in good standing.

2. be approved by his presbytery to the Commission.
3. have a minimum of two years of practical ministry experience or internship, or its equivalent, such as preaching, youth work, evangelism, teaching, missionary work, counseling, etc. This requirement will be waived in the case of endorsement for the military chaplaincy's program for seminarians, or in extraordinary circumstances if both the individual's presbytery and the Commission approve.
4. give evidence that he is able to adjust to the Chaplaincy, and that he is able to work within the system without thinking that he is compromising his personal convictions
5. give evidence that he is able to minister appropriately to military personnel and their families, to hospital patients and those attending or related to them, or to whatever constituency is served by the Chaplaincy to which he is seeking endorsement.
6. give evidence that he is able to submit to military authority or whatever lawful authority he is going to be serving under, and he must be willing to honor and abide by the requirements and guidelines of his denomination as far as chaplains are concerned.
7. meet all of the requirements of the Chaplaincy for which he is applying. In the case of military Chaplaincy, for example, this would include at least 120 hours of undergraduate credit, the M.Div. degree (a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate seminary study) plus ordination. Non-military organizations may have different requirements.
8. submit to the Commission a completed application form, with references as requested.
9. submit a nonrefundable processing fee with all new endorsement requests to defray administrative costs.
10. understand that ecclesiastical endorsement or approval may be withdrawn by the Commission upon the request of the individual, the individual's presbytery, or for cause. In the case of withdrawal for cause, the appropriate denominational provisions for discipline shall have been followed.

B. Non-Military/Civilian Chaplains. In addition to the points in "A" above, the Applicant shall:

1. submit a nonrefundable processing fee with all new endorsement requests to defray administrative costs.
2. ask the Executive Director for a professional Endorsement Certificate, suitable for framing.
3. ask the Executive Director for a wallet-sized identification card to prove endorsement by the PRJCCMP.

V. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE ECCLESIASTICAL APPROVAL

- A. The candidate applicant shall submit to the Executive Director a completed application packet with references as requested.
- B. The candidate shall:
1. be a member of a church that is in a denomination that has membership in the PRJCCMP, and ordinarily the candidate should be under care of a presbytery. The candidate, in any case, shall come under care of a presbytery within a year of approval. The presbytery must be of a denomination for which the PRJC endorses. The Executive Director can approve appropriate extensions of the one-year rule.
 2. give evidence that he is able to adjust to the Chaplaincy, and that he is able to work within the system without thinking that he is compromising his personal convictions. During his seminary training, the candidate shall give evidence that he is able to minister appropriately to military personnel and their families, to hospital patients and those attending or related to them, or to whatever constituency is served by the Chaplaincy to which he is seeking endorsement.
 3. give evidence that he is able to submit to military authority or whatever lawful authority which he is going to ~~be~~ serve, and must be willing to honor and abide by the requirements and guidelines of his denomination.
 4. make every effort to participate in the military training required and offered by the military service for which he is a candidate.
 5. maintain regular contact with his presbytery and attend presbytery meetings unless providentially hindered.
 6. keep the Executive Director of the Commission informed on such matters as change of seminary and family status. The candidate shall provide the Executive Director, the church and the presbytery under which the candidate is under care, with updated contact information.
 7. make a yearly report to the Executive Director and shall provide any other information relative to his ministry when requested by the Commission or his presbytery.
- C. Approval may be withdrawn by the Executive Director upon the request of the individual chaplain's church or presbytery, or for cause. In the case of withdrawal for cause, the appropriate denominational provisions for discipline shall have been followed.
- D. The candidate may expect of the Commission appropriate information, prayer, mentoring and counsel through its Executive Director, its individual members, or other chaplains endorsed by the Commission. Each candidate will be assigned an active duty, reserve components or retired PRJCCMP chaplain as a mentor during his time in the candidate program.

