

1 **OVERTURE 1** from the Potomac Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 23-1 on Associate/Assistant Pastors Succeeding Senior Pastor”  
3

4 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 23-1 be amended as follows (underlining for additions; ~~strickthrough~~  
5 for deletions).  
6

7 **23-1...**

8 The associate or assistant pastors may continue to serve a congregation when the  
9 pastoral relation of the senior pastor is dissolved, but they may not normally succeed  
10 the senior pastor without an intervening term of service in a different field of labor.  
11 ~~However a congregation by a secret ballot with four fifths (4/5) majority vote may~~  
12 ~~petition Presbytery for an exception which by a three fourths (3/4) majority vote~~  
13 ~~Presbytery may grant. Presbytery needs to determine if the dissolution of the pastoral~~  
14 ~~relationship with the senior pastor was brought about in Christian love and good order~~  
15 ~~on the part of the parties concerned. However, a congregation may petition Presbytery~~  
16 for an exception and Presbytery may approve a call to an associate or assistant pastor  
17 to succeed a senior pastor if the Presbytery, after careful consideration, determines by  
18 a two-thirds (2/3) vote that the dissolution of the pastoral relation with the senior pastor  
19 was brought about in Christian love and good order on the part of the parties  
20 concerned.  
21

22 **Rationale:**

23 Our *Confession of Faith* (1:6) states that “The whole counsel of God concerning all  
24 things necessary for... faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and  
25 necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture.” However, the rule of *BCO* 23-1, that  
26 an associate or assistant pastor may not normally succeed a senior pastor without an  
27 intervening term of service in a different field of labor, has neither express warrant in the  
28 Word of God, nor is it implied by good and necessary consequence.

29 That notwithstanding, our *Confession of Faith* (1:6) states “there are some  
30 circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to  
31 human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian  
32 prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.” It  
33 is here that the requirement of *BCO* 23-1, stated above, does find some warrant as governing  
34 circumstances in the government of the Church that Christian prudence commends.

35 Yet such prudent governance should not preempt the biblical and constitutional rights  
36 and responsibilities of congregations and Presbyteries, nor should it establish an absolute rule  
37 to prejudice all circumstances by an apparent presumption of guilt. It is the right and  
38 responsibility of the congregation to recognize by election to office those it judges to be called  
39 to ministry (*BCO* 16-1, 2) and it is the right and responsibility of the Presbytery to permit a  
40 call, if in its judgment the call is found in order and is for the good of the Church (*BCO* 16-1  
41 and 21-1).

42 In its current form *BCO* 23-1 severely restricts the rights and responsibilities of the  
43 congregation and the Presbytery to determine that in some circumstances a call to an associate  
44 or assistant to succeed a senior pastor without an intervening term of service in a different  
45 field of labor would be in order. An earlier form of this provision made the restriction absolute.

1    Though the current form was an improvement, it maintained a very high bar. Note that since  
2    then many PCA churches have chosen to call an associate or assistant pastor to take over as  
3    senior pastor, and the PCA has had no cases of the feared abuse. As a matter of prudence, the  
4    details can be adjusted further based upon experience. We can lower the bar, while preserving  
5    some heightened scrutiny, and allow more liberty in the matter for the good of the church. Of  
6    course, the action can be reversed if it proves to be an occasion for abuse.

7

8

9    *Reviewed and adopted at Potomac's Stated Meeting on March 15, 2025*

10   *Attested to by: /s/ TE Joel St Clair, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 2** from the Wisconsin Presbytery (to CCB, OC, MNA)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 5-4 for Consent of Mission Church Members in Calling a Pastor”

3  
4 **Whereas**, one of the great principles which has governed the polity of the Presbyterian Church  
5 in America and its predecessors since the formation of the General Assembly in 1789  
6 is that the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society  
7 resides in that society (Preliminary Principle 6, *BCO* Preface);

8  
9 **Whereas**, the guiding principle in the writing of *BCO* 5 was that a mission church should  
10 mirror the practices of a particular church as nearly as possible, establishing in the  
11 minds of the mission church the correct procedures they will be using after  
12 organization (*M38GA*, 2010, Overture 15 footnote i, 401f.);

13  
14 **Whereas**, mission churches are the same as particular churches, except that they have no  
15 permanent governing body, and thus must be governed or supervised by others (*BCO*  
16 5-1);

17  
18 **Whereas**, the pastoral ministry for the mission church may be provided “by a minister of the  
19 Presbytery called by Presbytery to serve as pastor” (*BCO* 5-4.a);

20  
21 **Whereas**, the temporary system of government provided by the Presbytery under *BCO* 5-3 is  
22 often removed from the mission church’s community by geography, race,  
23 socioeconomics, or otherwise;

24  
25 **Whereas**, the pastor of the mission church is part of the church’s community; and

