

Grace Churches International  
mPact Churches  
Military Chaplain Guidelines

*October 2020*

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## I. About Grace Churches International

### Endorser Authorization

Grace Churches International (GCI) is recognized by the Department of Defense as an ecclesiastical endorsing organization that supplies chaplains to the military services in accordance with Department of Defense Directive 1304.19.

GCI is also authorized to endorse chaplains for:

- The Federal Bureau of Prisons
- The Veterans' Administration
- Hospitals
- Corporations

### Theology

GCI embraces Reformed Theology and the full expression of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. Specifically, GCI believes the following:

**God:** There is one living and true God, infinite in glory, wisdom, holiness, justice, power and love, one in His essence but eternally substantial in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**The Bible:** The books which form the canon of the Old and New testaments as originally given are plerarily inspired and free from all error in the whole and in the part. These books constitute the written word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

**Creation:** God sovereignly created the world out of nothing, so that His creation, while wholly dependent upon Him, neither comprises part of God, nor conditions His essential perfection.

**Man:** God created man in His own image, in a state of original righteousness, from which he subsequently fell by a voluntary revolt, and as a consequence is guilty, inherently corrupt, and subject to divine wrath. The unregenerate are totally depraved and do not possess a will free from the dominion of the sin nature.

**Jesus Christ:** Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, possesses all the divine excellencies, being co-substantial and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In His incarnation, He united to His divine nature a true human nature and so continues to be both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, fulfilled the requirements of the law by His sinless life, suffered under Pontius Pilate, poured out His blood as a vicarious and propitiatory atonement for sin in satisfaction of the divine justice, and on the third day was raised from the dead in the same body, now glorified. He ascended into heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father interceding in Glory for His redeemed.

**The Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, through the ministry of regeneration and progressive sanctification applies salvation, guides and comforts the

children of God, directs and empowers the church in fulfillment of the Great Commission, and convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

**Salvation:** Salvation consists of the remission of sins, the impartation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the gift of eternal life and the concomitant blessings thereof, which are a free gift of God, and received by faith alone apart from human works of merit. Even the ability to believe is a gift of God. This blessing in no way relieves men of their responsibility to repent and believe. After repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, the believer is to publicly proclaim his identity with Christ by immersion in water baptism, in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit:** The Lord Jesus Christ baptizes regenerated believers in the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an empowering work of the Spirit which is distinct from the regenerating work of the Spirit which is offered to every Christian.

**Gifts of the Spirit:** All nine gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Cor. 12:4-11 continue to be expressed in the church today and are subject to the order prescribed by Scripture.

**Communion:** Communion is to be taken frequently and offered to all believers except those who are living in unrepentant rebellion or immorality. The communion elements are symbols of Christ's body and blood and are useful to the exercise of faith in the person of Jesus Christ as the only means of absolving guilt, shame, and punishment of sin. In large gatherings, chaplains may "fence" communion by admonishing the congregation regarding biblical standards of conduct.

**The Kingdom of God:** The Kingdom of God is a present reality and a future hope, forcibly advancing through the agency of the church.

**Death:** At death, the souls of the redeemed are made perfect in holiness and immediately enter into the presence of Christ, enjoying conscious fellowship with Him, there to wait the resurrection of the body.

**The Return:** The Lord Jesus Christ will return bodily, visibly, and personally to conform believers to His own image. He will judge the quick and the dead and will effect a final separation of the redeemed and the lost, assigning unbelievers to eternal punishment and believers to eternal glory.

**Congregational Leadership:** While all God's people are called to and gifted for ministry, only men are called as senior pastors. Since this is a frequent role for military chaplains, GCI only endorses men to military chaplaincy.

## **Mission**

GCI recruits, coaches, and mentors chaplains who advance God's Kingdom throughout the United States armed services and other agencies through the proclamation of the gospel, making disciples, and demonstrating the love of Christ.

The GCI endorser team is committed to embracing our chaplains and their families in prayer, pastoral care, and spiritual and professional development.

## II. The Military Chaplaincy

### The Importance of Military Chaplains

Military leaders from General George Washington to General George C. Marshall have recognized the critical importance of military chaplains. Every time Americans have gone to war, chaplains have accompanied soldiers, sailors, marines, (and, since World War II, airmen) into harm's way, shared their dangers and hardships, and brought the Word of God to life-or-death situations. Chaplains enable America's warriors to be morally and spiritually ready to face death, take life, and return from the crucible of combat free from moral injury.