VI. WHAT THE ENDORSEE/CANDIDATE MAY EXPECT FROM HIS DENOMINATION AND THE COMMISSION

- A. He may expect the official approval and endorsement of his denomination and the Commission as long as he meets the military or other requirements of his Chaplaincy, and as long as he remains a member in good standing of his presbytery.

- B. He may expect official representation with his chaplaincy's leadership, such as with the Chief of Chaplains of the service for which he is endorsed if he is a military chaplain.
- C. He may expect of the commission appropriate information and counsel through its Executive Director, its individual members, or other chaplains endorsed by the Commission.
- D. He may expect the prayers and support particularly of his presbytery and denomination, and of local churches within his denomination.

VII. WHAT THE COMMISSION EXPECTS FROM THE ENDORSEE/CANDIDATE

- A. Maintain regular contact with his presbytery.
- B. Keep the Executive Director of the Commission informed on such matters as assignment, change of status, promotion, etc. Upon change of station or any other change of address, provide both the Executive Director and the presbytery (of which the endorsee is a member) with the new address and telephone number(s).
- C. If full-time, make a quarterly report to the Commission and shall provide any other information relative to his ministry when requested by the Commission or his presbytery. If part-time, make an annual report to the Commission.
- D. Contribute a designated amount per year. In certain areas, such as if he is a military chaplain on active duty or in a reserve forces pay billet, a minimum amount is set for these regular contributions (See Policy and Guidance Handbook).
- E. Support his denomination wherever he may be located by attending local presbytery meetings and visiting area churches and mission stations of the denomination. Support and participate in General Assembly activities when at all possible.
- F. Agree to notify the PRJC Executive Director and denomination's Commission members if he encounters significant difficulties with, or disciplinary action by, his future command.

VIII. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to the guidelines set forth in this manual shall be made only with the approval of the Commission. Exceptions shall be considered either at the request of member denominations or at the initiative of the Commission itself. In either case, the Executive Director is to inform and normally secure the approval of each member denomination's mission's coordinator, Chaplaincy committee chairman, or other official who is charged with the leading responsibility for chaplaincy affairs.

IX. SUMMARY

In view of our responsibility to God, the Church, and institutions including the government of the United States, the Commission cannot and must not look lightly upon a man holding the Commission's endorsement or approval as a matter of convenience and demonstrate little interest in the principles, practices and ministry of his denomination. The members of the Commission are obligated to maintain a constant vigil to see that mutual responsibilities indicated in this manual are being fulfilled in a manner that is pleasing to God.

POLICY AND GUIDANCE HANDBOOK

I. ECCLESIASTICAL BASIS OF LITURGICAL, SACRAMENTAL AND PASTORAL ACTS PERFORMED BY MILITARY CHAPLAINS

The Armed Forces of the United States do not generate religious ministry. They receive ministries from the churches and religious bodies of America in accordance with the religiously pluralistic pattern of American society. The United States Code, for example, provides in the case of the Navy and Marine Corps, that: “An officer of the Chaplain Corps may conduct public worship according to the manner and format of the church of which he is a member.” (10 U.S.C. 6031(a))

Inasmuch as all liturgical, sacramental, and pastoral acts are performed on the basis of ecclesiastical rather than military credentials, it follows that the ultimate responsibility for the substantive nature of chaplains’ religious ministry rests with their denominations.

The religious context of the Armed Forces, like that of American society at large, is one of religious pluralism, in which independent churches and religious bodies coexist in mutual respect. Because of the impracticality of providing clergy of every faith or denomination at every military command, the Armed Forces and the churches of America have evolved jointly a pattern of cooperative ministry. The principle of cooperative ministry places on every chaplain the obligations to: (a) make provision for meeting the religious needs of those in the command who are adherents of other churches, and (b) cooperate with other chaplains and commands in meeting the religious needs of members of the chaplain’s own faith group.

