The Southern Baptist Endorsement Manual for Chaplains:
Policies, Guidelines and Practices for Chaplains

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NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO SBC CHAPLAINCY

Mission

The Chaplaincy Team of the North American Mission Board partners with local Southern Baptist churches, local Southern Baptist associations, and state or regional Southern Baptist conventions, and various agencies and institutions.

• To endorse Southern Baptists called to the chaplaincy ministry for the proclamation of the gospel;
• To embrace our chaplains and their families in prayer and pastoral care;
• To educate our congregations on the ministry of the chaplaincy;
• To promote to our congregations how to minister to the military;
• To engage our pastors and denominational leaders on an intentional strategy in support of our chaplains and our military families; and
• To enlist our chaplains for local church involvement and ministries.

Vision

Because we know that God is at work in the world to bring people into relationship with Himself through Jesus Christ, the Chaplaincy Team is dedicated to being on the front line of the advancement of chaplaincy
into the 21st century. The Chaplaincy Team will work in cooperative partnerships with SBC churches and organizational agencies

- To provide the best qualified chaplains;
- To advance the Christian witness in specialized settings of ministry; and
- To support SBC endorsed chaplains through prayer, pastoral care, training, and resources.

**Guiding Principles for SBC Chaplaincy**

**Obedience**
In response to the Great Commission and God’s call upon the lives of Southern Baptists to the chaplaincy ministry, the SBC will encourage local churches to engage those considering the chaplaincy to initiate the endorsement process. This endeavor will include educational and ministerial formation through faithfulness to the Word of God and maintenance of a well-balanced and integrated lifestyle.

**Partnership**
The NAMB Chaplaincy Team exists to partner with individuals, pastors, local churches, associations, state conventions, using agencies, professional chaplaincy associations, and certifying organizations in the development and support of chaplains through resourcing, equipping, strengthening, and serving each of our partners.

**Cooperation**
The NAMB Chaplaincy Team cooperates with those who invite chaplaincy into their organization as an essential element for the development and support of chaplaincy.

**Stewardship**
The NAMB Chaplaincy Team will be good stewards of the people, time, and fiscal resources entrusted to them for the furtherance of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and for ministry to persons in the name of Jesus Christ.
NAMB Staff Organization

The organizational structure of NAMB is designed to support three primary tasks: evangelism, church planting, and compassion. Every activity and process of NAMB undergirds all these functions.

Presently, five groups form the basic organizational structure of NAMB: Send Network, Send Relief, Evangelism & Leadership, Shared Services, and President’s Office. Within each group there are teams, and within each team there may be units. The NAMB Chaplaincy Team is assigned to the President’s Office for administrative purposes and is under the direct supervision of the NAMB executive vice president. Chaplaincy Team personnel are selected through an administrative process and serve for an indefinite period of time.

Territory

NAMB’s geographical area of ministry responsibility includes the United States, the territories of the United States, and Canada.

The Chaplains Commission, comprised of trustees appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention to NAMB, will endorse chaplains to using agencies within this geographic area. However, chaplains may find themselves serving throughout the world by virtue of their employment with an agency whose territory is worldwide (e.g., military chaplaincy).
The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is a cooperative group of local Baptist churches who have joined together “for the purpose of eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the Baptist denomination of Christians, for the propagation of the Gospel, any law, usage, or custom to the contrary notwithstanding.” In 1941 the SBC directed the Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board) to establish the Chaplains Commission as the primary executive agency for approving Southern Baptists seeking endorsement to serve as Southern Baptist chaplains. A growing number of agencies and institutions with chaplaincy programs, including the federal government, require an endorsement document from a recognized faith group or denomination.

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) was founded in 1998 through a restructuring that combined the Brotherhood Commission, the Radio and Television Commission, and the Home Mission Board. The Chaplaincy Team is organized within the President’s Office of NAMB. The mission, vision, and guiding principles of the Chaplaincy Team are derived from the mission and vision assigned to NAMB by the SBC.

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History of Chaplains Commission

Southern Baptist involvement in chaplaincy ministries dates back to 1847 when the pastor of a Hampton, Virginia, Baptist church was called to serve as the chaplain of the University of Virginia. Further involvement came during the Civil War as pastors and churches ministered and evangelized among the Confederate troops. The 1863 minutes of the SBC demonstrate the support of chaplaincy among military forces. Religious work was carried on among soldiers in a number of states. At the close of the war, the Domestic Mission Board of the SBC reported, “This has been a prolific field of ministerial effort. It would be gratifying to all the friends of Jesus to read the many letters we have received from chaplains and missionaries employed among the soldiers of the armies ....”

Southern Baptist ministers continued to respond to the call for military chaplains as they were recruited by the military. As World War I began, the following is found in the 1917 SBC minutes:

As the country is now greatly increasing its military, naval and aviation forces and will probably continue to increase them for some time, it is plain that the services of many ministers will be needed in the chaplaincy. The Home Mission Board is instructed to use its best endeavors to stimulate and cultivate the interest of our people in this matter and to care for the interests of the denomination as may be necessary. The co-operation of the State Boards is also earnestly requested in the task of finding and recommending men suited to this responsible work.

During the intervening years between World War I and II, the SBC sought to engage in military chaplaincy ministry through the work of the Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains. This committee was appointed by the Executive Committee, SBC, and was located in Washington, D.C. Just prior to United States entry into World War II the Executive Committee recommended to the SBC that the responsibility for endorsement of chaplains be designated to the Home Mission Board (HMB). The action of the messengers at the convention reads:

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2 Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention 1866, Russellville, KY, May 22-26, 1866 (Richmond: Dispatch Steam Presses, 1866), 40.

We further recommend that Southern Baptists make direct contact with the Government in the appointment of chaplains from our denomination and that the Home Mission Board be designated as an agent to make this contact through a duly appointed representative, in fullest cooperation with other religious bodies, and, further, that all recommendations and endorsements for chaplains from Southern Baptists be made by the Home Mission Board to the Government.

Wishing to maintain the most fraternal and co-operative relationship with the other evangelical bodies, the SBC shall through its Committee appointed by the Home Mission Board retain its membership on the General Commission of Army and Navy Chaplains, provided the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains shall continue to exercise its autonomy. Should the General Commission lose its autonomy, then the Committee appointed by the Home Board shall be instructed to seek a consultative membership on the General Commission of Army and Navy Chaplains.  

Following this meeting, the HMB established a committee to handle the endorsement function of the Board. This committee retained the name Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains. Dr. Alfred Carpenter, pastor at Blytheville, Arkansas, became the first “superintendent” for the work of chaplaincy.

A recommendation was presented and adopted at the 1949 SBC:

That for the sake of clarity the Convention change its terminology and that the Convention recognize the Chaplains Commission, SBC, established by the Home Mission Board, as having all of the powers and responsibilities committed to the Chaplains Committee by the Convention in 1941 as follows:

“(1) That the religious work in connection with the army camps, navy bases, marine corps stations, air corps, and C.C.C. Camps be assigned to the Home Mission Board, with the understanding that the Board will work in co-operation with the State Mission Boards.

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4 Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention 1941, Birmingham, AL, May 14-18, 1941 (Nashville: Executive Committee, SBC 1941), 52-53.
(2) We further recommend that Southern Baptist make direct contact with the government in the appointment of chaplains from our denomination and that the Home Mission Board be designated as an agent to make this contact through a duly appointed representative, in fullest co-operation with other religious bodies, and, further, that all recommendations and endorsements for chaplains from Southern Baptist be made by the Home Mission Board to the Government.

‘Wishing to maintain the most fraternal and co-operative relationship with other evangelical bodies, the SBC shall through its Committee appointed by the Home Mission Board retain its membership on the General Commission of Army and Navy Chaplains, provided the General Commission on Army and Navy shall continue to exercise its autonomy. Should the General Commission lose its autonomy, then the Committee appointed by the Home Mission Board shall be instructed to seek a consultative membership on the General Commission of Army and Navy Chaplains,’ and that we recognize the right of this Commission to designate itself as the Chaplains Commission, SBC, of the Southern Baptist Convention.”

Relationship to Southern Baptists

The Chaplains Commission, SBC, derives its charter and mission from the executive action of the SBC. Today, trustees elected by the SBC to serve on the North American Mission Board are appointed by the chairman of the NAMB Board of Trustees to serve on the Chaplains Commission.