26  
27 **Whereas**, this provision of the pastor typically occurs before there are any members of the  
28 mission church and so ordinarily the Presbytery acts without reference to the members  
29 but occasionally occurs when there are members of the mission church whose voice  
30 should be heard as part of the process;

31  
32 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 5-4 is amended as follows (underlining for additions):

- 33  
34 **5-4.** Pastoral ministry for the mission church may be provided:  
35 a. by a minister of the Presbytery called by Presbytery to serve as  
36 pastor, or  
37 b. by stated, student, or ruling elder supply (*BCO* 22-5, -6), or  
38 c. by a series of qualified preachers approved by the temporary  
39 government (*BCO* 12-5.e).  
40

41 If members of the mission church have been received according to *BCO*  
42 5-5 at the time the Presbytery calls a minister to serve as pastor for the  
43 mission church under *BCO* 5-4.a, the members must give their consent  
44 to the pastor by a majority vote at a congregational meeting held

1                                   according to BCO 25. This consent must be reported to the Presbytery  
2                                   prior to its calling a minister as pastor.

3

4

5   *Adopted by the Wisconsin Presbytery at its stated meeting July 26, 2025.*

6   *Attested by RE Jason Heinen, stated clerk.*

7

1 **OVERTURE 3** from the New York State Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 32-20 and 32-21 Regarding Dismissing Charges”  
3

4 **Be it resolved** that the following amendment be made to *BCO* 32-20 (underlining for  
5 additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
6

7 **32-20.** The accused or a member of the court may object to the consideration  
8 of a charge, for example, if he thinks the passage of time since the alleged offense  
9 makes fair adjudication unachievable. The court ~~should~~ shall consider ~~factors~~  
10 ~~such as~~ the gravity of the alleged offense as well as what degradations of evidence  
11 and memory may have occurred in the intervening period along with any other  
12 relevant factors.  
13

14 **Be it further resolved** that the following paragraph be inserted after *BCO* 32-20:  
15

16 **32-21.** No charge within an indictment shall be dismissed without a hearing of  
17 the court where both parties are able to present arguments for or against dismissal.  
18 Statements offered by either party shall be narrowly focused on the reasons for  
19 dismissal and not stray into testimony. If the motion to dismiss is on the grounds  
20 of the memory of the witnesses, each witness shall be interviewed by the court  
21 and a ruling made on their ability to recall the facts in question. In any instance  
22 of dismissal, the court shall record its reasons for dismissal.  
23

24 So that the amended paragraphs will read as follows:  
25

26 **32-20.** The accused or a member of the court may object to the consideration  
27 of a charge, for example, if he thinks the passage of time since the alleged offense  
28 makes fair adjudication unachievable. The court shall consider the gravity of the  
29 alleged offense as well as what degradations of evidence and memory may have  
30 occurred in the intervening period along with any other relevant factors.  
31

32 **32-21.** No charge within an indictment shall be dismissed without a hearing of  
33 the court where both parties are able to present arguments for or against dismissal.  
34 Statements offered by either party shall be narrowly focused on the reasons for  
35 dismissal and not stray into testimony. If the motion to dismiss is on the grounds  
36 of the memory of the witnesses each witness shall be interviewed by the court and  
37 a ruling made on their ability to recall the facts in question. In any instance of  
38 dismissal, the court shall record its reasons for dismissal.  
39

40 Rationale: No charge should be dismissed without proper consideration of the seriousness of  
41 the allegations and proper determination of the degradation of witness memory, aside from  
42 speculation that it might be degraded. A recent SJC decision (Case 2024-18) held that they  
43 could not overturn a presbytery decision to dismiss in the absence of clear error on this point.  
44 However, both concurring and dissenting opinions noted the deficiency of the procedure the

1 presbytery used. This amendment would make consideration of these things a constitutional  
2 requirement, thus it would be a clear error for a court to neglect them.

3

4

5 *Adopted by the New York State Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 26, 2025*

6 *Attested by John Van Voorhis, stated clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 4** from the Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to OC)  
2 "Docket a Prayer of Thanksgiving for Adult Professions of Faith"  
3

4 **Be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA offer a prayer of thanks to God during the Assembly in  
5 Louisville for the 5,656 adult professions of faith reported in the PCA Statistical  
6 Report, which reflects data from the last annual report of the 1,723 churches shown.  
7 (Accessed 8/12/24. <https://presbyteryportal.pcanet.org/Report/StatsReport>)  
8

9 **Rationale:**

10  
11 1. While there are many things in the life of our Church for which to give thanks while we're  
12 together at GA, we are compelled, and it would be good for our hearts, to celebrate and  
13 give thanks for God's gracious, saving work in these many lives, rejoicing with those who  
14 rejoice in heaven, welcoming our new brothers and sisters in Christ, and encouraged in the  
15 focus of our mission.  
16

17 "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. "Just so, I tell you,  
18 there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over  
19 ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:6-7; ESV)  
20