Inasmuch as the denominations represented by the Commission are confessional bodies which seek to adhere to their standards at all points, each chaplain must be guided in his ministry not merely on an individual interpretation of Scripture, but by the theology and ecclesiology set forth in the Westminster Standards or, for the URCNA chaplains, the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort) and the denomination’s Book of Church Order.

These policies, therefore, will be followed by chaplains endorsed by this Commission:

1. A chaplain shall have liberty in the full and free presentation of the whole counsel of God as contained in the Scriptures and summarized in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms or, for the URCNA endorsed chaplains, the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort).
2. No military or civilian higher authority may require a PRJCCMP chaplain to:
 - a. Lead or participate in conducting worship services with non-Trinitarian chaplains.
 - b. Conduct worship services with chaplains whose ordination requirements do not meet the ordination requirements of the PRJCCMP chaplain’s particular denomination.

- c. Conduct worship services that are not consistent with the PRJCCMP chaplain's convictions on the matter.
 - d. Pray without invoking the name of Jesus, because the PRJCCMP member denominations adhere to the Westminster Standards (Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms) or, for the URCNA chaplains, the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort) as their statement of faith, and because these standards define prayer that is acceptable to God as necessarily being made in the name of the Son (WCF xxi.3). The PRJCCMP upholds the constitutionally protected right of the PRJCCMP-endorsed chaplains to pray in the name of Jesus, both in worship services and in other public ceremonies. This in no way prohibits a chaplain from working with ordained chaplains in other appropriate professional areas of ministry.
3. Since the sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are given to the church in particular, chaplains must exercise caution in their administration by assuming that:
- a. The sacraments are always administered in conjunction with the faithful preaching of the Word.
 - b. An appropriate and clear 'fencing of the table' is made each time the sacrament is administered.
4. Marriage is a divine ordinance and therefore careful attention to the Biblical principles, as they are defined in the Westminster Confession of Faith, or, for the URCNA chaplains, the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort)* must be followed by all our chaplains.

October 28, 1983 (Rev. December 2000, February 2007)

* Added in February 2008, when the PRJCCMP began as the Endorsing Agency for the URCNA.

II. CODE OF ETHICS FOR PRJCCMP-ENDORSED CHAPLAINS

Whereas Jesus Christ, the Head of His Church, has ordained His body to be His primary instrument through which He carries out His messianic, saving and sanctifying ministry to people,

PURPOSE

We, the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRJCCMP), representing the churches of our respective member denominations (the PCA, the OPC, and the RPCNA) are committed to endorsing only well-qualified chaplains for military, police, hospital, Veterans Administration, prison, industrial and other institutional chaplaincy ministries. Therefore, we are unequivocally committed to maintaining, by relying on God's sanctifying grace, only the highest standards of chaplain selection, oversight and endorsing accountabilities.

In seeking energetically to maintain a demonstrable and credible commitment to a realistic code of ethics, in support of the above stated purpose, we, the members of the Commission, subscribe to the following specific obligations, and further will require any chaplain we endorse to subscribe, confessing our conscious reliance on God's enabling grace to do so.

OBLIGATIONS

1. To uphold carefully and ethically, without mental reservation, the biblical truths, doctrinal and confessional distinctives, policies and practices of our ordaining and endorsing denominations as represented through the PRJCCMP.

2. To abide by all the requirements for ministry of the institution(s) seeking the ministry services of a PRJCCMP-endorsed chaplain, unless one or more of those requirements is plainly in contradiction to the word of God and the confessional standards of the chaplain's endorsing church. In that unlikely but possible eventuality, we commit to a wholehearted effort to resolve the difference(s) through the process of humble, respectful and biblical discussion.
3. To require our endorsed Chaplains to provide ministry to all those whom they are called to serve, which is in accord with biblical standards of kindness, confidentiality, humility, and ethical regard for those recipients.
4. To respect and uphold the ethical and constitutional right of other endorsers and their respective chaplains, to maintain and express their doctrinal distinctives and ecclesiological practices. At the same time we thereby do not agree or imply any willingness, overtly or covertly, to deny or otherwise suppress the free and appropriate expression of our own distinctives, of which offering prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is a case in point.
5. To encourage our own (and other non-PRJCCMP endorsed chaplains) to provide the maximum of cooperative ministry without any covert or overt pressure on our own, or other chaplains, to compromise their conscience. At the same time, we are committed to respecting those distinctives, which make a cooperative ministry possible.
6. To seek actively the grace of God, in order to engage in all relevant aspects of endorsement, approval, and oversight of PRJCCMP chaplains in their pastoral ministry, in accordance with recognized standards for a genuinely godly personal conduct in all matters public and private.