The Department of Defense not only supports the Constitutional requirement for the free exercise of religion, but also recognizes the salutary effect of religion upon soldiers and their families:

Religious participation, attendance and affiliation ... are also historically and empirically recognized as protective factors against risky behaviors such as suicidal behaviors, substance abuse and domestic violence, etc.<sup>1</sup>

GCI chaplains bring an even greater impact through the power of Jesus Christ, bringing the Word of eternal life and the power of the Holy Spirit to those who lay their lives on the line for our nation. While the gospel should never be forced upon members of the armed forces, GCI chaplains provide the finest possible ministry to military personnel, reaching out to all service members and their families.

### The Context of the Military

The United States' armed forces face combat and operational deployments that constantly put them in harm's way. They undergo arduous training to maintain the ability to defeat a wide variety of potential adversaries. This requires service members and their families to leave the communities in which they grew up and develop new relationships within the new community of the military. A military family can expect to change duty stations every two or three years, requiring them to build new friendships often. The full diversity of the American people characterizes military units and installations. About 50% of the military identifies as Protestant or nondenominational Christian, 20% as Roman Catholic, and less than 1% each Jewish, Islamic, Pagan, Buddhist, or Hindu. Nearly 25% have no religious preference.<sup>2</sup> GCI chaplains have the privilege of serving as missionaries to this diverse group of warriors and family members.

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<sup>1</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army. HQDA OPORD Enduring Personal Readiness. (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Pentagon, December 1, 2016), 65.

<sup>2</sup> Jared Besse, "How Religious Is Our Military? 3 Ways Faith and Defending Freedom Go Hand-in-Hand," *First Liberty*, (July 26, 2019), <https://firstliberty.org/news/how-religious-is-our-military/>.

## The Roles of the Chaplain

Chaplains fulfill two roles: staff officer and religious leader. Chaplains serve their commanders by advising them on all matters pertaining to religion, morale, morals and welfare of their unit members/crew and families, ensuring the free exercise of religion for all the servicemembers under their care, and implementing the commander's religious program for the well-being of the command. Depending upon their branch of service, new chaplains may be assigned to commands ranging from an 850-man Army or Marine Corps infantry battalion to a Navy destroyer squadron, an Air Force base support squadron, or a basic training battalion. As religious leaders, GCI chaplains authentically represent the Lord Jesus Christ as Christian Ministers, strengthening the living, caring for the wounded and honoring the dead as they provide life-giving counsel, prayer, pastoral care, and religious services.

## III. Guidance for Chaplains

### Standards of Conduct

GCI chaplains must live their personal and professional lives with the highest standards of Christian integrity, guarding their hearts and minds, refraining from conduct that would bring reproach to the name of Christ, and possessing a personal character that agrees in all aspects with their ministry. GCI chaplains will exercise sound judgment in counseling, visiting, communicating and traveling with anyone of the opposite sex in order to guard against any perception of impropriety. GCI Chaplains will also adhere to the "Covenant and Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces" (Appendix A). The GCI Endorsing Agent is available to discuss interpretations of this document should there be any concerns regarding implementation within the military context.

### Spiritual Disciplines

Due to the hardships and temptations inherent in military ministry, the military chaplain must ensure that "his piety be vigorous" lest he find his spiritual impact diminished and the cause of Christ brought into disrepute.<sup>3</sup> GCI Chaplains and candidates will deliberately carve out time with the Lord daily to pray, read the Bible, and worship. These activities should flow from the abundance of what God has already done and should draw the individual into an ever-deepening relationship with God. GCI chaplains will remain connected to the Body of Christ through a local chapel or church and maintain an accountability relationship with an mPact-affiliated church regarding their walk with the Lord.

### Theological Integrity

GCI chaplains must be mature, prudent leaders who provide proper pastoral care to their units in an arena sometimes hostile to Christianity. They must work cooperatively with clergy of other faith groups without compromising GCI's theological position. Though regulations protect the conscience of chaplains, ministry in a pluralistic environment requires GCI chaplains to guard

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<sup>3</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 13-15.

their theological integrity.<sup>4</sup> GCI chaplains never cease to be ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Although we extend dignity, love, and compassion to everyone, GCI chaplains will not:

Conduct, assist or support any training event, service or ceremony, or engage in speech or actions, that could be reasonably construed as affirming homosexuality, transgenderism, sexual immorality, or other unbiblical conduct.

Officiate, participate in, or attend a marriage or union ceremony for any couple that is contrary to the biblical model of marriage of one man and one woman.

Provide any pre-marital or marital counseling and/or marriage enrichment training in support of a union that is contrary to the biblical model of one man and one woman.