The NAMB Chaplaincy Team carries out the policies and guidelines of the Chaplains Commission. The Chaplaincy Team is organizationally a part of the President’s Office, NAMB, and provides support and training to endorsed persons under the organizational processes of NAMB.

The ministry of chaplains is supported by Southern Baptists through a network of individuals that includes the Chaplains Commission, SBC, the Chaplaincy Team, Chaplain Ambassadors, state/regional convention

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chaplaincy representatives, local associations, and local churches. The connection among these persons provides for ongoing support, encouragement, challenge, and fostering of chaplaincy.

**Chaplains Commission Membership**

Trustees of NAMB are elected for their term of service by the SBC in its annual session. Trustees determine operating policies and give overall strategic direction in matters pertaining to NAMB’s ministry and obligations.

The Chaplains Commission is a standing committee of the NAMB Board of Trustees. Trustees are appointed by the Board Officers of the NAMB Board to serve on the Chaplains Commission. Ex-officio (nonvoting) members include the Chairman of NAMB Board of Trustees and the NAMB President. The Chaplaincy Team processes and presents applications at the Chaplains Commission meetings.

The Chaplains Commission meets approximately six times each year, or as required. The specific dates are determined annually by the Chaplains Commission in consultation with the Chaplaincy Team.

**Chaplaincy Financial Support**

The basic financial support of the Chaplains Commission and the Chaplaincy Team is through NAMB’s annual budgeting process. NAMB funds are derived from generous giving through the Cooperative Program, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering®, and other designated contributions. Additional support for military chaplaincy is derived from offerings received from military chapel congregations. These funds are accounted for through the “Military Chaplains’ Fund.” Additionally, the Alfred Carpenter Scholarship Fund is supported by designated donations and annuities.

**Affiliations and Partners for SBC Chaplaincy**

The Chaplaincy Team, under the advisement and approval of senior NAMB leadership, maintains affiliation and partners with a number of faith-based organizations involved with the promotion, facilitation, and development of the chaplaincy ministry. The NAMB Chaplaincy Team also relates to a number of institutions and organizations supporting the education and professional development of persons serving in chaplaincy.
The Context and Nature of Chaplaincy Ministry

Chaplains are ministers of the gospel called by God to minister to people outside the walls of the church in the environment of a particular institution or organization. Pastoral ministry occurs within the context of a local church as stated in Article VI of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. A Southern Baptist who is endorsed to the chaplaincy ministry must clearly understand that the context of chaplaincy is beyond the ministry environment of a local church setting and very often in a pluralistic and diverse setting. Chaplains are normally employees or volunteers of an institution or agency, providing ministry to the clients, employees, and families of the institution. The Chaplaincy affords men and women unique opportunities of ministry. The office of pastor is associated with the local church, while the chaplain, a member in good standing with a local SBC church, represents their church in specialized ministry settings. This change of context is a significant point of education for the new chaplain, especially if they are coming from a church-based ministry setting. The following points should help others to better understand the chaplaincy ministry.

Chaplaincy Ministry Expectations

Tremendous insights can be gained from Jesus’ example as He resided on earth. As the life of Jesus reveals, all people are to be treated with compassion, dignity, and respect. When Jesus was asked about the greatest command, His response was relational: Love God. Love others (Matt. 22:37-39, HCSB). Chaplains are in the people-care business. When people provide care to others, they provide it unto God. Jesus gives assurance that whatever a person does “for one of the least of these brothers of [His], [we do] for [Him]” (Matt. 25:40). Considering that every person in the world matters to God, everyone should matter to us and be treated with love, dignity, and respect.

Regarding Religious Diversity and Complexity

The chaplain’s ministry is to all persons of the agency/institution and to all persons served by that particular agency or institution. For example, the military chaplain ministers to every member of their assigned military unit, including authorized Department of Defense employees, and their respective family members. A healthcare chaplain ministers to patients, patient’s families, and staff members. A correctional facility chaplain ministers to staff, inmates, and their families. Those served include all persons who seek the chaplain’s services, including those who have no religious preference or belief. The focus is not simply on those who respond to the chaplain’s presence, but to all persons within the chaplain’s sphere of ministry. Every chaplain is expected to support the free exercise of religion toward all within their assigned agency or institution. This contextual focus provides chaplains with endless opportunities to be witnesses of the gospel to every person, whether they express a personal faith preference or have none.

Many agencies/institutions (i.e., a military service, prison system, healthcare facility) that host chaplaincy programs employ or provide services to people who are affiliated or claim association with a wide variety of faith groups. The chaplain is expected to perform or provide religious ministry to all these persons, regardless of their faith group, as well as those of the chaplain’s particular faith group. Most agencies/institutions expect the chaplain to facilitate the free exercise of religion within their organization. Simply stated, the chaplain is to ensure that all persons have access to the appropriate exercise or expression of their chosen faith group. As the Southern Baptist chaplain accomplishes this religious task, the chaplain also is free to minister to those of the chaplain’s faith group (i.e., Southern Baptist).
Conversely, the chaplain may be expected to facilitate access to religious practices with which the chaplain may have a theological disagreement. The United States Constitution fully protects the chaplain from being compelled to violate his or her own conscience or the requirements of his or her faith. But these rights cannot be taken for granted. Chaplains must regularly educate their institutional leadership and members on the freedom of religion, as well as all religious matters. They also must be prepared to defend those within their institution (including themselves) whose freedom of religion is violated, challenged, or restrained by superiors who do not understand them.

Chaplains are expected to “perform or provide.” Rather than the chaplain conducting a service or providing an ordinance/sacrament for a group with which he or she personally disagrees or whose tenets violate the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, the chaplain is expected to ensure and make provision for these persons to practice their own faith. Usually, this requires the chaplain to contact another chaplain to provide the ordinance/sacrament/service. If no one is available within the institution or organization, the chaplain may need to contact someone outside the agency or institution. Facilitating religious practice should be within the confines of the policies of the agency or institution.

Questions or concerns about the utilization of Southern Baptist endorsed chaplains should be referred to the Chaplaincy Team at the North American Mission Board, 800-634-2462, or chaplain@namb.net.

Regarding Women in Ministry
The Chaplains Commission, SBC and the Chaplaincy Team support the statement regarding the pastorate in Article VI of the 2000 SBC Faith and Message. Every follower of Jesus Christ is a minister and is called to serve in the church (Eph. 4:16). However, the New Testament as a whole upholds restrictions on the ministry of women, barring them from teaching men or having authority over them (1 Tim. 2:12). Nevertheless, the Bible reveals a church that had a significant participation of women.

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7 For more information regarding a chaplain’s religious freedoms, please become familiar with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

in the ministry related to God’s truth. We encourage the ministry of women in all aspects of the chaplaincy other than those pastoral leadership roles requiring ordination. Therefore, in accordance with Items 23 and 51 of the 2001 Southern Baptist Convention, the Chaplains Commission will only endorse female chaplains who are not ordained.

**Regarding Credentials**

The terms licensed, commissioned, and ordained describe the procedures followed by recognized churches or church denominations to vest ministerial status upon qualified individuals. Each ministerial status has specific legal and ecclesiastical provisions. It is important for chaplains to understand which status has been given to them by an SBC church or church of like faith recognized by a chaplain’s current church in order to fulfill those expectations for chaplaincy ministry within that institution or organization.

**Regarding Agency/Institutional Structure**

A chaplain must learn the structure of the organization that hosts their chaplaincy ministry. Most agencies/institutions are vertically organized, with leadership recognized in a defined “chain of command.” While the chaplain’s foremost allegiance is to God, the chaplain’s primary accountability in the organization is to the head of the organization or the next person up the chaplain’s chain of supervision. Therefore, hiring, assigning, reassigning, and dismissing of the chaplain is the prerogative of the leadership within the organization being served by the Southern Baptist chaplain.

**Regarding Agency/Institutional Policies**

The management of most agencies/institutions is governed by established policies. The position of the chaplain within the agency is defined in those policies. The process for planning delivery of religious ministry and its funding will be designated in the organizational manuals or directives. The new chaplain must become familiar with how the agency/institution organizes itself and conducts its business.

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For example, in some organizations, like the military, the promotion process in the organization is very competitive and strictly governed by law. In other organizations, promotion will only come when a position becomes available in the organization through retirement, promotion, or dismissal.