Adopted 22 February 2006

III. FEES AND DUES

A. Fees

1. Military Applicant for Endorsement as a Military Chaplain (Active, Reserves, Guard, Civil Air Patrol) pays a one-time fee of \$100 (this includes a new fee for a PRJC-required background check).
2. Military Chaplain Candidate Applicant pays a one-time fee of \$25.00.
3. Civilian Chaplain Endorsement Applicant pays a one-time fee of \$100 (this includes a new fee for a PRJC-required background check).
4. All endorsement applicants shall pay a fee for a background check (included in the revised application fees above).

The Endorsed Chaplain will receive an Endorsement Certificate and ID card.

NOTE: An unendorsed Civilian Chaplain may choose to pay a \$50.00 fee and receive these two documents.

B. Dues

1. That dues be assessed at the rate of 2% of base pay, rounded down, for Reserve and National Guard chaplains as follows:

O-2 and O-3	\$180 per year	O-5	\$288 per year
O-4	\$204 per year	O-6	\$348 per year

2. That dues be assessed at the rate of 1% of base pay for active duty military and Veterans Administration chaplains as follows: (Note: The amounts have been adjusted down to the next number divisible by 12 to facilitate automatic monthly payment plans.)

O-2	\$348 per year	O-5	\$792 per year
O-3	\$396 per year	O-6	\$996 per year
O-4	\$600 per year		

Full-time VA chaplains: GS-11, \$492 per year; GS-12, \$636 per year

On motion, the Commission voted to recommend that dues be required of those civilian chaplains whose employers or certifying bodies require an ecclesiastical endorsement as follows:

Full-time paid civilian chaplains	\$300 per year
Part-time paid civilian chaplains	\$180 per year

For those paid civilian chaplains whose employers or certifying bodies do not require an endorsement, annual dues are \$120.

Volunteer (unpaid) chaplains pay no dues.

Gifts to the PRJCCMP over and above the required dues would be appreciated.

IV. WOMEN IN COMBAT

In recent years, the major churches making up the membership of the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRJCCMP) have in their senior deliberative bodies (General Assemblies and Synod) passed resolutions concerning the use of women as military combatants in the Armed Forces of the United States. Since this was the first formal response of our churches to the evolving policy and practice of female integration into all areas of the U. S. military, the result has been discussion and dialogue in many circles with a commensurate number of questions and concerns as to the practical meaning of these resolutions for members of these respective church bodies.

To assist in applying the resolutions, the PRJCCMP provided this response to encourage study of commissioned study papers from the committees of each church. The approved statements, grounds and committee study reports are in published synod and assembly minutes. This response of the PRJCCMP may be made available to church members and interested individuals and may be used as an aid by pastors, elders, chaplains, church leaders and military members in counseling others on this subject.

It is our prayer that each church member and fellow follower of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word will consider the resolutions of General Assemblies and Synod with due seriousness, applying these principles to living out their calling as disciples of the Lord.

DECLARATIONS OF THE SYNOD/ASSEMBLIES

A. RPCNA 168th Synod, 1998

“Therefore, be it now resolved:

That, while recognizing the right and duty that women have to self-defense, which may involve physical violence (Judges 9:53), it is our conviction that Biblical teaching does not give warrant to employ women for military combat.