Serve on staff of a chapel with a chaplain whose preaching or lifestyle is inconsistent with biblical morality.

Serve on chapel staff with a non-trinitarian chaplain.

All military chaplains are endorsed to ensure the free exercise of religion for all military personnel according to DoD 1304.28, par. 6.1.3. As such, GCI chaplains remain protected under DoD policy and applicable federal law to preach, teach and counsel in accordance with the tenets of their faith and consciences. Therefore, GCI chaplains will:

Conduct religious support and pastoral care in accordance to the guidelines contained in this document.

Preach and teach the whole counsel of God faithfully, maintaining forms of prayer, worship, preaching, and Bible studies regardless of societal pressures.

Provide sound Biblical pastoral care and counseling for all service members and their families, making those they counsel aware of this from the beginning.

Affirm the historic, natural and Biblical view of marriage as the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenantal relationship for life, and that God designed the sexual relationship to occur within the bounds of such a union.

When appropriate, refer service members to chaplains and religious leaders who can meet religious needs outside the scope of GCI practice.

Treat all service members regardless of rank or behavior with Christ-centered dignity, honor and respect.

## Performing and Providing Religious Support

GCI chaplains perform ministry in accordance with the tenets of their faith. When faced with the need to support individuals outside of GCI theological practices, the GCI Chaplain provides, within the confines of good order and discipline, the means for the individual to exercise his or her faith. For example, a GCI chaplain may coordinate a Roman Catholic priest to administer mass or may identify a Muslim soldier to lead Jum'u'ah prayers. By coordinating with other chaplains and religious leaders, GCI chaplains fulfill their staff responsibility to ensure free exercise while guarding their own theological integrity.

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<sup>4</sup> For example: "Chaplains will not be required to perform or participate in religious services, rites, sacraments, ordinances, and other religious ministrations when such participation would be at variance with the tenets of their religion or their endorser policies." Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Army Regulation 165-1: Army Chaplain Corps Activities* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Pentagon, June 20, 2015), 9.



## Professionalism

As professional military officers, GCI chaplains should model military bearing, physical fitness, mental toughness, leadership, and mental agility. This is an integral part of becoming part of the military culture and multiplies ministry impact.

## IV. Relationships

### God

The Triune God is at the core of our identity as Christians and as ministers. As stated above, GCI chaplains must carve out daily time to foster their connection with God. Chaplains must go to the well of God's intimacy so they can minister from the overflow of His Spirit.

### Family

Chaplains must pay close attention to their marriages and family relationships. Marriage requires constant maintenance and an attitude of self-sacrifice, especially when faced with deployments and the other demands of the military. Parenting requires similar commitments. GCI encourages its chaplain families not to voluntarily undergo geographic separation if possible.

### Local Church

GCI Chaplains will have an ongoing relationship with an mPact-affiliated church. Also, GCI encourages active duty chaplains to immerse themselves in the installation chapel program and build authentic, life-giving Christian community. mPact Churches' website provides contact information for churches across the United States at <https://www.mpactchurches.com/churches>.

### GCI

The GCI endorsing agent is the primary individual who interacts on a regular basis with GCI chaplains. The GCI endorsing board, consisting of other individuals appointed to serve in that capacity, supports the GCI chaplains through prayer.

### Commanders

Military chaplains normally work for and advise their commanders. As a staff officer, the chaplain implements the commander's religious plan for the well-being of the unit. He performs and provides religious support and pastoral care to the command, staff, and unit members, as well as their families. The commander also will expect the chaplain to be a man of convictions who advises him in a forthright, logical, and tactful manner.

### Chaplain Technical Chain

Supervisory chaplains coach, teach and mentor their subordinate unit chaplains. GCI chaplains are committed to effective working relationships with other chaplains and should strive to develop reputations as team players with their fellow staff officers and other chaplains. GCI

chaplains are encouraged to seek chaplain mentors from those senior to them, regardless of denomination, in order to grow professionally.

## Chaplain Branch

Like all chaplains, GCI chaplains are subject to the needs of the service. It is wise to cultivate good working relationships across one's branch and ensure one's career manager knows one's desires for assignment, at the same time trusting God to place us where we can make the desired impact for His Kingdom.

## Other Chaplains

GCI chaplains should prioritize developing mutually supportive friendships with other Godly chaplains and their families. These friendships will often last for one's entire career and provide much-needed support and counsel. Often GCI chaplains will be the only one of our fellowship at a given installation. When the opportunity presents itself to fellowship with other GCI Chaplains it should be embraced with regular commitments for friendship, accountability, and support. The annual GCI chaplain training is an event to cultivate these relationships as well. Every effort should be made to attend this annual training.