Another example would be seen in how the agency/institution provides funding for religious ministries. What is the source of funding for religious programming? The chaplain must understand these policies in order to ensure their involvement in the programming and budgeting process. In most agencies/institutions funding for the provision of chaplaincy services and religious programming is totally unrelated to the gathered religious community that assembles for worship. The chaplain’s compensation comes from the using agency, operational funds are allocated by the organization, and offerings collected are subject to the authority and policies established by the using agency.

Southern Baptist ministers must work hard to balance learning about the policies of their assigned agency/institution while seeking to make time for ministry to persons.

**Regarding Agency/Institutional Culture**

As the new chaplain learns about the structure and policies of the organization they serve, they also will want to pay attention to the culture these structures and policies create. For example, a warden is tasked to run a correctional facility. That facility takes on a culture that results from the warden’s policies and the attitudes those policies engender throughout the institution. A particular military command has a culture developed around its mission and the leadership of the command. Chaplains must pay close attention to the culture that exists within their specialized ministry setting while, at the same time, maintaining their pastoral identity.
Southern Baptist Chaplains are recognized Baptist ministers sent forth from the local church to serve as an extension of Christ’s ministry to all people. The employing institutions normally establish the minimum requirements for their chaplains. Some organizations have strict educational and training requirements, while others may appoint a dedicated employee with little or no formal theological training to the “extra” duty of serving as the chaplain for their organization. In all situations, the chaplain is expected to perform in a professional and dedicated manner.

**Areas of Chaplaincy**

Chaplaincy occurs in a wide variety of specialized settings. Presently, the Chaplains Commission of the North American Mission Board endorses chaplains to the following categories: community services, corporate, institution, crisis response, healthcare, military, pastoral counselors, and public safety.

**Community Services**

Community Service Chaplains provide Christian ministry outside the walls of the church but under the supervision of the local church, often in collaboration with volunteer agencies, in support of individuals, families, businesses, corporations, schools, and groups in the local community.
Corporate
These chaplains often provide ministry at industrial settings, manufacturing sites, business offices, corporate headquarters, and community settings. The chaplains may be hired by a particular corporation or business to work as an employee of that organization or on a contractual basis. Marketplace Chaplains and Corporate Chaplains of America are two agencies that place chaplains in corporate settings on a contractual agreement.

Crisis Response
A volunteer chaplaincy service associated with SBC Disaster Relief Ministries.

Healthcare
While hospital settings are the usual place for healthcare chaplaincy, Southern Baptists also have chaplains serving with hospice organizations, mental health facilities, special needs programs, nursing homes, and with the Department of Veterans Affairs. This area of service also includes endorsement for students in intern or residency Clinical Pastoral Education programs.

Institutional
Chaplains for incarcerated persons are involved in prisons and jails at all levels of the government (federal, state, county, and city) and with private corrections companies. Institutional chaplains serve in both adult and juvenile facilities.

Military
The United States Army, Navy, and Air Force have a corps of chaplains who provide chaplaincy ministry. These chaplains/staff officers serve on active duty or in a capacity as a Reserve or Guard chaplain. Military chaplains also include the volunteer chaplains of the Civil Air Patrol, the Air Force auxiliary service, and Auxiliary Clergy Support of the Coast Guard. Also, each state has an organized State National Guard with an associated chaplaincy service. Additionally, some states may have a militia or State Defense Force.
Pastoral Counselors
In 1985 the SBC adopted Recommendation 11 to task the Chaplains Commission with the endorsement responsibilities for Southern Baptists involved in pastoral counseling ministries. Pastoral Counselors are a small segment of the chaplain professionals endorsed by the SBC. The Chaplaincy Team supports endorsement of pastoral counselors when required by the using agency or certifying organization. We do not provide certification or licensing for pastoral counselors.

Public Safety
Law enforcement and fire departments have chaplains who serve the members of the department, as well as the people of the community.

Employment Status
Chaplains serve under a variety of arrangements with the organizations that invite the chaplain into the organization. Employment may be on a full-time basis with numerous employment benefits attached to the compensation for service. Employment also may be on a part-time or volunteer basis.

Employment status is an arrangement between the chaplain and the organization being served. NAMB does not have a policy of providing compensation for chaplaincy services. The Chaplains Commission and the Chaplaincy Team are not organized or tasked to create or provide employment opportunities for chaplaincy.

Professional Organizations
Various professional organizations require endorsements for membership and/or certification. For chaplains seeking membership in these organizations, the endorsement is similar to all other endorsement procedures.

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Endorsement Defined

Endorsement, as used by the Chaplains Commission, is an official statement that affirms to a using agency or certifying organization that the chaplain is a called and qualified religious leader who is an active member in good standing with a local church of the Southern Baptist Convention.\(^\text{12}\)

Endorsement is for a specific chaplaincy with a specific using agency or certifying organization. It is the chaplain’s responsibility to ensure they have a current endorsement on file with their using agency. Southern Baptist chaplains must understand and comply with the endorsement requirements of this manual, as well as any additional policies or guidelines issued by the SBC or NAMB.

Reasons/Benefits of Endorsement

Most employing institutions require an ecclesiastical endorsement as a condition of employment. An endorsement by the SBC affirms that the individual is a minister in good standing with Southern Baptists. Some organizations may not require an endorsement, but the

\(^{12}\) See Appendix B, “Chaplain Endorsement Pathway,” for an overview of the endorsement process.
individual serving as a chaplain may request an endorsement. Even though the endorsement is not required, it communicates to the employer that the SBC recognizes the individual as a minister and chaplain. The endorsement also establishes a relationship with the SBC Chaplaincy Team. It is the goal of the Chaplaincy Team to maintain a pastoral relationship with all endorsed chaplains. This is done through chaplaincy training events, phone calls, personal correspondence, social media, and by SBC endorser visits to chaplains at their places of work.

Most chaplains seek ecclesiastical endorsement primarily because it is required by most using agencies. However, there are many other reasons and benefits to seek endorsement:

1. Application process helps clarify one’s calling to chaplaincy ministry.
2. Tangible affirmation of your chaplaincy calling by 16 million SBC members and more than 45,000 SBC churches.
3. Offers a support network with other SBC chaplains.
4. Provides regional professional development training for chaplains each year.
5. Pastoral care through our Chaplain Ambassador program.
6. Prayer support from the SBC Chaplaincy Team, NAMB, and Southern Baptists.
7. Field guidance as needed on current issues chaplains are facing in their ministry setting.

**Types of Endorsements**

The Chaplains Commission provides five types of endorsement. Two types simply note that the position to which the person is endorsed is either a “full-time” or “part-time” position (for military this indicates “active component” or “reserve component”). The third type of endorsement is for persons serving in a voluntary (non-paid) capacity. The fourth type of endorsement is for training with organizations like the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), and other programs and centers for ministry training. A fifth category of endorsement is for “professional membership” in organizations, which require endorsement as part of the membership criteria (e.g., International Conference of Police Chaplains).
Basic Qualifications/Requirements for SBC Endorsement

The Chaplains Commission of the North American Mission Board endorses chaplains to the following categories: community services, corporate, corrections, disaster relief, healthcare, military, and public safety. Chaplains are allowed to have more than one endorsement.

General Endorsement Requirements

When employing vocational or volunteer chaplains, each institutional agency and organization sets specific requirements for their hiring criteria. In addition, the Southern Baptist Convention has its own denominational requirements for endorsing chaplains. All chaplains endorsed by the SBC must meet these minimum requirements:

• Demonstrate the call, competence, and character for ministry as a chaplain.
  > The applicant must demonstrate a call to the ministry. This involves not only the written communication, but actions showing a personal commitment to Christian ministry.
  > The applicant must have proven character in line with his or her call to chaplain ministry. Chaplains are expected to live their personal and professional lives with the highest practice of integrity in accordance with the Chaplaincy Code of Conduct. A chaplain's personal character must be consistent with the spiritual leadership required to work with people.
  > Background check that includes credit, criminal, and sexual offenses.

• Be affiliated with the SBC for a minimum of one year and a member in good standing of a church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention for at least six months. All endorsed chaplains are expected to maintain membership in a Southern Baptist church and develop an accountability relationship with a Southern Baptist church. This accountability should relate to the chaplain’s personal life, as well as their exercise of ministry in their ministry context.

• References including one from applicant’s SBC Pastor or Director of Missions.

• For vocational chaplains, be licensed, commissioned, or ordained by an SBC church or church of like faith recognized by the applicant’s
current church. This recognizes the role of the local church in affirming the ministry of the applicant.