That, we direct all presbyteries and sessions, to instruct their congregations in this regard,

That we urge any of our female members who are considering or presently engaged in military service to take counsel of their Sessions as to the teaching of God's Word in the matter, and

That the Clerk of the Synod send a copy of this resolution to the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and to our military chaplains, and

That the Moderator of the Synod be directed to assign a representative to present a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Senate, and the House of Representatives.”

B. OPC 68th General Assembly, 2001

“That the 68th GA declares that the use of women in military combat is both contrary to nature and inconsistent with the Word of God.

Grounds [also adopted by the GA]:

1. This is a ministerial declaration of what is revealed in Scripture, cf. 1 Corinthians 11:14; Report I, Sections III-IV. [See pp. 265-269 of the 68th GA minutes].
2. This provides the biblical counsel requested by the PRJCCMP without making any further pronouncements that would, presumably, cause the church to ‘intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth’ in a matter that some would say is not yet an extraordinary case, cf. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 31.4.”

C. PCA 29th General Assembly, 2001

“That the Philadelphia Presbytery Overture, the PRJCCMP letter, and the Report of the Bills and Overtures Committee be answered by this report.

That the PCA continue to recognize that the individual conscience, guided by the Word of God and responsive to the counsel of the Church, must decide concerning the propriety of voluntary service in the military.

That the PCA believes that military service is a just and godly calling; however, that it presents special and difficult moral challenges in light of the integration of women into the armed services.

That the women of the PCA be warned of the many difficulties and moral and physical dangers involved in serving in the military in secular America, due to their inherent greater vulnerability.

That individual believers as citizens be urged to exercise their godly influence to bring about authentic spiritual and moral reformation in the military services.

That the PCA chaplains be encouraged in their continued ministry to all male and female personnel in their spheres of ministry.

That pastors and sessions be informed of this report and be encouraged to instruct their people in the matters it presents.

That the NAPARC and NAE churches be informed of the PCA’s position on this matter.”

D. PCA 30th General Assembly, 2002

- “1. Acknowledging that the child in the womb is “a person covered by Divine protection” (*Statement on Abortion*, Sixth General Assembly); and that women of childbearing age often carry unborn children while remaining unaware of their child’s existence; and that principles of just war require the minimization of the loss of life—particularly innocent civilians; the PCA declares that any policy which intentionally places in harms way as military combatants women who are, or might be, carrying a child in their womb, is a violation of God’s Moral Law.
2. This Assembly declares it to be the biblical duty of man to defend woman and therefore condemns the use of women as military combatants, as well as any conscription of women into the Armed Services of the United States.
3. Therefore be it resolved that the Thirtieth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America adopts the above as pastoral counsel for the good of the members, the officers, and especially the military chaplains of the Presbyterian Church in America.
4. Be it further resolved that the Presbyterian Church in America supports the decision of any of its members to object to, as a matter of conscience, the conscription of women or the use of women as military combatants.”

E. PCA 31st General Assembly, 2003

“Nothing done by the previous Assembly compels any court of original jurisdiction to exercise discipline on issues pertaining to the report on the Ad-Interim Study Committee on Women in the Military.”

PRJCCMP UNDERSTANDING OF THE FORCE OF SYNOD/ASSEMBLY DECLARATIONS

We believe that the actions of the General Assemblies/Synod, rightly understood, have significant weight for chaplains, ministers, ruling elders, military personnel and members of our churches.

The weight of these ecclesiastical statements includes the duty to take them seriously, not to dismiss them casually as advice that can be ignored. Our purpose here is not to foster judicial actions, but to help understand and apply what the assemblies have approved.