# V. Endorsement Requirements and Ministry Options

## DoD Requirements for Military Chaplains and Candidates

These requirements are outlined in DOD instruction 1304.28, dated 11 June 2004.<sup>5</sup>

### Chaplain Requirements (Army, Navy, and Air Force Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard)

- Ordained minister of an mPact Church or one recognized by mPact.
- Valid GCI endorsement.
- 120 semester hour undergraduate degree from an accredited institution.
- Master of divinity/theology degree of at least 72 hours from an accredited institution.
- Citizen of the United States.
- Pass the National Agency Check for a security clearance.
- Pass Armed Forces physical exam.
- Willingness to provide or coordinate programs for individuals of all faiths.
- Two years' pastoral ministry with experience in conducting baptisms, communion services, weddings, funerals, and grief counseling (Active Duty).
- Have experience or currently be engaged in pastoral ministry (Reserves and National Guard).
- Meet age requirements for specific branch:
  - Army: Be between 18-36 years of age at time of commissioning.
  - Navy: Be 21 years of age and be able to complete 20 years of service.
  - Air Force: Be less than 35 years of age at time of appointment.

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<sup>5</sup> Headquarters, Department of Defense, "Department of Defense Instruction 1304.28, Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments," (Washington, DC: Pentagon, June 11, 2004), 3-5.

**Chaplain Candidate Program:**

- Be a full-time graduate student at an accredited seminary or theological school.
- Ordination is not required.
- Meet age requirements for specific branch:
  - Army: Be between 18-36 years of age at time of commissioning.
  - Navy: Be 21 years of age and be able to complete 20 years of service.
  - Air Force: Be less than 35 years of age at time of appointment.

**GCI Requirements for Military Chaplains and Candidates**

In addition to the DOD chaplain requirements, GCI requires the following:

- Be a man who demonstrates a call to ministry through a track record of proven character and ministry impact.
- Establish and maintain an accountability relationship with an mPact church that addresses one's personal and family life as well as conduct of ministry.
- A completed application for endorsement, available on the mPact Churches website: [www.mpactchurches.org/chaplains](http://www.mpactchurches.org/chaplains).
- Complete an interview in person or through the use of visual electronic media. If the candidate is married, his wife must also complete an interview.
- Be ready to pass the applicable service's physical fitness test by a comfortable margin.
- Army: [https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/acft/fy20\\_standards.pdf](https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/acft/fy20_standards.pdf)
- Navy: <https://www.navy-prt.com/>
- Marine Corps: <https://www.fitness.marines.mil/Portals/211/FitnessCalc/calc.html>
- Air Force: <https://airforce-pt.com/>
- Two years of paid ministry experience preaching, baptizing, conducting funerals and weddings, counseling, and the other practical skills required of a minister.

In addition to DOD chaplain candidate requirements, GCI requires that the candidate:

- Be actively serving at an mPact church or a church approved by the GCI endorser.
- Be a man of Christian character.
- Be ready to pass the applicable service's physical fitness test.

**Call to Full-Time Ministry**

The one considering the military chaplaincy must first understand his own sense of calling as a minister. One's identity must be grounded in Jesus Christ and the fact that God Himself owns us. This foundation enables one to handle crises and circumstances of life even in the midst of pain, disappointment and suffering. The call to full-time ministry must be confirmed by ministry experience that shows godly character, theological integrity, and ministry competence as observed by church eldership.

**Call to Military Chaplaincy**

The call to chaplaincy is a missionary calling, requiring one to embrace a different culture, the military. This requires sacrifices from wives and children who experience the military culture alongside the chaplain. The GCI chaplain family trusts the sovereignty of God so that even in the

midst of multiple moves and less than desirable circumstances they model Godly values. Both the chaplain and his wife must embrace this calling and challenge their children to do so as well.

## **Endorsement**

Endorsement as a chaplain candidate is the official statement of GCI indicating the applicant is in seminary, a candidate for ordination, and is authorized to represent mPact Churches as a military chaplain candidate.

Once a candidate is ordained and meets all requirements, GCI may endorse him as a chaplain. The military requires separate levels of endorsement for the reserve components, for initial active duty, and for continuing on active duty indefinitely.

Ecclesiastical endorsement is the official statement from GCI indicating the individual is an ordained minister in good standing, is qualified morally, intellectually, emotionally, and doctrinally, and has been chosen to represent mPact Churches to the military.