21 2. As assistance for that thanksgiving, attached is a table with data from the PCA Statistical  
22 Report online. It shows the church in each presbytery that reported the most "adult  
23 professions of faith" in their last annual report and the total number of adult professions  
24 reported in each Presbytery.  
25

26 3. The Stated Clerk's 2025 report to GA indicated there were 1,667 churches in the PCA and  
27 297 missions. (52<sup>nd</sup> GA Commissioner Handbook p. 331.)  
28

29 4. The 5,656 figure reflects data from the last report filed by each of 1,723 churches. Some  
30 were for years prior to 2024. The 2025 Stated Clerk's report indicated there were "more  
31 than 5000 adult professions, more than 5000 child professions, and more than 5000 infant  
32 baptisms" in 2024. (52<sup>nd</sup> GA Commissioner Handbook p. 307)  
33

34 5. No attempt was made to independently verify the numbers in the following tables. These  
35 numbers will be updated and a revised Overture will be refiled if PCA statistics are updated  
36 and published in sufficient time before the mid-May 2026 Overture filing deadline.  
37  
38

39 *Approved at Pacific Northwest Presbytery's Stated Meeting on October 10, 2025.*

40 *Assigned to PNW Overtures Commission with authority to revise & refile if deemed necessary.*

41 *Attested to by: TE Jerid Krulish, Clerk, Pacific NW Presbytery*  
42

Overture 4, Pacific Northwest Presbytery

total APs	Presbytery	# APs	Churches Reporting the Most Adult Professions ("AP's") in Each Presbytery in 2024 Reports
4	Arizona	2	Desert Palms Church - Chandler, AZ
22	Ascension	7	Gospel Fellowship - Valencia, PA
29	Blue Ridge	12	Mercy Pres - Forest, VA
115	Calvary	37	Grace & Peace - Greenville, SC
3	Canada West	2	Woodgreen - Calgary, AB
29	Catawba Valley	15	Meadowview Reformed - Lexington, NC
70	Central Carolina	52	Hope Community - Charlotte, NC
85	Central Florida	28	St. Andrews Chapel, Sanford, FL
41	Central Georgia	4	Covenant & Milledgeville & North Macon Pres - 4 ea.
62	Central Indiana	50	Christ Community - Carmel, IN
78	Chesapeake	29	Chapelgate - Marriottsville, MD
50	Chicago Metro	13	Christ Pres - Roselle, IL
70	Covenant	15	College Hill - Oxford, MS
8	Eastern Canada	2	Bedford Pres, NS & Harbour Lights Sydney, NS - 2 ea.
39	Eastern Carolina	9	Christ the King - Wilmington, NC
33	Eastern Pennsylvania	13	Providence Pres - Quakertown, PA
109	Evangel	28	Briarwood - Birmingham, AL
24	Fellowship	10	Filbert Pres - York, SC
37	Georgia Foothills	21	Grace - Blairsville, GA
13	Grace	5	First Pres - Biloxi, MS
115	Great Lakes	24	New City Pres - Ferndale, MI
56	Gulf Coast	15	Grace Community - Mobile, AL
35	Gulfstream	19	Spanish River - Boca Raton, FL
63	Heartland	37	Grace Pres - Lawrence, KS
	Heritage	14	Cornerstone Pres - Kemblesville, PA
18	Highlands	7	Covenant Pres - Hendersonville, NC
70	Hills & Plains	47	Trinity Grace - Rogers, AR
15	Houston Metro	6	Redeemer Pres - Sugar Land, TX
7	Illiana	4	Center Grove Pres - Edwardsville, IL
13	Iowa	6	Hope Evangelical, N. Liberty & Hospers Pres - 6 ea.
30	James River	7	New Life in Christ - Fredericksburg, VA
34	Korean Capital	29	Korean Central Pres - Centreville, VA
11	Korean Central	5	Korean Pres - St. Louis, IL
3	Korean Eastern	1	State College & Sarang Nanum & Pittsburgh KPC
-	Korean Northeastern	-	no 2024 church reports
60	Korean Northwest	53	Maranatha Vision Church - Livermore, CA
30	Korean Southeastern	15	Him Church of Orlando - Ocoee, FL
-	Korean Southern	-	no 2024 church reports
-	Korean Southwest	-	no 2024 church reports
54	Korean SW Orange Co	20	Orange Hill Pres - Orange, CA
33	Lowcountry	23	Church Creek Pres - Charleston, SC
174	Metro Atlanta	118	Perimeter - Johns Creek, GA
8	Metro New York	4	Redeemer Pres West Side - New York, NY
50	Mississippi Valley	20	Redeemer Church - Jackson, MS