• Hold theological beliefs currently adopted by the SBC as represented in the *2000 Baptist Faith and Message*. Additionally, applicants and endorsed chaplains are to affirm compliance and support of the following policies:
  > Divorced people will be assessed with grace and mercy on an individual basis in accordance with NAMB policy.\(^\text{13}\)
  > *Chaplaincy Code of Conduct*.

• Vocational chaplains must have accredited theological training consistent with their projected ministry assignment. A master of divinity degree or equivalent often is required for vocational chaplains.

• Volunteer chaplains are expected to be actively engaged in chaplain-specific training.

• Meet requirements of employing agency. The Chaplain Commission will not endorse a chaplain who does not meet the requirements of the employing agency.

• Approval by the Chaplains Commission.

All chaplain endorsements are to a specific ministry position. Any change in that position will require an update or additional endorsement. It is the responsibility of the chaplain to initiate the process for updating an endorsement. After notifying the SBC Chaplaincy Team, at least four weeks should be allowed for the update endorsement process.

Any exception to these basic qualifications/requirements must be approved by the Chaplains Commission.

**Community Service Chaplain**

Community Service Chaplains provide Christian ministry outside the walls of the church but under the supervision of the local church, often in collaboration with volunteer agencies, in support of individuals, families, businesses, corporations, schools, and groups in the local community. Though not exhaustive, some examples may include pastoral counselors, life coaches, motorcycle chaplains, resort chaplains, sports chaplains, civic groups, and campus chaplains.

\(^{13}\) For specific details, see *Chaplaincy Endorsement Manual*, “Divorce and Remarriage,” 32.
Denominational endorsement may be required if the institution or organization recognizes a person serving as a chaplain. SBC General Endorsement Requirements, as well as additional standards established by the community service organization, will be required for persons seeking SBC chaplaincy endorsement.

**Corporate Chaplain**

Corporate chaplains often provide ministry at industrial settings, manufacturing sites, business offices, corporate headquarters, and community settings. Some businesses may internally hire an employee to serve as a chaplain of that organization. A number of chaplaincy service ministries provide chaplains on a contractual basis to various corporate and business settings.

In addition to SBC General Endorsement Requirements, corporate chaplains usually have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in biblical studies from an accredited college or university, master of divinity preferred; and a minimum of seven years of full-time workplace experience. A business degree can reduce this requirement. Most corporate chaplaincy organizations provide their own training. Institutions often expect specialized training to deal with suicide prevention, marriage enrichment, resiliency, and other situations.

**Disaster Relief Chaplain**

Disaster Relief (DR) chaplains are volunteer members of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams. They are mobilized with their SBC state convention disaster relief team by the state disaster relief coordinator. The DR chaplain provides ministry both to the deploying disaster response team and to the survivors of the disaster. For this reason, the training requirements for endorsement as a disaster relief chaplain are set high. Ministry opportunities include providing devotionals for the team, assisting with personal crisis of team members, and praying and providing emotional support to disaster survivors.

Disaster Relief training is coordinated and scheduled by each Southern Baptist state convention through the office of the Disaster Relief Coordinator or state chaplaincy representative. This training often includes:
• Introduction to Southern Baptist Disaster Relief
• Specialized Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training.

For SBC endorsement, disaster relief chaplains also should meet the SBC General Endorsement Requirements, as well as the following training or its equivalent:

• Complete the “Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Chaplains Manual” training (about nine hours)
• Complete one unit of training in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) or Operational Stress First Aid (14 hours)
• Minimum of at least one state Disaster Relief callout.

Healthcare Chaplain

While hospital settings are the usual place for healthcare chaplaincy, Southern Baptists also have chaplains serving with hospice organizations, mental health facilities, special needs programs, nursing homes, and with the Department of Veterans Affairs. This area of service also includes endorsement for students in extended or residency Clinical Pastoral Education programs.

In addition to SBC General Endorsement Requirements, healthcare chaplains usually have an accredited master of divinity degree and at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Care education (CPE). Staff chaplain positions normally require four units of CPE. Pastoral experience as required by the hiring healthcare organization. Specialized positions in healthcare require more training.

Veterans Affairs Chaplain Requirements:

• Ordained minister of or recognized by an SBC church.
• Valid endorsement from the Chaplains Commission.
• Undergraduate degree of 120 semester hours from an accredited institution.
• Master of divinity or equivalent degree of at least 70 hours of graduate course including all of the following: 20 semester hours in pastoral ministry; 20 semester hours in any combination of theology, ethics, and philosophy of religion; 20 semester hours
in the study of sacred writings, including the study of languages in which sacred writings are/were written; and 10 semester hours in religious history and/or world religions from an accredited institution.

• Citizen of the United States.

• Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE): In addition to the education requirements, applicants must have completed at least two units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) [as defined by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) and the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC)]. As a substitute for the required CPE, 800 hours of supervised ministry in a formal training program that incorporated both ministry formation and pastoral care skills development may be accepted.

• Ministry experience: To qualify for GS-11, you must have at least two years of professional experience, after completion of the master of divinity or equivalent, which has demonstrated both practical pastoral knowledge and skill, and ability to minister in a pluralistic setting. Supervised or guided pastoral experience completed during graduate professional education may be credited for up to one of the two years of experience. Part-time experience is pro-rated by comparing the average number of hours worked to a 40-hour work week. Completion of a doctoral degree directly related to pastoral ministry may be substituted for one year of experience.

Institutional Chaplain

Chaplains for incarcerated persons are involved in prisons and jails at all levels of the government (federal, state, county, and city) and with private corrections companies. Institutional chaplains serve in adult and juvenile facilities.

In addition to SBC General Endorsement Requirements, the minimum qualifications of Institutional Chaplains vary according to the type of confinement facility and state.

Local and County Facilities: Chaplains at local confinement facilities are usually volunteers. The local facilities set their own requirements, and they often are minimal. Formal accredited theological education and ordination often are not required. A background check is expected. Those
desiring to provide ministry in these situations should consult with local authorities for requirements.

State Facilities: Most chaplains at state prisons are required to have a theological degree, including at least 75 semester hours of college. Experience often is credited for some educational requirements. After employment, two units of Clinical Pastoral Education may be required for promotion.

U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons: Requirements for those desiring to work at federal correction facilities are more comprehensive:

- Ordained minister of or recognized by an SBC church.
- Valid endorsement from the Chaplains Commission of the North American Mission Board.
- The normal age limit to apply is 37. Exceptions are made based on experience.
- Citizen of the United States.
- Undergraduate degree from an accredited institution.
- Master of divinity/theology degree or the equivalent education from an American Theological School (ATS) accredited residential seminary or school of theology: 20 graduate hours of theology; 20 graduate hours of sacred writings; 20 graduate hours of church history or comparative religions; and 20 graduate hours of ministry courses, ordination, plus ecclesiastical endorsement.
- At least two years of autonomous experience as a religious/spiritual leader in a church or specialized ministry setting. Clinical Pastoral Education may satisfy up to one year of experience.
- Pass a background investigation.
- Pass physical requirements and examination by the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Military Chaplain

The United States Army, Navy, and Air Force have a corps of chaplains who provide chaplaincy ministry. These chaplain/staff officers serve on active duty or in a capacity as a Reserve or Guard chaplain. This area also includes the volunteer chaplains of the Civil Air Patrol, an Air Force
auxiliary service, and Auxiliary Clergy Support of the Coast Guard. Also, each state has an organized State National Guard with an associated chaplaincy service. Additionally, some states may have a militia or State Defense Force.

Check with the Military Chaplain Recruiter of the particular Military Branch for the most current requirements, including age.

**U.S. Army Chaplain Requirements (Active Duty, Army Reserve, and Army Guard):**
- Ordained minister of or recognized by an SBC church.
- Valid endorsement from the Chaplains Commission.
- Undergraduate degree of 120 semester hours from an accredited institution.
- Master of divinity/theology degree of at least 72 hours from an accredited institution.
- Citizen of the United States (Permanent residents can apply for US Army Reserve only).
- Pass the National Agency Check for a security clearance.
- Pass Armed Forces physical exam.
- Two years’ pastoral experience within a congregational setting.

For **U.S. Army Chaplain Candidate Program:**
- Be a full-time graduate student at an accredited seminary or theological school.
- Be between 18-36 years of age at time of commissioning.
- Ordination is not required.

**U.S. Air Force Chaplain Requirements (Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard):**
- Ordained minister of or recognized by an SBC church.
- Valid endorsement from the Chaplains Commission.
- Undergraduate degree of 120 semester hours 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.
• Two years’ pastoral experience within a congregational setting.