GCI provides the initial endorsement only after a personal interview and the members of the GCI Endorsement Board have approved the application. GCI periodically reviews endorsements and can normally endorse a chaplain from one level to another (reserve components to active duty, for example) without redoing the formal interview process.

Chaplains can change ecclesiastical endorsement to or from another church body for a variety of reasons. Any transfer of endorsement to another organization requires the chaplain to inform their current endorsing agent. As a general rule, GCI requires a 90-day transition period for transfer of endorsement to or from another religious ecclesiastical body.

In the event that an endorsed chaplain violates a law (local, state, or federal, including Uniform Code of Military Justice), professional ethic, or moral standard that would be an embarrassment to the cause of Christ, disciplinary action may be in order. In all cases GCI desires repentance and restoration, but such situations may call for the withdrawal of a chaplain's endorsement.

## **Chaplain Ministry Options**

### **Chaplain Candidate Program**

The chaplain candidate program helps candidates confirm their calling to the chaplaincy. It allows seminarians to receive commissions as junior officers in the Army, Air Force, or Navy, attend the chaplain basic officer course of the appropriate service, and experience on-the-job internship training at an armed forces installation. Candidates receive military pay and benefits while on active duty orders. Many seminaries accept the chaplain basic officer course as elective credit and recognize the internship as a culminating experience for the MDiv. To enter the program, candidates must be accepted at an approved seminary and apply for endorsement with GCI. The GCI endorser may visit candidates at seminaries to encourage and give briefings on the program.

## Reserves and National Guard

Service as a chaplain in either the Reserves or National Guard requires an endorsement. GCI has similar requirements for reservists, guardsmen, and active duty chaplains. Reservists and guardsmen have a special call because they often serve mPact Churches congregations while serving their units. The chaplain's congregation must fully understand and accept his commitment to the chaplaincy. Appendix C, *Guidelines for Congregations with Reserve Chaplains*, provides assistance in this regard.

## Active Duty

Active duty chaplains are full-time military officers. Federal laws mandate the conduct of divine services on ships and military installations, and the Army requires chaplains to support installation chapel programs. GCI encourages active duty chaplains to immerse themselves in installation chapel ministries as life-giving leaders, building genuine Christian community in the chapel setting. GCI expects active duty chaplains to be part of the Christian community at their duty station and also maintain a relationship with their sponsoring mPact- church.

## Commissioning Service

The mPact- affiliated church that has sponsored the newly appointed chaplain will normally conduct a commissioning service to recognize the calling and significant milestone of becoming a military chaplain. This service also reinforces the relationship between the chaplain and his sponsoring church. The GCI endorser will take part in this service.

## Ministry Life Cycle

The normal pattern for chaplains is that they enter the military from local church ministry and return to local church ministry. As a chaplain prepares to depart the service through voluntary separation or retirement, he should consult the GCI endorser and his mPact-affiliated church regarding possibilities for continuing service in advancing God's Kingdom.

# VI. Additional Expectations

## Finances

GCI is self-funded through its chaplains and candidates. The GCI Endorser must attend conferences required by the armed services as well as travel to provide pastoral care for GCI chaplains and their families. While there is no mandatory percentage, many GCI chaplains direct 40% of their tithe in support of GCI. Anyone may provide tax-deductible support to GCI by mailing checks to GCI Chaplaincy, 5117 Cliffdale Rd., Fayetteville, NC 28314, or through the secure PayPal link found at <https://www.mpactchurches.com/chaplains>.

## Endorser Training Conferences

The GCI Endorsing Agent provides annual opportunities for GCI chaplain professional development training. These events provide personal ministry, professional development, and

opportunities to build mutually supportive friendships. GCI chaplains will make every attempt to attend. Because this is a professional requirement, commanders should fund this travel through unit funds. GCI will provide letters requiring attendance that serve as justification for TDY requests. Chaplains should notify the endorser if mission requirements preclude attendance.

### **Reporting and Communication**

GCI requires a semi-annual report. A copy of this report, with submission instructions, is found at Appendix B. Chaplains are also encouraged to submit articles and photographs illustrating their ministry. Additionally, chaplains and candidates may share confidential prayer requests to provide the endorser the opportunity to provide pastoral support during critical and challenging circumstances. Chaplains and candidates should immediately notify the endorser for prayer and assistance if they:

- Experience a death of serious illness/injury in the family.
- Face UCMJ, a commander's inquiry, or an Inspector General complaint.
- Experience any situation where they are pressured to compromise Christian doctrine or moral teaching.