As we do this, it is important to realize that none of the declarations has been formally adopted as part of the law and order of the church. Therefore, they are, in a sense, works in progress and the full force of the statements is yet to be determined. Nevertheless, actions are to be taken and counsel is to be given in accordance with the stated position of the church, insofar as one’s individual conscience enables.¹

Regarding the matter of individual conscience, these words from A. A. Hodge’s commentary on *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Banner of Truth reprint, 1992) are instructive. The following paragraphs are from that commentary on Chapter 31, sections II-IV: “... synods and councils, consisting of uninspired men, have no power to bind the conscience, and their authority cannot exclude the right, nor excuse the obligation, of private judgment. If their judgments are unwise, but not directly opposed to the will of God, the private member

¹PCA members of the Commission, in consultation with recognized leaders of the PCA, understand the actions of the Assembly to be interpreted and applied while keeping in mind two common errors: The first error perceives an action of the General Assembly to be similar to a law of Congress or a decision of the Supreme Court. Both are improper analogies. Until the General Assembly acts so as to make a matter a part of our Standards, then that matter is not binding -- unless the matter is determined by a judicial decision or unless the determination is already within the powers of the GA as assigned in the constitution (such as determining the trustees of agencies). The second error perceives a non-constitutional statement of the GA as being superfluous and of no import. In actuality, the GA makes such statements to advise its members and churches of the mind of the larger church at that moment. While such action does not have the authority of law to bind conscience or future Assemblies, brothers in Christ are obligated to weigh with great deference this "pious advice" since they have vowed to seek the peace and purity of the church, and this cannot be done through simply ignoring the properly approved advice of brothers and fathers. Such advice (i.e., an "in thesi" statement) must be seriously considered as the consensus of the church (but not the mandate of the church) by conscientious brothers until the church changes its advice.

should submit for peace' sake. If their decisions are opposed plainly to the Word of God, the private member should disregard them and take the penalty.”

Nothing herein summarized by the PRJCCMP compels any court of original jurisdiction to exercise discipline on issues pertaining to Synod and General Assembly declarations cited above.

PRJCCMP RESPONSES TO ISSUES RAISED ABOUT WOMEN IN COMBAT

1. We acknowledge that many troops have as their primary mission the support of the warfighters. They may kill or capture the enemy in instances of self-defense within the support train. They are positioned in harm's way, as are any military or civilian personnel close to the battlefield. However, the synod/assemblies' declarations clearly assert that God never intended a woman to be a military combatant. Further, we regard these assembly/synod actions to frame the biblical sense of military combatant to be anyone who is involved, accountably and plainly, in seeking the death of enemy personnel.

There are concerns for women in support roles, as in “remote” naval and aviation roles in the military, that must be considered individually and judiciously. Those concerns affect the spiritual life of the female military member or potential member as well as the male member who as commander or subordinate might be expected and required to abstain from acting on his sense of moral obligation to protect women. While these denominational declarations do not forbid women from participating in those remote or support roles, each should evaluate his own circumstances. Military positional requirements should be examined and evaluated in light of the Scriptures elevated by denominational study committees, as well as by the chaplain's independent study. PRJCCMP chaplains should assist men and women, as requested, in their making that evaluation.

2. These declarations provide authority for PRJCCMP chaplains who counsel or advise other military members regarding the use of women in combat.
3. These declarations do not require a PRJCCMP chaplain, who is biblically counseling a military member who has a problem of conscience with women in combat, to advise resignation. Neither do they require a chaplain who has a problem of conscience with women as military combatants to resign.
4. PRJCCMP chaplains should counsel women who are or might be carrying a child in their womb and who intentionally place that child in harm's way to repent and consider the implications of genuine repentance and forgiveness. Counseling should include the father of the baby and the person who knowingly orders that woman into harm's way.
5. The military chaplain is not expected or obliged to preach or impose these biblically derived declarations presumptively upon individual service members. He should be prepared to teach principles from which this finding is derived and to explain and elaborate when particular pastoral guidance is sought by a uniformed service member. As well, the chaplain shall explain the particulars of such pastoral guidance to a uniformed service member's senior in command when asked to do so by a member who is appealing for relief from duties that could compromise behavior by a man toward a woman.
6. With respect to questions of conscience and morals, as in any other difficult and complex ethical problem, it is the duty of any PRJCCMP endorsed chaplain, humbly relying on God's enabling grace, to seek to deal with all the aspects of such a situation in a manner consistent with his ordination vows, regardless of the inherent difficulty.