Overture 4, Pacific Northwest Presbytery

52	Missouri	21	Twin Oaks - Ballwin, MO
68	Nashville	50	Cornerstone Pres - Franklin, TN
19	New Jersey	13	First Pres - Ocean City, NJ
15	New River	14	Covenant Pres - Nitro, WV
18	New York State	8	Hope Church - Ballston Spa, NY
246	North Florida	163	Good News Church - St. Augustine, FL
47	North Texas	11	Mercy Pres, Dallas, TX
72	Northern California	27	Trinity Church Central Oahu- Millani, HI
79	Northern Illinois	32	Grace - Peoria, IL
25	Northern New England	9	Hooksett Christian Fellowship - Hooksett, NH
71	Northwest Georgia	36	Grace Church - Canton, GA
19	Ohio	10	Grace Pres - Hudson, OH
41	Ohio Valley	9	North Cincinnati Community - Mason, OH
83	Pacific	35	Pacific Crossroads - Manhattan Beach, CA
64	Pacific Northwest	23	Christ Church Bellingham, WA
49	Palmetto	13	Columbia Pres - Columbia, SC
26	Pee Dee	13	Surfside Pres - Myrtle Beach, SC
35	Philadelphia	32	Tenth Pres - Philadelphia, PA
8	Philadelphia Metro West	4	Iron Works Church, Phoenixville, PA
103	Piedmont Triad	54	Hope Pres - Winston-Salem, NC
24	Pittsburgh	6	Calvin Pres, Providence Pres, View Crest Pres - 6 ea.
29	Platte Valley	13	Grace Chapel - Lincoln, NE
86	Potomac	17	McLean Pres & Grace Christian Herndon - 17 ea.
9	Providence	2	Decatur Pres & Southwood Pres & Valley Pres - 2 ea.
5	Rio Grande	4	City Pres - Albuquerque, NM
98	Rocky Mountain	27	Harvest Reformed - Gillette, WY
29	Savannah River	8	Lakemont - Augusta, GA
12	Siouxlands	4	Foothills Sturgis & Reformation Mankato MN - 4 ea.
16	South Coast	15	New Life Pres - La Mesa, CA
150	South Florida	60	Old Cutler Pres - Palmetto Bay, FL
29	South Texas	6	Grace & Westminster & Dios Con Nostros - 6 ea.
40	Southeast Alabama	9	First Pres - Dothan, AL
16	Southern Louisiana	6	Bethel, Lake Charles, Grace Baton Rouge - 6 ea.
27	Southern New England	13	Center Grace Church, Beverly, MA
99	Southwest Florida	39	Trinity Pres - Lakeland, FL
21	Suncoast Florida	10	Cornerstone of Lakewood Ranch - Bradenton, FL
31	Susquehanna Valley	10	New Covenant Fellowship - Mechanicsburg, PA
53	Tennessee Valley	11	Restoration South Side - Chattanooga, TN
34	Tidewater	10	Calvary, Norfolk & Hope Pres, Smithfield - 10 ea.
14	Warrior	7	First Pres - Aliceville, AL
27	West Hudson	14	Redeemer Church - Montclair, NJ
5	Westminster	2	Westminster Pres - Johnson City, TN
78	Wisconsin	20	Jacob's Well Pres - Green Bay, WI

1 **OVERTURE 5** from the Pacific Northwest Presbytery—**REVISED** (to CCB, OC, AC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 5-1.a to Stipulate that AC Members Elected by GA Must Be from  
3 Different Presbyteries”  
4

5 **Be it resolved**, the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA amend *RAO* 5-1.a as shown below (underlining for additions;  
6 ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
7

8 ***RAO* 5. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

9 **5-1.** The Administrative Committee of General Assembly (AC) shall consist of  
10 twenty (20) members:

- 11 a. Eleven members in classes elected through the standard nomination and  
12 election procedure; No person may be elected as one of these 11 members or  
13 as an alternate if there is already a member from the same Presbytery. But if  
14 a person changes Presbyteries after being elected he may continue to serve his  
15 full term.  
16 b. One member each from the following program Committees or Agencies: ...  
17

18 So that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

19 **5-1.** The Administrative Committee of General Assembly (AC) shall consist of  
20 twenty (20) members:

- 21 a. Eleven members in classes elected through the standard nomination and  
22 election procedure. No person may be elected as one of these 11 members if  
23 there is already a member from the same Presbytery. But if a person changes  
24 Presbyteries after being elected he may continue to serve his full term.  
25 b. One member each from the following program Committees or Agencies: ...  
26

27 **Rationale:**

- 28  
29 1. This amendment is similar to the provision governing SJC membership in *BCO* 15-4.  
30  
31 2. *BCO* 14-1.9 says: "The GA's committees are to include proportionate representation of all  
32 presbyteries, *wherever possible*." [emphasis added] That is easily achievable with 11  
33 members of AC. But while the proportionality provision is considered by the Nominating  
34 Committee, it can easily be overlooked when floor nominations are considered at GA.  
35  
36 3. At present, the 11 members in the four AC classes include two members each from three  
37 Presbyteries. This seems contrary to *BCO* 14-1.9.  
38  
39 4. The AC is unique among the 10 GA Permanent Committees and Agency Boards and has a  
40 "unique role" (*RAO* 5-4). For example, the AC has authority to recommend the annual  
41 budgets of each Program Committee and Agency.  
42