### **Endorser Visits**

The GCI endorsing board requires the endorser to visit active-duty GCI Chaplains. Ideally, active duty chaplains can expect a visit during a given tour at an installation. The purpose of the visit is to affirm the ministry of the chaplain and provide pastoral support as it is needed. Normally the endorser will strive to meet supervisory chaplain and appropriate commander as well. Overseas, endorsers travel under official DOD recognition as GS-16 equivalents and normally receive protocol treatment. It is always prudent to notify the senior supervisory chaplain and the installation/ship commander of the endorser's visit

### **Adopt a Chaplain Program**

GCI places much emphasis on GCI chaplains having a relationship with an mPact-affiliated church. If an applicant seeking GCI endorsement does not have a current relationship with an mPact-affiliated church, the GCI will provide the individual with potential churches who have expressed a desire to serve in this capacity. It is incumbent on the individual to make contact and establish the relationship.

## Appendices

### A. The Covenant and the Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces

#### The Covenant

Having accepted God's call to minister to people who serve in the armed forces of our country, I covenant to serve God and these people with God's help: to deepen my obedience to the commandments, to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. In affirmation of this commitment I will abide by the Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all public actions set forth in our code of ethics.

#### The Code of Ethics

I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of my religious body.

I will carefully adhere to whatever direction may be conveyed to me by my endorsing body for maintenance of my endorsement.

I understand as a chaplain in the armed forces that I must function in a pluralistic environment with chaplains of other religious bodies to provide for ministry to all military personnel and their families entrusted to my care.

I will seek to provide pastoral care and ministry to persons of religious bodies other than my own within my area of responsibility with the same investment of myself as I give to members of my own religious body. I will work collegially with chaplains of religious bodies other than my own as together we seek to provide as full a ministry as possible to our people. I will respect the beliefs and traditions of my colleagues and those to whom I minister. When conducting services of worship that include persons of other than my religious body I will draw upon those beliefs, principles, and practices that we have in common.

I will, if in a supervisory position, respect the practices and beliefs of each chaplain I supervise, and exercise care not to require of them any service or practice that would be in violation of the faith practices of their particular religious body.

I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues throughout the military environment.

I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, and regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for professional and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.

I will recognize that my obligation is to provide ministry to all members of the military services, their families, and other authorized personnel. When on active duty, I will only accept added

responsibility in civilian work or ministry if it does not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my primary military ministry.

I will defend my colleagues against unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion or national origin.

I will hold in confidence all privileged and confidential communication.

I will respect all persons of other religious faiths. I will respond to any expressed need for spiritual guidance and pastoral care to those who seek my counsel.

I will show personal love for God in my life and ministry, as I maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the profession to which I have been called.

I recognize the special power afforded me by my ministerial office. I will never use that power in ways that violate the personhood of another human being, religiously, emotionally or sexually. I will use my pastoral office only for that which is best for the persons under my ministry.

Adopted by the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, January 2011.



**B. Semi-Annual Report**

**SEMIANNUAL REPORT FOR GCI CHAPLAINS**

**Reporting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **RANK/GRADE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **OFFICE PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CELL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **HOME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SPOUSE NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_, **DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SPOUSE EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ANNIVERSARY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCAL CHURCH HOME:** \_\_\_\_\_

Are you in contact with your home church?  Yes  No

Who do you consider to be your pastor? \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information for your pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

**BRANCH/SERVICE AREA:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATUS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT DUTY STATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**UNIT/ORGANIZATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPERVISORY CHAPLAIN NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**COMMANDER'S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**DUTY ASSIGNMENT** (title; brief *description of responsibilities*):

**PRAISE REPORTS:**

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

**SIGNIFICANT EVENTS TO REPORT FROM THE PAST 6 MONTHS:**

**GOALS FOR MINISTRY IN THE COMING YEAR:**

**DESCRIBE BRIEFLY YOUR DEVOTIONAL LIFE. WHAT IS GOD SPEAKING TO YOU ABOUT YOUR WIFE, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR MINISTRY?**

**SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR ENDORSER:**

**Do you expect to move in the next year?  Yes  No**

**If yes, when & where do you expect to move?**

### C. Guidelines for Congregations with Reserve or National Guard Chaplains

GCI encourages mPact-affiliated churches whose pastors or associate pastors are members of the reserve components (Reserves or National Guard) to facilitate their ministry in the armed forces. Ministry to the armed forces is a direct response to the Great Commission and an extension of the congregation's mission outreach. Such cooperation by congregation and pastor is also a tangible contribution of Christian citizenship that facilitates the free exercise of religion.

