

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alignment Recommendation for the Ministry of Endorsement

A Structural Discernment Report

The ministry of endorsement serves a vital intersection of ecclesial supervision and public institutional trust. Bishops rely on it to confirm clergy suitability for specialized settings; institutions depend on it for credentialing and accountability; and clergy require it to serve in environments shaped by federal and professional standards. Because endorsement spans supervisory, administrative, and institutional domains—and as the U.S. Region takes shape and connectional structures continue to evolve—its structural placement warrants careful examination.

References to GBHEM in this summary reflect the ministry’s current administrative setting, while recognizing that ongoing structural developments may result in these functions being carried within a reconfigured or successor general church structure.

This report evaluates four alignment pathways and recommends the one that best supports supervisory clarity, operational stability, and institutional credibility.

Alignment Pathways Considered:

Continuity Model – Office within GBHEM

UMEA remains within the Division of Ordained Ministry, under GBHEM governance and administrative systems.

Restored Division Model – Division within GBHEM

UMEA becomes a restored division, recovering some visibility and authority associated with the former Section on Chaplains and Related Ministries.

Affiliated Commission Model – COB-Governed Commission, Administratively Housed in GBHEM

Governance shifts to a Council of Bishops–constituted commission, while GBHEM (or a successor structure) provides administrative support and operational continuity.

Independent Commission Model – Standalone Commission

UMEA becomes an autonomous commission with episcopal governance and separate administrative infrastructure.

Criteria for Evaluation:

- **Supervisory Clarity and Episcopal Accountability**
- **Institutional Credibility and Representation**
- **Administrative and Operational Capacity**
- **Integration with Connectional Identity**
- **Adaptability under Regionalization**
- **Continuity of Ministry**
- **Fiscal Responsibility**
- **Feasibility and Legitimacy**

Comparative Insights:

Continuity Model

Stable but retains ambiguity in supervisory authority and limits episcopal engagement.

Restored Division Model

Improves internal identity within GBHEM but leaves key supervisory tensions unresolved.

Affiliated Commission Model

Provides episcopal governance, a recognizable institutional identity, administrative stability through GBHEM, and adaptability as regionalization unfolds.

Independent Commission Model

Strong ecclesial alignment but administratively complex, costly, and legislatively demanding.

Recommendation:

The Affiliated Commission Model emerges as the alignment that most effectively supports the ministry of endorsement.

It offers:

- clear episcopal oversight,
- strengthened institutional credibility,
- operational continuity through established GBHEM systems, and
- flexibility for future regional structures.

This model balances supervisory coherence, administrative realism, and public trust.

Transition Considerations:

If the Church moves toward this alignment, several principles should guide transition planning:

- **Continuity of Ministry:** No disruption to endorsed clergy or institutional partners.
- **Collaborative Development:** GBHEM, GCFA, the Council of Bishops, and emerging regional bodies should clarify roles together.
- **Phased Realignment:** Governance may shift first; administrative adjustments can follow gradually.
- **Transparent Communication:** Clear messaging will sustain confidence across the connection.

Conclusion:

Endorsement cannot remain indefinitely in structural ambiguity. The ministry is too important—and too exposed institutionally—to operate without a settled structural home. Any transition undertaken by the Church will require steadiness, sustained follow-through, and a commitment to safeguarding those who carry this ministry now.