1 And *RAO* 10-1 provides: "Final approval of all decisions regarding the Assembly  
2 [arrangements] rest in the Administrative Committee," including customarily finalizing  
3 GA locations without formal GA approval.<sup>1</sup>  
4

5 And AC is the only Committee for which (a) the *RAO* encourages financial support from  
6 churches, (b) specifies an annual "Administrative Fee" from Ministers, and (c) requires the  
7 other 9 Permanent Committees and Agencies to financially support the AC. (*RAO* 5-4).  
8  
9

10 *Approved at Pacific Northwest Presbytery's Stated Meeting on October 10, 2025.*

11 *Attested to by: TE Jerid Krulish, Clerk, Pacific NW Presbytery*

12 *Revision approved by a PNW Overtures Commission with authority to do so, on February*  
13 *12, 2026.*

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<sup>1</sup> *RAO* 10-8. "Ordinarily the AC will bring GA sites before the Assembly for approval before any contracts are finalized. However, the AC shall be authorized to finalize contracts with hotels and convention centers before obtaining GA approval when circumstances arise wherein the AC approves the site, the presbytery (or presbyteries) has/have agreed to host the Assembly, good facilities at favorable rates are available, and the opportunity may be lost if a delay in finalizing the contract must await approval at the next GA."

1 **OVERTURE 6** from the Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 14-9, 15-8, and add 16-7.h to Require a 10% Minority to Remove from  
3 an Omnibus”  
4

5 **Be it resolved** the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA amend *RAO* 14-9 and 15-8, and add a 16-7.h, each stipulating the  
6 same thing, to require a 10% minority to remove an item from the list of committee  
7 recommendations to be considered in omnibus. (underlining for additions;  
8 ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
9

10 **14-9. Presentation of the Report of Permanent Committees and Agencies through**  
11 **Their Respective Committees of Commissioners, to the General Assembly**  
12

13 d. The chairman of the committee of commissioners or his designee shall move  
14 each recommendation in turn, offering an explanation of the motion and the  
15 committee’s rationale. The Moderator may put to the Assembly in gross all  
16 recommendations passed by the committee, unless there is ~~objection from the~~  
17 ~~floor to the inclusion of specific recommendation(s), in which case such~~  
18 ~~recommendation(s) shall be voted upon separately.~~ a request from the floor to  
19 remove a recommendation from the omnibus (the "in gross" package). In that  
20 case, the Moderator shall put the removal question to the Assembly, without  
21 any debate. An item shall be removed from omnibus if one-tenth (10%) of the  
22 commissioners vote in favor of the removal.  
23

24 **15-8. Presentation of the Report of the Overtures Committee to the General**  
25 **Assembly.**  
26

27 b. The chairman or his designee shall move each recommendation in turn,  
28 offering an explanation of the motion and the committee’s rationale. The  
29 Moderator may put to the Assembly in gross all recommendations passed by  
30 the committee, unless there is ~~objection from the floor to the inclusion of~~  
31 ~~specific recommendation(s), in which case such recommendation(s) shall be~~  
32 ~~voted upon separately.~~ a request from the floor to remove a recommendation  
33 from the omnibus (the "in gross" package). In that case, the Moderator shall  
34 put the removal question to the Assembly, without any debate. An item shall  
35 be removed from omnibus if one-tenth (10%) of the commissioners vote in  
36 favor of the removal.  
37

38 **16.7 Guidelines for Reporting on Presbytery Records**  
39

40 h. The chairman or his designee shall move each recommendation in turn,  
41 offering an explanation of the motion and the committee’s rationale. The  
42 Moderator may put to the Assembly in gross all recommendations passed by  
43 the committee, unless there is a request from the floor to remove a  
44 recommendation from the omnibus (the "in gross" package). In that case, the  
45 Moderator shall put the removal question to the Assembly, without any

1 debate. An item shall be removed from omnibus if one-tenth (10%) of the  
2 commissioners vote in favor of the removal.

3  
4 So that the amended paragraphs read:

5  
6 **14-9. Presentation of the Report of Permanent Committees and Agencies through**  
7 **Their Respective Committees of Commissioners, to the General Assembly**

8  
9 d. The chairman of the committee of commissioners or his designee shall move  
10 each recommendation in turn, offering an explanation of the motion and the  
11 committee's rationale. The Moderator may put to the Assembly in gross all  
12 recommendations passed by the committee, unless there is a request from the  
13 floor to remove a recommendation from the omnibus (the "in gross" package).  
14 In that case, the Moderator shall put the removal question to the Assembly,  
15 without any debate. An item shall be removed from omnibus if one-tenth  
16 (10%) of the commissioners vote in favor of the removal.