The reserve component service of our pastors and staff also results in concrete benefits to the individual church. Pastors selected for the chaplaincy receive training and professional development from the military that makes them better leaders, planners, and administrators. These skills are of great value at local and national levels for equipping the church to maximize her response to ministry opportunities. Congregations also derive direct benefits from their service through cyclical pastoral revitalization, continued advanced training, professional development, and the exchange of ideas with other clergy, which often results in new insights for more effective ministry.

This ministry does, however, require a significant obligation from the chaplain, his family, and the church in the face of mobilization. Reserve components augment active duty forces on short notice during a national emergency. This obligation and the need for stability within the church demand that both the congregation and the pastor plan together to reap the benefits of an expanded ministry and prepare in advance to meet its potential obligations in an orderly fashion. As a "mobilization asset," the reserve component chaplain is legally required and conscience-bound to report for active duty.

The military training of reserve component chaplains is conducted through a combination of schooling and inactive duty and active duty training assignments that proceed through the years in a predictable order that allows one to plan in advance. These planned absences provide for ministry opportunities within the pastoral staff and the congregation. The reserve component chaplain, in consultation with his congregational leadership, should prepare a document of understanding, or a mobilization agreement, that details the arrangements under which the pastor participates in the reserve component chaplaincy. A sample mobilization agreement is outlined in Section VII below. It is the pastor's responsibility to guide the development of this plan and see to its annual review.

Participation in the reserve component chaplaincy necessitates regular communications with and reporting as required to the GCI endorser and the military service involved.

A pastor in the reserve component chaplaincy, like active duty chaplains, has been specially selected by GCI for his pastoral skills and abilities to serve in the unique military environment. Because the pastor/chaplain can only serve in the military with the endorsement of GCI, chaplains at all times serve as representatives and missionaries of the church when in uniform. He must attend a variety of regularly scheduled training periods each year as well as periodic schools and conferences of longer duration, and if required, deploy for combat operations. The guidelines that follow will attempt to address each of these requirements.

## I. Basic Schooling.

A. Following endorsement by GCI and joining the Reserve component of choice, the pastor attends a basic chaplain school. Schools range in length from eight to twelve weeks, are often attended in segments, with class dates offered throughout the year. Sometimes this school can be completed in subsequent summers. The pastor should explore the options offered and in advance reach an agreement with the church as to the most desirable option available.

B. Federal law prohibits requiring a Reservist to use vacation time for the performance of mandated Reserve military duty. The congregation and pastor should agree in advance as to whether he will be granted a leave of absence without pay for the schooling period, during which time the congregation would pay for interim pastoral services, or whether he will be granted leave with pay, which would necessitate the pastor paying for interim coverage.

## II. Inactive Duty Training.

A. The regular time commitment is two days per month for “drill.” Depending upon unit, assignment, and location, these days are usually performed together on one weekend. Exact arrangements vary widely depending on military branch, regional regulations, and unit structures. Some commands of the Reserves have regulations that allow the pastor of a Christian congregation to perform drill on a day other than Sunday.

B. Inactive duty training is often at a nearby Armed Forces facility, but can also be located at distances requiring travel time. Location is usually decided by the exact “billet,” job, or position that the chaplain holds at a given time. The pastor should exercise care and negotiate advance agreements with his congregation related to travel time and drill days.

C. If the pastor holds a pay billet and is away for drill on a Sunday, it is generally expected that he will pay for the required pulpit coverage at his congregation. Advance agreement in detail on this matter is very important.

D. The ministry and needs of the congregation are to remain top priority in the life and planning of the drilling Reserve component chaplain/pastor.

## III. Active Duty for Training.

A. Active duty for training is a commitment of fourteen to seventeen days per year, performed within the fiscal year which runs from October 1 to the following September 30. Duty assignments and dates vary greatly with the needs of the service, but are usually published in advance and available throughout the year. The pastor is expected to do advance planning and coordination to minimize any negative impact of annual active duty upon the parish schedule.

B. Since federal law prohibits requiring a Reservist to use vacation time for the performance of mandated Reserve military duty, the church and pastor should agree in advance as to whether he will be granted a leave of absence without pay for the active duty period, during which time the congregation would pay for interim pastoral services, or whether he will be granted leave with pay, which would necessitate the pastor paying for interim coverage. Financial determinations are usually based on the particular circumstances of the pastor and congregation.