For U.S. Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program:
• Be a full-time graduate student at an accredited seminary or theological school.
• Less than 35 years of age at the time of appointment.
• Ordination is not required.

U.S. Navy Chaplain Requirements (Active Duty and Reserve):
• Ordained minister of or recognized by an SBC church.
• Valid endorsement from the Chaplains Commission.
• Undergraduate degree of 120 semester hours 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.
• Pass a Navy physical fitness test.
• Two years’ pastoral experience within a congregational setting.

For U.S. Navy Chaplain Candidate Program:
• Be a full-time graduate student at an accredited seminary or theological school.
• Be 21 years of age and be able to complete 20 years.
• Ordination is not required.

Civil Air Patrol Chaplain Requirements:
• Ordained minister of or recognized by an SBC church.
• Valid endorsement from the Chaplains Commission.
• Undergraduate degree of 120 semester hours from an accredited institution.
• Master of divinity/theology degree of at least 72 hours from an accredited institution. Clergy without accredited graduate degree may ask for a waiver providing they have a minimum of five years full-time pastoral experience.
• Two years’ pastoral experience within a congregation setting.
• Meet CAP Senior Membership requirements.
• Fingerprint card and background check.
• Pay CAP national and wing dues.
• Contact your wing chaplain for an application (CAP Form 35).

Coast Guard Auxiliary Clergy Support:
The Auxiliary Clergy Support program supplements and supports Navy Chaplains serving with the Coast Guard by expanding religious ministry within the Coast Guard to better meet the needs of Coast Guard members and their families.

• Ordained minister of or recognized by an SBC church.
• Be a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary.
• Must meet many of the same qualifications as members of the Navy Chaplain Corps.

Public Safety Chaplain
Law enforcement and fire departments have chaplains who serve the members of the department, as well as the people of the community. In addition to SBC General Endorsement Requirements, Public Safety chaplains in the following positions are encouraged to seek further theological and crisis intervention training.

Law Enforcement Chaplains: Each law enforcement agency establishes its own requirements for chaplains. The International Council of Police Chaplains gives recommended standards for Police Chaplains. Those desiring to be Law Enforcement Chaplains must consult with individual agencies for qualifications and method of application for positions.

Fire Department Chaplains: Similar to law enforcement agencies, each fire department also establishes its own requirements for chaplains.
The Federation of Fire Chaplains brings together individuals and groups interested in providing effective chaplaincies for fire service organizations. Anyone interested in serving as a Fire Department Chaplain must consult with the individual fire departments for their requirements.

**Duration of Endorsements**

Endorsement is to a specific position. Any change in employment requires an update of endorsement. Some ministerial training programs have a specified duration. When the chaplain completes the training, the endorsement terminates. Some endorsements have a specified period of time for which they are valid. This termination date is usually stated on the endorsement or is expressed by the using agency's policy. If an endorsement is no longer required, the endorsement will be listed as “inactive” until an update is requested. A chaplain may request the withdrawal of endorsement at any time. The Chaplain Commission may request the withdrawal of endorsement at any time due to circumstances such as doctrinal stance, moral failure, or other substantial issues.

All endorsements terminate when the chaplain is no longer affiliated with the organization to which they were endorsed or the chaplain no longer meets the SBC requirements for endorsement.

**Endorsement Updates**

Periodically, the using agency will ask that the chaplain receive an updated endorsement. It is the responsibility of the chaplain to initiate the process for updating an endorsement. A chaplain should contact the Chaplaincy Team to request an endorsement update when their status or ministry location changes. Also, endorsement update requests can be made through the chaplain’s portal (mynamb.net). Chaplains are allowed to have more than one endorsement.

Chaplains can request an update by contacting the Chaplaincy Team or through their chaplain portal at mynamb.net. Once initiated, the chaplain will need to complete an Endorsement Update Application and submit appropriate supporting documents. When a chaplain requests an update to a vocational endorsement from a volunteer endorsement, the basic requirements/guidelines for that chaplaincy category and status applies. At least four weeks should be allowed for the update endorsement process to be completed.
Transferring an Endorsement

A chaplain can only be endorsed through one endorsing body. However, a chaplain can change ecclesiastical endorsement at any time for a variety of reasons. Any transfer of endorsement to another religious ecclesiastical organization requires the chaplain to inform their current endorsing agent. The ecclesiastical endorsement process, requirements, and timeline differs among the various religious ecclesiastical organizations. As a general rule, SBC Chaplaincy provides a 90-day transition period for transfer of endorsement to another religious ecclesiastical body.

Oversight and Supervision

Chaplains serve a using agency at the invitation of the agency and therefore are under the direct supervision of the agency’s supervisory structure. Additionally, the Chaplains Commission, through the administrative actions and pastoral care of the Chaplaincy Team, retains ecclesiastical oversight of the chaplain’s work and life as a representative of the SBC. The Chaplaincy Team members are available to respond to any questions or concerns.

Each applicant submitting an application for denominational endorsement by the Chaplains Commission signs the following agreement to assure the Chaplains Commission of the applicant’s understanding, acceptance, and willingness to cooperate in carrying out the Commission’s policies and purposes. The statement reads:

In making this application, I recognize the Chaplains Commission of the North American Mission Board, SBC, to be the agency designated by the Southern Baptist Convention to endorse chaplains to military and civilian agencies and agree to cooperate with the Chaplains Commission, SBC, in carrying out its policies and programs.14

Discipline and Withdrawal of an SBC Endorsement

In the event that an endorsed chaplain violates a law (local, state, or federal, including Uniform Code of Military Justice), agency policy, SBC general expectation, Chaplaincy Code of Conduct, personal or

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14 Statement taken from current SBC Endorsement application.
professional ethic, or should there be an embarrassment to the cause of Christ, the SBC or SBC Chaplaincy, disciplinary action may be in order. The Chaplains Commission desires that justice, grace, and mercy be exercised in all situations with the goal being personal redemption and restoration. However, withdrawal of endorsement may result from any situation deemed by the Chaplains Commission to warrant such action.

It is the right of any autonomous entity, i.e., using agency or professional organization, to which a chaplain belongs, or the judicial system, to choose to exercise disciplinary measures it deems necessary. Poor work performance will be an issue with the using agency’s supervisory process but may involve the Chaplains Commission, if invited by the using agency or chaplain.

The endorsed SBC chaplain’s relationship with God and family is of utmost importance. Restoration to ministry will not always be possible depending on the nature of the violation. Chaplains are reminded that personal reputation is to be guarded closely. One’s reputation with people is a primary building block for ministry.

Chaplains are expected to inform the appropriate Chaplaincy Team immediately upon being accused of a violation in regard to their ministry, in regard to a felony arrest, or other situation which could adversely impact the reputation of a minister or the SBC. The Chaplains Commission and the Chaplaincy Team desires to be of assistance to the chaplain experiencing extreme difficulties in their life.

The disciplinary/withdrawal process will usually include the following steps:

1. Chaplaincy Team is informed, preferably by the chaplain via telephone or other expeditious means. Using agencies are welcome and encouraged to contact the Chaplaincy Team.
2. The Chaplaincy Team advises the Chaplaincy Executive Director on the probable removal of endorsement. The Chaplaincy Executive Director confers with the chaplain and then provides a recommendation to the Chaplains Commission and/or the NAMB President.
3. The Chaplaincy Team, in collaboration with the Chaplains Commission, will work with the chaplain in a restorative
relationship as appropriate to the situation, SBC, chaplain, and others involved.

Personnel Policies of the Chaplains Commission

The Chaplains Commission of the North American Mission (NAMB) endorses SBC Chaplains. NAMB is an agency of the SBC whose messengers over the years have adopted resolutions on a variety of subjects. These range from broad concepts of freedom of religion and the separation of church and state to matters of morality and personal conduct. The Chaplains Commission expects that endorsed chaplains will have as a focus in the midst of their ministry an awareness of and responsiveness to opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. One outcome of the ministry of Southern Baptist chaplains is seeing persons make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, then follow that profession of faith in believer’s baptism and affiliation with a local church. Chaplains are expected to live their personal and professional lives with the highest practice of integrity. They are expected to abide by guidance given to them by the SBC, NAMB, or Chaplaincy Team leaders. If their personal lifestyle could cause embarrassment to NAMB or, in the judgment of the Chaplains Commission, impacts their effectiveness, they may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including withdrawal of endorsement. By seeking and receiving an SBC Chaplaincy endorsement, chaplains indicate their willingness to abide by the *SBC Code of Conduct*. Applicants and endorsed chaplains with questions, comments, or difficulties in the areas of these policies are encouraged to contact the Chaplaincy Team member for their area of ministry.\(^{15}\)

Doctrinal Stability

The Chaplains Commission, SBC, considers an affirmation of the *2000 Baptist Faith and Message* essential for endorsement. The initial and update application process offers an opportunity for the applicant to affirm support of these doctrinal statements.