17  
18 **15-8. Presentation of the Report of the Overtures Committee to the General**  
19 **Assembly.**

20  
21 b. The chairman or his designee shall move each recommendation in turn,  
22 offering an explanation of the motion and the committee's rationale. The  
23 Moderator may put to the Assembly in gross all recommendations passed by  
24 the committee, unless there is a request from the floor to remove a  
25 recommendation from the omnibus (the "in gross" package). In that case, the  
26 Moderator shall put the removal question to the Assembly, without any  
27 debate. An item shall be removed from omnibus if one-tenth (10%) of the  
28 commissioners vote in favor of the removal.

29  
30 **16.7 Guidelines for Reporting on Presbytery Records**

31  
32 h. The chairman or his designee shall move each recommendation in turn,  
33 offering an explanation of the motion and the committee's rationale. The  
34 Moderator may put to the Assembly in gross all recommendations passed by  
35 the committee, unless there is a request from the floor to remove a  
36 recommendation from the omnibus (the "in gross" package). In that case, the  
37 Moderator shall put the removal question to the Assembly, without any  
38 debate. An item shall be removed from omnibus if one-tenth (10%) of the  
39 commissioners vote in favor of the removal.

40  
41 **Rationale:**

42  
43 1. If over 90% of the Assembly does not want to debate a committee recommendation, it  
44 should not be required to do so. The effect of our current procedure is to either (1) take up  
45 at least 10 minutes of floor time on a matter that a single commissioner wants to discuss,

- 1 or (2) require someone to move the previous question after a lone individual requests the  
2 question be split from omnibus. In an assembly of 2,000 people, the procedure should be  
3 flipped. It should require an affirmative vote of at least 10% to debate a committee  
4 recommendation that the Moderator has deemed prudent to be presented in omnibus.  
5
- 6 2. The amendment seeks to expedite business without precluding debate on matters that a  
7 10% minority wishes to debate. It seeks to decrease the amount of time the Assembly  
8 spends in quasi "committee work." The amendment would apply to 13 committees  
9 reporting at GA (i.e., 11 committees of commissioners, the Overtures Committee, and the  
10 Committee on Review of Presbytery Records).  
11
- 12 3. According to our historical practice and the *RAO*, and as very obliquely described in  
13 *Robert's Rules*, it would be the Assembly Moderator and not the committee chairman that  
14 proposes a specific set of recommendations to be considered in gross/in omnibus. (RONR  
15 (12th ed.) 12:14, 51:48.b.)  
16
- 17 4. When a GA committee is unanimous or nearly so, it's imprudent to grant a single  
18 commissioner the right to withdraw a recommendation from omnibus for debate. For  
19 example, last year there were 72 *unanimous* RPR recommendations to approve its report  
20 as a whole for those 72 Presbyteries. When a GA committee of 60+ men are unanimous on  
21 a matter, it's not sensible for just one commissioner out of 2,000+ to be able to automatically  
22 remove something from omnibus. Requiring 10% (about 200) of those commissioners to  
23 vote in favor of removal seems reasonable and efficient.  
24
- 25 5. This would be particularly valuable for recommendations made by both the Permanent  
26 Committees/Agency Boards *and* their respective committees of commissioners. At present,  
27 a lone GA commissioner can ask for an item to be removed from an omnibus package, even  
28 when the Permanent Committee or Agency Board, and its respective Committee of  
29 Commissioners, were both unanimous in favor of the action recommended to the  
30 Assembly.

31 And if a Committee of Commissioners recommends an amendment to a  
32 recommendation from a Permanent Committee or Agency Board, the *RAO* already affords  
33 60 minutes of debate. (*RAO* 14-9-h.3) And in the rare event there is a need to consider a  
34 Committee of Commissioner's recommendation individually, the amendment proposed by  
35 this Overture would only require 10% of the GA commissioners to agree and it would be  
36 removed from omnibus.  
37

38 *Approved at Pacific Northwest Presbytery's Stated Meeting on October 10, 2025.*  
39 *Assigned to PNW Overtures Commission with authority to revise & refile if deemed necessary.*  
40 *Attested to by: TE Jerid Krulish, Clerk, Pacific NW Presbytery*

1 **OVERTURE 7** from the Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 16 Regarding RPR’s Reporting on Presbytery Records”  
3

4 **Be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA amend *RAO* 16-7 as shown below with conforming changes  
5 made to *RAO* 16-3.e.(8) and 16-4.c.(3) (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for  
6 deletions):  
7

8 **RAO Article XVI - Review of Presbytery Records**

9 **16-7. Guidelines for Reporting on Presbytery Records**

10 1. The Committee has authority:

- 11 a. To approve a Presbytery's minutes as being without any exceptions.  
12 b. To determine an exception of form and inform the Presbytery of such.  
13 c. To determine an exception of substance and cite the Presbytery to respond  
14 to the Committee.  
15 d. To determine whether a Presbytery's initial response is satisfactory, and if  
16 not, cite the Presbytery to respond again to the Committee.  
17 e. To recommend to the Assembly that a second Presbytery response be judged  
18 unsatisfactory (*RAO* 16-10.c).  
19 f. To recommend to the Assembly whether the provisions of *OMSJC* 15  
20 should be initiated in a *BCO* 40-5 matter.