C. The pastor should make advanced detailed arrangements for coverage of routine church responsibilities as well as emergency pastoral and contingency needs during active duty. It is strongly recommended that the arrangements be written and distributed to all concerned.

IV. Additional days for military schooling, other temporary active duty, etc.

A. Whether the temporary active duty orders are “voluntary” or not, there are periods of time, including military schools, conferences, etc., when the pastor/chaplain will be expected to be on orders from the military. Taking such opportunities and the subsequent time away from the church should be arranged by mutual agreement.

B. When the salary is continued it is recommended that the pastor/chaplain make remuneration for pulpit supply and/or emergency pastoral coverage, for periods other than annual training (AT).

C. If the pastor/chaplain elects to use earned vacation for such training, the substitute pastor should be paid by the congregation. Advance arrangements should be made for pastoral coverage and, again, it is strongly recommended that the arrangements be written and distributed to all concerned.

V. Mobilization - Nine (9) months or less. The following actions are recommended:

A. The calling entity should grant a leave of absence for the expected period of time contained in the call-up orders (it might be wise to have such a resolution in place in order to avoid the necessity of a special meeting; a provision that the Board of Elders or some other body be notified immediately should be part of that resolution).

B. The congregation can make arrangements for an interim pastor to assist the congregation during the period of the pastor's absence. The interim pastor can then perform pastoral duties such as hospital calls, shut-in visits, evangelism contacts, weddings, etc., so that ministry to and with the people of God may continue.

C. The salary and any allowances of the pastor/chaplain should cease at the time of reporting for active duty, and the interim pastor's remuneration should begin.

D. While on leave of absence, the pastor/chaplain's housing allotment should continue until the military housing allowance is activated (normally about 30 days). If the

pastor/chaplain and family live in a parsonage the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), less the cost of family paid utilities, should be offered to the calling entity as rent for use of the parsonage.

VI. Mobilization - More than nine (9) months. At “call up,” when mobilization is begun, the duration of the emergency is usually uncertain and the emotional climate extremely volatile. It is, therefore, most important that a well thought out and carefully constructed contingency plan of action to be taken by both the pastor and congregation be in place. A sample outline is provided in Section VII below. It is strongly recommended that this document be reviewed and updated annually. As a minimum the following areas of concern should be addressed:

A. Actions by the Pastor.

1. He should immediately notify the GCI Endorsing Agent and the church leaders. As time permits he should assist in making these arrangements.
2. He should review the “Reserve Chaplaincy Agreement and Contingency Planning Document” (MOB Agreement) with the church leadership and also reprise the Circuit Counselor and District representative on its contents and agreements.
3. If there is a parsonage, the military housing allowance, less the cost of family paid utilities, should be paid monthly to the congregation as rent for the quarters.
4. He should make time to spend with his family, complete last minute personal arrangements (major needs should already be met in pre-mobilization preparedness planning), and maintain close contact with congregational leaders as circumstances develop.
5. During mobilization he should stay in contact with the congregation's leadership as well as the GCI Chaplain Endorser, to share information as the situation clarifies.
6. Should active duty extend beyond nine months, it is recommended that he and the GCI Chaplain Endorser review his call to the local congregation. If there is likelihood that the chaplaincy will be his full time ministry for an extended period of time, a peaceful release may be indicated. Such action provides the congregation the freedom to make more permanent arrangements to meet its pastoral care needs.

B. Actions by the Congregation's Leadership.

1. Review the “Reserve Chaplaincy Agreement and Contingency Planning Document” with the pastor and establish contact with the GCI Endorsing Agent.
2. Provide assistance and support to the pastor and his family as needed.
3. Through the appropriate board or committee, direct the completion of arrangements to cover the pastoral needs of the church during this period of mobilization.

4. If there is a parsonage, the pastor's family should remain in it until a new pastor is called. When military housing allowance is paid, that amount, less the cost of family paid utilities, should be received monthly by the church as rent.

VII. Reserve Chaplaincy Agreement and Contingency Planning Document. While the actual format may vary widely, at a minimum, the following areas should be specifically addressed:

A. Origin and Review Record. Date the document was created; name of the approving board and date; date of last review.

B. Title. A clear statement that this is the document of (name of) church's contingency planning for pastoral ministry in the event of Pastor's (name) mobilization as a military chaplain.

C. Purpose. A summary statement that Pastor (name) is a member of the (service branch) Ready Reserve. As such, he must be prepared for recall to active duty in the event of war or national emergency. This document reflects previously agreed upon actions and contingency plans to be followed in the event of mobilization for the continuation of the pastoral ministry here and for the provision of assistance to the pastor's family.