\(^{15}\) See Appendix A, Chaplaincy Code of Conduct.
Divorce and Remarriage

We support the statement regarding marriage in Article XVIII of the SBC 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.\(^{16}\) However, divorce is complicated. We do endorse divorced chaplain applicants with the full support of their SBC church, but it is by exception. Current NAMB policy indicates that from the official date of divorce, the chaplaincy applicant shall have waited two years before remarriage. In the event of remarriage, the chaplaincy applicant will have experienced five years of a successful second marriage. When we receive an application from someone who has been divorced, we consider their entire application package, including the church placement letter and pastoral recommendation. Additionally, we seek clarification/explanation from the applicant regarding the marital history to determine the appropriate response. The Chaplaincy Team desires to play a supportive role with the chaplain and family involved in separation or divorce. A chaplain’s spiritual and relational health is a vital component of their ministry. All endorsed chaplains who are currently serving and get a divorce or remarry will be evaluated with grace and mercy on an individual basis in accordance with NAMB policy.

The NAMB Chaplains Commission expects that endorsed chaplains will have as a focus in the midst of their ministry an awareness of and responsiveness to opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. One outcome of the ministry of Southern Baptist chaplains is seeing persons make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, then follow that profession of faith in believer’s baptism and affiliation with a local church. Chaplains should guard against activities that proselytize persons active in other faith groups. Chaplains should present the biblical truths in the course of their ministry and be ready to guide persons who are responding to the work of the Holy Spirit toward a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Personal Ethics

Integrity

Chaplains are expected to live their personal and professional lives with the highest practice of integrity. Integrity is being who and what you claim to be — a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ serving as a chaplain. Chaplains are expected to be honest and genuine in all your words and actions. A chaplain’s personal character must be consistent with the spiritual leadership they have with people. Chaplains must remember that those to whom they minister and those they serve depend on the chaplain’s integrity to be of the highest quality.
Chaplain Relationships
Since chaplains are called upon to provide counseling and care to people or families experiencing domestic difficulties, family separation, and divorce matters requiring spiritual guidance, chaplains must exercise sound judgment to preclude involvement that goes beyond an acceptable counselor-client relationship. Such non-professional involvement results in the deepest personal hurt to the chaplain and other people involved and loss of ministry effectiveness and Christian credibility. Any chaplain experiencing difficulty in this area is expected to inform the Chaplaincy Team member for their area of ministry and to seek counseling and assistance as early as possible.

Ministry to All Persons
SBC endorsed chaplains are expected to minister to all persons, regardless of their behavior choices, ethnicity, physical condition/presence, or religious preference. In providing this ministry, they are not condoning/approving of behaviors the Scriptures (Holy Bible) define as sinful, for example drunkenness, fornication, homosexuality, or abortion. Rather, they should be seeking to help the person recognize God’s intended order for life and to understand their need to humbly acknowledge God’s plan for their life. They should be as inclusive as possible for mandatory activities and appropriately exclusive in ecclesiastical function and performance.

Relationships to Other Faith Groups
Chaplains usually will find their ministry opportunities in an environment with a diversity of religious beliefs and expressions. Southern Baptist chaplains should seek to display a spirit of cooperation and team building. Relationships with those of other faith groups are expected to be one of “cooperation without compromise.” This standard phrase carries the meaning for Southern Baptist chaplains of cooperation in methodology without a compromise of Southern Baptist faith and practice. Good ministry relationships will come from being acquainted with and sensitive to the customs and cultures of the people with whom chaplains work and to whom they minister. An “open door” attitude is always a healthy approach to lasting relationships. The Chaplains Commission, SBC, believes this attitude has merit and value because it emphasizes the worth and dignity of individuals.
Recognition of Ministry Limitations17

SBC chaplains are endorsed to minister within specialized ministry environments. SBC chaplains not only represent themselves but also the churches and members of the SBC. Endorsed Southern Baptist chaplains, within their respective institutional settings, provide ministry according to the principle of “cooperation without compromise.” SBC chaplains will:

- Support and conduct religious services in accordance with the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, The Southern Baptist Endorsement Manual for Chaplains, and the guidelines contained in this document.
- Provide biblical counseling and pastoral care for those of like faith and make provisions to meet the religious or spiritual needs of others.
- Treat everyone with Christ-centered dignity, honor, and respect.
- SBC chaplains are free to lead or participate in religious services with any chaplain who is a Trinitarian and accepts the authority of God’s Word.

SBC chaplains have a pastoral and professional responsibility to ensure that everyone is shown Christ-centered dignity, honor, and respect, regardless of differences in theological beliefs, cultural world view, and personal behavior. However, when the ministry requested does not comply with SBC beliefs and practices, the chaplain will coordinate with another chaplain or religious leader to perform the requested ministry.

Although SBC chaplains will extend dignity, love, and compassion to everyone, they will not:

- Conduct any religious service or ceremony jointly with a chaplain, contractor, or volunteer that could be reasonably misconstrued as affirming a homosexual lifestyle, sexual immorality, and other such unbiblical conduct.
- Officiate, participate in, or attend a marriage or union ceremony for any couple contrary to the following biblical mandates that:

17 See “Southern Baptist Endorsed Chaplains/Counselors in Ministry Guidelines in Response to the June 26, 2013, Supreme Court Ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)” in Appendix C.
“... all persons are created in God’s image and are made to glorify Him; ... God’s design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female; ... affirm God’s good design that gender identity is determined by biological sex and not by one’s self-perception.”

“... marriage is between one man and one woman, ordered by God toward the union of the spouses, the means of procreation, formative of family, and foundational to the common good of society.”

- Provide any pre-marital or marital counseling and/or marriage enrichment training in support of such a union.

This biblical guidance, under the authority of the SBC endorsing body, remains in effect irrespective of any civil law authorizing same-sex marriage, transgender marriage, or equivalents to marriage. Questions or concerns about the utilization of Southern Baptist endorsed chaplains should be referred to the Chaplaincy Team at the North American Mission Board, 800-634-2462, or chaplain@namb.net.

**Baptism and the Lord’s Supper**

These are ordinances of the church. Through the endorsement process, each cooperating SBC church provides the chaplain with the necessary credentials to administer these ordinances and scope of ministry. Therefore, endorsed Southern Baptist chaplains are to administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper under the authority of the chaplain’s local Southern Baptist church.

**Contact Information**

Chaplains are required to keep the Chaplaincy Team informed of contact information changes (i.e., address, telephone numbers, and e-mail). The quarterly report, email, telephone, or letter are recommended means of advising of changes in contact information. Additionally, endorsed chaplains can update their basic profile information through their chaplain portal (mynamb.net).

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Quarterly Reports

Upon endorsement and affiliation with a using agency, a chaplain is required to complete a quarterly report. This required report is used to gather statistical data reflective of the chaplaincy to which the chaplain is endorsed. Individual reports are never used in a comparative process to evaluate effectiveness in ministry. The statistical summary and narrative parts aid in telling of the story of chaplaincy provided by Southern Baptist endorsed chaplains. The Chaplaincy Team provides the quarterly report reminders through email. Quarterly reports can be completed either through the NAMB chaplaincy website (namb.net/Chaplaincy) an endorsed chaplain’s portal on mynamb.net or qr.namb.net. It is the chaplain’s responsibility to ensure that a report is submitted each quarter in a timely manner.

Professional Development Training

Chaplaincy Professional Development Training (CPDT) events for endorsed chaplains allows them to stay connected with the SBC chaplaincy team, other SBC chaplains, and to grow professionally. CPDT provides theological and denominational training for Southern Baptist chaplains to maintain a high level of proficiency in chaplain pastoral care ministry. The purpose of this requirement to attend CPDT is to ensure that all of our endorsed chaplains are developing their chaplaincy skills and networking. It is acceptable to attend any training event that helps one develop professionally as a chaplain. The events that meet this professional development training requirement are described below.