7. How are chaplains supposed to deal with (including providing counsel) commanders' policies and institutional/state policies as compared to dealing with individual women vis-à-vis the Synod/Assembly actions?

Chaplains have a moral responsibility to be well and carefully informed of the policies and actions of their endorsing church as well as the policies of their parent command and service, and also the appropriate civilian authorities. From the perspective of the PRJCCMP, we believe this includes diligent, thoughtful reading of the actions of the three church bodies on this issue, including the exegetical work. Furthermore, we believe that the obligation of each chaplain is to deal biblically with each counselee, as God will grant him the grace to do so.

For instance, we do not believe any PRJCCMP endorsed chaplain is obligated to inform every female service member he meets of the position of his church on the subject of women as military combatants, any more than he is obligated to inform every service member he meets of his church's stand on baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc. On the other hand, if any one asks for a biblical perspective on any of these subjects, we believe it is the duty of the chaplain to represent his endorsing denomination without fear or dissimulation.

To put it another way, it is the duty of a chaplain to do his own "heavy lifting" beforehand on issues such as women as military combatants, issues which may come up in many different settings. He must think it through with humility, honesty and care, just as he would in explaining why our PRJCCMP denominations do not ordain women. Thus, when asked about the issue of women as military combatants, he can kindly and with sensitivity give the questioner the basic biblical facts and citations to encourage his or her own "heavy lifting."

8. The Commission was also asked: How should chaplains advise their command concerning these Synod/Assembly actions?

When asked, answer honestly. When reporting to the command, during the indoctrination period, inform the senior chaplain and/or C.O. if it appears that there may be an issue. If the issue is discussed in an up-front manner at the beginning of the relationship with the command, the probability of friction diminishes. Informing a command of our commitment to use the name of Jesus Christ in prayer is an analogous issue best addressed before having to force the issue in an actual occasion of public prayer.

9. In light of the Synod/Assembly adopted recommendations, some chaplains have asked what advice they are being "commanded" to give? The answer is "none."

11. A group of chaplains addressed the following related questions to the PRJCCMP: "We felt that the churches will be looking to the PRJCCMP for guidance on this issue. How should they be counseling their members on this issue? Some form of statement would be very beneficial so that ministers can provide the Godly advice as stated in the resolutions. And, if it is the obligation of men to protect women, can the denominational statements be construed to imply that all our young men should enter the military to fulfill their obligation and our young women be counseled on the biblical roles that they can play in the military?"

We do not believe it is the place of the PRJCCMP to instruct churches as to what respective synod/assemblies have said. However, we can provide to those who are interested the narrower application for which the PRJCCMP is responsible. It is not the place of the PRJCCMP to construe denominational statements with respect to these questions outside the responsibilities of the PRJCCMP as set forth in the first sentence of Article II of its Constitution: "The Commission is an agent of its member denominations (not an

ecclesiastical commission in the technical sense), created by them to assist in carrying out their ministries to members of the Armed Forces and other institutions.”

Note on exegesis: The exegetical grounds of the PCA and OPC statements address diverse issues of military combat, such as those raised in Judges 4:4-5:31. Deborah was not a woman in combat. Chaplains and other interested Christians are urged to make use of the careful exegetical work already done by the General Assembly committees that studied the issue. The RPCNA included Scripture references in its declaration. The PCA and OPC published in General Assembly minutes the full majority and minority reports of their study committees, including detailed exegesis.

Adopted 02 March 2004

V. PRAYING IN JESUS' NAME

- A. Today, as never before in our nation's history, there are contentious issues related to the free exercise of religion and the protection of individual civil liberties that challenge United States military chaplains in the conduct of their ministry to members of the Armed Forces.