21 2. The report of the committee shall be concise. It shall include the following:

- 22 a. A list of the minutes, by presbyteries, received by the committee.  
23 b. A list of the presbyteries which have not submitted minutes, if any.  
24 c. ~~A recommendation concerning the minutes of each presbytery, which The~~  
25 report on each Presbytery, which shall include:  
26 1) Minutes approved without exception;  
27 2) Minutes approved with exceptions of form, which shall be reported  
28 directly to the presbytery;  
29 3) Minutes approved with exceptions of substance, which shall ~~be~~  
30 presented to the General Assembly, which presentation shall include  
31 citation of any relevant scriptural and/or constitutional references, and  
32 provide the committee’s rationale for finding the exception of substance;  
33 4) Responses to exceptions of previous Assemblies Committees, if any;  
34 5) ~~Recommendations concerning all responses to exceptions taken by~~  
35 previous Assemblies that have not been disposed of suitably.  
36 d. Any other recommendation to the Assembly.  
37 e. A statement of the division of the vote on each.  
38 f. Any recommendation which may affect the budget of the Assembly shall be  
39 referred to the Committee of Commissioners on Administrative Committee.  
40 g. A list of members present.  
41 h. Minority Reports  
42 1) With respect to any recommendation to the Assembly under 1.e. or 1.f.  
43 above, prior to a recess or adjournment of the Review of Presbytery  
44 Records Committee following the adoption of said recommendation,

1 any member of the committee may indicate an intention to file a  
2 minority report by giving notice to the chairman.

- 3 2) The minority report, from at least six (6) members of the committee,  
4 must be filed with the chairman of the committee and the office of the  
5 Stated Clerk of General Assembly not more than seven (7) days after  
6 the adjournment of the RPR Committee meeting.

7  
8 16-3.e 9) Minutes of executive sessions are not exempt from the general  
9 requirement that presbytery's actions shall be recorded in the  
10 presbytery's minutes and that these minutes (even if kept in a separate  
11 section on executive sessions) shall be submitted to the General  
12 Assembly for review (*BCO* 13-11; 14-6.c; 40-1). Presbytery may ask  
13 that the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records deal with these  
14 minutes confidentially. ~~However, any exceptions to these minutes must  
15 be submitted to the General Assembly through the normal procedures.~~

16  
17 16-4.c. 3) [Presbytery shall submit] A letter stating Presbytery's response to the  
18 ~~Assembly~~ Committee concerning disposition of any exceptions of  
19 substance taken by the past ~~Assembly~~ Committee.

20  
21 **So that the amended paragraphs will read as follows:**

22  
23 **RAO Article XVI - Review of Presbytery Records**

24 **16-7. Guidelines for Reporting on Presbytery Records**

- 25 1. The Committee has authority:
- 26 a. To approve a Presbytery's minutes as being without any exceptions.
  - 27 b. To determine an exception of form and inform the Presbytery of such.
  - 28 c. To determine an exception of substance and cite the Presbytery to respond  
29 to the Committee.
  - 30 d. To determine whether a Presbytery's initial response is satisfactory, and if  
31 not, cite the Presbytery to respond again to the Committee.
  - 32 e. To recommend to the Assembly that a second Presbytery response be judged  
33 unsatisfactory (*RAO* 16-10.c).
  - 34 f. To recommend to the Assembly whether the provisions of *OMSJC* 15  
35 should be initiated in a *BCO* 40-5 matter.
- 36 2. The report of the committee shall be concise. It shall include the following:
- 37 a. A list of the minutes, by presbyteries, received by the committee.
  - 38 b. A list of the presbyteries which have not submitted minutes, if any.
  - 39 c. The report on each Presbytery, which shall include:
    - 40 1) Minutes approved without exception;
    - 41 2) Minutes approved with exceptions of form, which shall be reported  
42 directly to the presbytery;
    - 43 3) Minutes approved with exceptions of substance, which shall include  
44 citation of any relevant scriptural and/or constitutional references, and  
45 provide the committee's rationale for finding the exception of substance;