Chaplain Professional Training Conferences

Every year the Chaplaincy Team of the North American Mission Board hosts several regional events for Southern Baptist chaplains in the United States and around the world (including the Chaplains Reception at the SBC Annual Meeting). These annual chaplain trainings are a time for spiritual renewal, continuing education, best practices, networking, and fellowship for all SBC-endorsed chaplains who attend. Chaplains are encouraged to attend the conference nearest their location.

State or Regional Convention Training

These events are sponsored by the state or regional convention. The state/regional chaplaincy representative plans the conference and provides registration information.
New Chaplains Orientation

This orientation provides the newly endorsed SBC chaplain with an introduction to the NAMB, the Chaplains Commission, SBC, and the work of chaplains as viewed by the Chaplaincy Team. Newly endorsed persons should plan to attend a Chaplain’s Orientation within the first year of endorsement. The Chaplaincy Team extends invitations.

Other Training Opportunities

College or seminary courses, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) classes, and other professional chaplaincy-related training.

Legal Support

Chaplains who are accused (arrested or charged) of misconduct concerning performance of their ministry or in their personal lives are expected to immediately inform the Chaplaincy Team. Processes of “professional discipline” in which a chaplain is involved come within this same procedure/expectation. The chaplain must recognize that their ministry may be terminated due to loss of respect and trust within their using agency. The desire of the Chaplains Commission, SBC, and the Chaplaincy Team is to be of assistance to the chaplain and their family; however, neither the Chaplains Commission nor the NAMB Chaplaincy Team are able to provide legal advice or direct legal advocacy. Should the need arise, chaplains are encouraged to consult with third-party legal professionals as appropriate.

Privileged and Confidential Communications

Communications received from persons usually occur because of trust in the chaplain. When faced with a decision about a privileged or confidential communication, the SBC Chaplain must be aware of federal, state, and local laws governing reporting requirements in the jurisdiction in which they minister. Some chaplains may be considered a mandated reporter especially in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. Every chaplain should know the policies of their using agency and professional practices within their specialized ministry. Confidentiality should be maintained as fully as possible within the limits of the law.
Liability Insurance

Chaplains should consult with their using agency to determine whether or not they have liability coverage for the exercise of their ministry. Neither the SBC nor NAMB provides liability insurance coverage for endorsed SBC chaplains.

Local, State, or National Organization Involvement

Chaplains are encouraged to be involved in local, state, or national organizations that promote chaplaincy, seek to provide for the welfare of persons, and that inform and shares social policy. Prior to the chaplain’s involvement, the using agency should be advised of the chaplain’s interest or approval from the using agency obtained. Chaplains will be representing both Southern Baptists and the agency in which they serve.
The ministry of chaplains is supported by the Southern Baptist Convention through a network of individuals that includes the Chaplains Commission, the Chaplaincy Team, Chaplain Ambassadors, state/regional convention chaplaincy representatives, local associations, and local churches. The connection among these persons provides for ongoing support, encouragement, challenge, and fostering of chaplaincy.

Prayer Support

Intercessory Prayer Line
Chaplains are encouraged to make prayer needs known for inclusion on the NAMB prayer line. Also, chaplains can call the toll-free prayer line (800-634-2462) Monday–Thursday 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Quarterly Report
Chaplains have the opportunity to list prayer needs for the Chaplaincy Team each quarter. Prayer requests are distributed to each member of the Chaplaincy Team (including Chaplain Ambassadors).
**PrayerConnect**

SBC Endorsed Chaplains have the opportunity to respond to periodic emails from PrayerConnect to share prayers that will be sent to anyone who has committed to pray for NAMB missionaries and chaplains. Also, submitted prayers are listed on the NAMB website for anyone to view and intercede in prayer (https://www.namb.net/pray/).

**Publications**

**SBC Life**

The journal of the Southern Baptist Convention published by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. SBC Life features articles and updates on topics and issues related to Southern Baptist missions and ministries, churches, and the culture. It provides information, encouragement, and inspiration, and majors on telling the good news of what God is doing through the Southern Baptist Convention and its people. Three print issues of SBC Life are produced each year and are sent free of charge to Southern Baptist pastors, pastoral staff, full-time denominational workers, chaplains, and vocational evangelists. Email subscriptions also are available.

**OnMission**

NAMB’s award-winning flagship magazine, designed to help you be on mission where you work and live, as well as to highlight the work of missionaries across North America. Endorsed chaplains are included on NAMB’s mailing list of this publication. This is a semi-monthly publication.

**Ministry Program Materials**

The Chaplains Commission, SBC, and the Chaplaincy Team do not provide ministry program materials. Chaplains are encouraged to use products from Lifeway Christian Resources (https://www.lifeway.com/). Chaplains using materials from other publishing sources should take care to review doctrinal presentations that reflect biblical truth.

**Chaplain Communications**

Chaplains are encouraged to communicate with the Chaplaincy Team. The Alpharetta, Georgia, office is located in the Eastern time zone of the United States. Core office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The following options are provided to enhance communication opportunities.
NAMB Connection Center
The NAMB Connection Center provides customer support through phone calls and emails and supports NAMB’s systems for missionary and chaplain endorsement. To contact the Connection Center, you can email help@namb.net or call 800-634-2462.

NAMB’s Website
NAMB’s website, namb.net/Chaplaincy, is provided to inform persons interested in chaplaincy about the endorsement process, resources, and upcoming events.

Email and Telephonic Communications
Email and telephonic communications are available to each member of the Chaplaincy Team. The policy of NAMB is to respond to your message as soon as possible. Staff members usually check their voice mail and email several times daily. Additional information of a public nature also will be provided from time to time via email through “SBC Chaplaincy Update.” Also, automatic emails will be sent at least three times to remind endorsed chaplains about timely submission of their quarterly reports. SBC endorsed chaplains should add the following emails to their electronic address book: info@namb.net, chaplainquarterly@namb.net, and noreply@namb.net to insure the timely delivery of Chaplaincy Team communications.

Site Visits by Chaplaincy Team Personnel
Periodically, the Chaplaincy Team members and Chaplain Ambassadors have the opportunity to visit with chaplains at the sites where they provide ministry. The Chaplaincy Team or Chaplain Ambassadors are expected to prearrange these visits. The purpose of the visit is to provide pastoral care and encouragement to the chaplain. The visit also serves as an opportunity for supervisory persons to meet their ecclesiastical representatives.

Pastoral Care
The Chaplaincy Team and Chaplain Ambassadors are available to dialogue with chaplains about ministry coaching, pastoral care and counseling services, transition assistance, and tuition assistance.
Ministry Coaching
Professional and life situations are often a topic of concern. The Chaplaincy Team desires to come alongside to encourage personal and professional development and to assist chaplains in maximizing their potential in fulfilling God’s call.

Pastoral Care Manager
The Chaplain Pastoral Care Manager is a full-time staff person who oversees and undergirds the work of the Chaplain Ambassadors. The manager also provides direct pastoral care to chaplains and families, helps refer those in need to applicable pastoral care resources, processes requests for financial assistance for intensive counseling retreats, and provides training on ministry, personal and self-care, and other topics to enhance the skills of chaplains. Additionally, the Chaplain Pastoral Care Manager serves as the Chaplain Ambassador for chaplains currently assigned to overseas locations.

Chaplain Ambassadors
Chaplains and their families are supported by a network of Chaplain Ambassadors in eight geographical regions as well as one National Ambassador for Women. Their role is to support and encourage chaplains in their ministry and personal lives through prayer, various forms of communication, and pastoral interactions during conferences and site visits. To find out who your Chaplain Ambassador is or to contact the Chaplain Pastoral Care Manager or a member of the Chaplaincy Team, SBC email help@namb.net or call 800-634-2462 (Connection Center, NAMB).

Transition Assistance
Changing from one ministry opportunity to another is often a difficult and time-consuming journey. Chaplaincy Team personnel have a variety of information and resources to recommend to those in transition. For those who have the luxury of lead-time, it is recommended that the search for a new position in ministry begin at least one year prior to the transition date. Any chaplain who is terminated from an agency should immediately advise the Chaplaincy Team.
Tuition Assistance
The Alfred Carpenter Scholarship Fund is available to support endorsed chaplains for accredited chaplaincy education opportunities beyond the master of divinity degree. Request forms are available from Chaplaincy Team.