One high profile issue is the liberty to pray in Jesus' name, in public, non-sectarian settings, and without illegitimate pressures to refrain from doing so, both from within and without the uniformed services. The most common source of those unconstitutional pressures has been some senior chaplains and senior commanders who are fearful of offending others.

The secular settings in which these pressures are growing are settings of religious and cultural diversity commonly referred to as pluralism.

It should be noted that in the context of worship services, conducted in any military setting, the use of Jesus' name in prayers is seldom an issue.

B. Historical Background

Congress established the military chaplaincy to provide for ministry for uniformed Americans in the free exercise of their religion in environments where that exercise would otherwise be impossible or extremely difficult. It is no accident that the first amendment to our Constitution addresses the principle that the government may not establish any religion.

From the beginning of the military chaplaincy, it was understood that the chaplaincy services necessarily included chaplains endorsed by different ecclesiastical bodies. Further, the providential circumstances of remote and/or combat environments required chaplains to provide ministry to those from religious traditions and communities other than their own. It was understood that such ministry was to be offered graciously, respecting the right of recipients to believe differently than the chaplain himself.

Well before the War of Independence, the practice of offering public prayer in non-sectarian environments was a well-established practice. Prayer was commonly offered in local governmental meetings, school classrooms, civic memorial services, and even in Congress itself. For nearly two centuries, few saw this strong tradition of public prayer as a problem, so it was seldom addressed or challenged. In recent decades, that relatively benign situation has changed. Multiple lawsuits and court challenges became a major strategy for those who objected to public prayer at non-sectarian events.

C. Discussion

This development generated a growing debate and conflict when a chaplain was invited to offer public prayer, and did so "in the name of Jesus Christ." The reason this is so contentious is that many non-Christians, and even some churchgoers, rightly regard this phrase as implying that all religions which do not specifically highlight the exclusivity of Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation, are therefore, "wrong." In this, they are eminently correct, from the perspective of those who hold to the Bible as God's inspired Word, and as revealing salvation in Jesus Christ alone. Admittedly, that truth, however circumspectly avoided in direct statement by a discerning chaplain in the wording of his public prayer, in today's politically correct climate, is to invite attack, and, for chaplains, possibly cause damage to their careers.

Where the debate becomes murkier is in the widespread notion that chaplains, offering prayer at public events, should suppress the specific mention of Jesus' name and use generic nomenclature to refer to God. That the specific understanding and intent of a rabbi or imam who would so use their respective traditional names for their god is of no offense to those of anti-Christian bias is scarcely surprising, even though adherents of those faiths also believe theirs is the only true way to Heaven. In the name of "pluralism", chaplains are often pressured by supervisors to restrict the expression of their Christocentric focus and commitment.

Yet, from a constitutional perspective, no governmental entity has the legal authority to tell a chaplain offering prayer, in a public ceremony, what the content of his prayers will be. To do so violates the stringent restrictions on our government to establish a religion of any sort. Governmental attempts at any level to restrict the content of any chaplains' prayer constitute an effort to establish a generic religion, supposedly devoid of theological offense.

In sum, many Christians believe their entire faith and system of belief center in the person, and finished work, of Jesus Christ, of which one of many expressions is offering prayer in His name. Further, for some Christians, refraining from that obedience in such a circumstance constitutes betrayal of their Savior. Nevertheless, recognizing the diversity of an audience in a public setting, we counsel thoughtful language in the use of Jesus' name (e.g., "I pray in Jesus' name" versus "we pray ...") and prefacing public prayer with a statement such as: "I am a Christian Chaplain, and am praying in accordance with my Christian faith"). Thus, chaplains and their endorsing bodies, have a spiritual and constitutional duty, to insist that they not be censored for the use of the name of Jesus Christ in public prayer.

Adopted Mar 06