Ministry Recognition
The Chaplaincy Team provides recognition acknowledging the years of service rendered by a chaplain. The retiring chaplain should provide information regarding the retirement to the Chaplaincy Team as soon as the date of retirement and/or ceremony is known.
Chaplains Commission – A sub-group of the NAMB Board of Trustees that meets to grant and remove endorsement(s) to chaplains and provide overall direction for chaplaincy.

Chaplaincy Team – This team is organizationally a part of the President’s Office, NAMB. The team acts on behalf of the Chaplains Commission, SBC, and provides daily support for chaplains.

Confidential Communication – Information between a person and a chaplain cannot be shared with anyone. Confidentiality is sometimes limited by legal and ethical guidelines in states, agencies, and credentialing organizations in the event of danger to life. The most common includes when a person reveals they are a threat to themself or others, in which case a chaplain must take steps to insure the safety of those who may be harmed. This may include the legal and ethical requirement to break confidence and notify appropriate authorities. A chaplain should check with their using agency for reporting policies and procedures.

Endorsement – Endorsement, as used by the Chaplains Commission, is an official statement that affirms to a using agency or certifying organization that the chaplain is a called and qualified religious leader who is an active member in good standing with a local church of the Southern Baptist Convention.
**Endorser** - The “endorser” is technically the person who signs the denominational endorsement documents. Currently, the Chaplaincy Team has two endorsers: Federal and Non-Federal.

**Full-time Chaplain** - A person employed who serves as using agency as the primary focus of their ministry.

**Part-time Chaplain** - A person employed who serves a using agency as the secondary focus of their ministry.

**Privileged Communication** - A special category of confidentiality. A person has a privilege to refuse to disclose and to prevent another from disclosing a confidential communication by the person to a clergyman or to a clergyman’s assistant, if such communication is made either as a formal act of religion or as a matter of conscience. The chaplain does not have authority to break confidence where privilege is invoked. The privilege belongs to the penitent. (For more information, see “General rule of privilege” particularly applicable to Military Chaplains IAW UCMJ - Military Rule of Evidence 503, Communications to Clergy.”) Outside of the military, communication is not privileged if it’s made to a non-clergy person. The minister must be officially recognized as clergy.

**Using Agency** - An organization, such as a business, healthcare facility, or correctional system, that invites the chaplaincy to take place in their organization.

**Volunteer Chaplain** - A person who volunteers their time and resources to serve a using agency as a chaplain.
The SBC Chaplaincy Code of Conduct and Pledge of Support

The Chaplains Commission of the North American Mission (NAMB) endorses Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Chaplains. NAMB is an agency of the SBC whose messengers over the years have adopted resolutions on a variety of subjects. These range from broad concepts of freedom of religion and the separation of church and state to matters of morality and personal conduct. The Chaplains Commission expects that endorsed chaplains will have as a focus in the midst of their ministry an awareness of and responsiveness to opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. One outcome of the ministry of Southern Baptist chaplains is seeing persons make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, then follow that profession of faith in believer’s baptism and affiliation with a local church. Chaplains are expected to live their personal and professional lives with the highest practice of integrity. You will be expected to abide by guidance given to individuals/churches by the SBC, NAMB and/or SBC Chaplaincy Team leaders. If your personal lifestyle impacts your ministry effectiveness or could bring about embarrassment to the cause of Christ, the SBC or SBC Chaplaincy, you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including withdrawal of endorsement.

By seeking and receiving a SBC Chaplaincy endorsement, you indicate your willingness to abide by the following “Code of Conduct”.

**CODE OF CONDUCT PLEDGE**

- I will conduct myself in a way that reflects positively on Christ and the Southern Baptist Convention.
- If married, other than my spouse or family member, I will not be at a residence alone, have a meal alone, or be in a car alone with anyone of the opposite sex.
- I will be a member in good standing of a Southern Baptist Church.
- I will practice tithing.
- I execute sound judgment in counseling, visiting, communicating and traveling with anyone of the opposite sex in order to guard against any perception of inappropriateness.
- I will not show affection that could be questioned as inappropriate.
- I will abstain from consumption of any alcoholic beverage or illegal drugs.
- I will not view pornography.
- I will maintain financial integrity.
- I will submit the required Quarterly Chaplaincy Report to the SBC Chaplaincy Team.
- I will covenant to pray for the integrity and spiritual health of my fellow chaplains.

Printed Name: __________________________________________
Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________
CHAPLAIN ENDORSEMENT PATHWAY

Application → Assessment → Chaplain Commission → Endorsement

ONE MONTH → TWO MONTHS

SUPPORT → Chaplaincy Team

Sending Church/Chaplain Ambassadors

Community Services
Corporate
Disaster Relief
Healthcare
Institutional
Military
Public Safety
APPENDIX C

Southern Baptist Endorsed Chaplains/Counselors in Ministry Guidelines in Response to the June 26, 2013, Supreme Court Ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

North American Mission Board

4200 North Point Pkwy
Alpharetta, GA 30022

770.410.6000
800.634.2462

NAMB.NET

August 29, 2013

RE: Southern Baptist Endorsed Chaplains/Counselors in Ministry Guidelines in Response to the June 26, 2013, Supreme Court Ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

To Whom It May Concern:

In light of the June 26, 2013, Supreme Court of the United States ruling that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which states “the word ‘marriage’ means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word ‘spouse’ refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife” is unconstitutional, and the resultant Department of Defense policy changes to extend benefits to same-sex domestic partners as spouses, the following guidelines clarify the ministry expectations for all military and VA chaplains endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention:

Doctrine

All religious ministry and pastoral care conducted by military chaplains endorsed by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention will fully reflect the doctrine and practices of Southern Baptists as set forth in Holy Scripture, the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM) 2000 and The Southern Baptist Endorsement Manual for Chaplains and Counselors in Ministry. All ministries regarding human sexuality will reflect the historic, natural and biblical view of marriage as God’s lifelong gift of “the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime.” (Article XVII, BFM)

Pastoral Care

Southern Baptists believe that “all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography” (Article XV, BFM) are condemned by Holy Scripture as sin. Such practices violate God’s biblical standards for sexual purity and are equally destructive to healthy marital relations and Christian social order. Responsible pastoral care will seek to offer repentance and forgiveness, help and healing, and restoration through the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ’s sacrificial gift of love on the cross.

Restrictions

In harmony with Holy Scripture, NAMB endorsed chaplains will not conduct or attend a wedding ceremony for any same sex couple, bless such a union or perform counseling in support of such a union, assist or support paid contractors or volunteers leading same-sex relational events, nor offer any kind of relationship training or retreat, on or off of a military installation, that would give the appearance of accepting the homosexual lifestyle or sexual wrongdoing. This biblical prohibition remains in effect irrespective of any civil law authorizing same sex marriage or benefits to the contrary. Chaplains in violation of these restrictions will be subject to removal of their endorsement in accordance with The Southern Baptist Endorsement Manual for Chaplains and Counselors in Ministry, Chapter 4, Endorsement Policies and Guidelines.
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Southern Baptist chaplains are free to lead or participate in a worship service conducted on any
military installation or location designated for worship. This excludes conducting a service
jointly with a chaplain, contractor or volunteer who personally practices or affirms a
homosexual lifestyle or such conduct.

Pluralism
All military chaplains without exception are endorsed to ensure the free exercise of religion for
all service members according to DOD 1304.28, par. 6.1.2 while serving in the pluralistic
environment of the military. Every chaplain remains protected under DOD policy and applicable
federal law to preach, teach and counsel in accordance with the tenets of their denominational
faith group and their own religious conscience.

Therefore, endorsed Southern Baptist military chaplains will:

   a) Provide sound, biblical pastoral care for all service members and their families.
   b) Conduct religious support and pastoral care in accordance with the BFM 2000, the
      SBC/NAMB Chaplain Endorsement Manual and the guidelines contained in this
document.
   c) Treat all service members regardless of rank or behavior, with Christ-centered dignity,
honor and respect while assisting the institutional leadership in its religious mission
requirements and responsibilities as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United
States Constitution.

If you need to discuss these guidelines and expectations further, or if you experience undue
prejudice or irreparable harm as a result of following these expectations, please contact us
immediately at the North American Mission Board, phone number 770-410-6367.

God bless you for all you do to minister the love of Jesus Christ to the members of the Armed
Forces, our veterans and their families.

Douglas L. Carver
Executive Director of Chaplaincy Services
North American Mission Board
Southern Baptist Convention

Keith Travis
Endorsing Agent
North American Mission Board
Southern Baptist Convention
BIBLIOGRAPHY