- 1                   4) Responses to exceptions of previous Committees, if any;  
2                   d. Any other recommendation to the Assembly.  
3                   e. A statement of the division of the vote on each.  
4                   f. Any recommendation which may affect the budget of the Assembly shall be  
5                   referred to the Committee of Commissioners on Administrative Committee.  
6                   g. A list of members present.  
7                   h. Minority Reports  
8                   1) With respect to any recommendation to the Assembly under 1.e. or 1.f.  
9                   above, prior to a recess or adjournment of the Review of Presbytery  
10                  Records Committee following the adoption of said recommendation,  
11                  any member of the committee may indicate an intention to file a  
12                  minority report by giving notice to the chairman.  
13                  2) The minority report, from at least six (6) members of the committee,  
14                  must be filed with the chairman of the committee and the office of the  
15                  Stated Clerk of General Assembly not more than seven (7) days after  
16                  the adjournment of the RPR Committee meeting.  
17  
18                  16-3.e    9) Minutes of executive sessions are not exempt from the general  
19                  requirement that presbytery's actions shall be recorded in the  
20                  presbytery's minutes and that these minutes (even if kept in a separate  
21                  section on executive sessions) shall be submitted to the General  
22                  Assembly for review (*BCO* 13-11; 14-6.c; 40-1). Presbytery may ask  
23                  that the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records deal with these  
24                  minutes confidentially.  
25  
26                  16-4.c.   3) A letter stating Presbytery's response to the Committee concerning  
27                  disposition of any exceptions of substance taken by the past Committee.  
28

29                  **Rationale**

- 30  
31                  1. A deliberative Assembly with over 2,000 commissioners cannot reasonably consider 500  
32                  recommendations contained in a 215-page RPR Report that is posted online 12 days before  
33                  the Assembly convenes. (ShareFile indicates it was uploaded this year on 6/12/25.)  
34  
35                  2. Last year, RPR's Report recommended 410 exception-of-substance citations for 73  
36                  Presbyteries, and 90 recommendations to find 32 Presbyteries' first responses  
37                  Unsatisfactory. This required 105 minutes of GA floor time.  
38                  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r345Hdcojo4>.  
39  
40                  3. In addition to the sheer number of recommendations, any of which can be removed from  
41                  an omnibus motion at the request of a single individual—even if the RPR vote was  
42                  unanimous. Theoretically, the Chattanooga GA could have had 10 minutes of debate on all  
43                  400+ exception of substance recommendations. Last year, the 60+ member RPR committee  
44                  was unanimous in its overall vote on 74 Presbyteries.  
45

- 1 4. It's important to remember that *RAO* 16-8 stipulates: "Neither the report of the committee  
2 nor the General Assembly's approval or disapproval of this report establishes doctrinal  
3 precedent."  
4
- 5 5. This amendment does not decrease RPR authority, nor does it increase it much. The most  
6 important issue has been and will remain whether a presbytery's *second* response is  
7 Satisfactory. And this would not delay any decision on such. After this change, when RPR  
8 asks presbytery to respond to an exception of substance citation, it is asking as a committee,  
9 and not as the GA, per se. But the presbytery is still required by the *RAO* to respond to the  
10 RPR Committee.  
11
- 12 6. RPR does not need to be a commission of the Assembly. If any presbytery declines to  
13 respond to the RPR Committee, it will eventually come before the GA as an RPR  
14 recommendation to find the presbytery's second non-response Unsatisfactory. And RPR  
15 would also have *RAO* authority to judge a presbytery's minutes to be "without [any]  
16 exception." That's essentially what's currently done, as it is extremely rare to have anyone  
17 split that RPR recommendation out of omnibus, i.e., to debate the *commendation* of a  
18 presbytery.  
19
- 20 7. Here's how this would affect the RPR Report to the Louisville GA. The 2026 RPR would  
21 prepare its report in the same format as 2025 (with hundreds of recommendations). But if  
22 this *RAO* change is enacted by the Louisville GA on Tuesday night, all those RPR  
23 recommendations would become approved—by RPR—under the newly adopted provision,  
24 except any that recommend the GA find a Presbytery's second response Unsatisfactory.  
25

26 To illustrate, if this proposed amendment had been in place in Chattanooga, there would  
27 have been no RPR recommendation that came to the floor, but the full RPR Report would  
28 have recorded all those 500 RPR actions.  
29

30 Finally, just in case this amendment is not enacted, the Louisville GA docket will need to  
31 initially provide the same amount of time for the RPR Report as in the past. But if it is  
32 approved and enacted on Tuesday night, June 23, 2026, the amount of RPR docket time  
33 needed on the Louisville Docket would decrease substantially.  
34  
35

36 *Approved at Pacific Northwest Presbytery's Stated Meeting on October 10, 2025.*

37 *PNW appointed an Overtures Commission with authority to revise/refile if deemed necessary.*

38 *Attested to by: TE Jerid Krulish, Clerk, Pacific NW Presbytery*

1 **OVERTURE 8** from the Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 8-4.i to Set the Deadline for Floor Nominations Earlier”

3  
4 **Be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA amend *RAO* 8-4.i as follows (underlining for additions;  
5 ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):

6  
7 ***RAO* 8-4 Nominating Committee**

8 h. The Committee shall present its nominations to the Assembly through the  
9 Commissioner Handbook or Supplement. This presentation shall include a brief  
10 statement regarding each nominee.

11 i. Additional nominations ("floor nominations") may be submitted by registered  
12 Commissioners ~~either (1) in writing or (2) electronically, in either case~~ on forms  
13 supplied by the Stated Clerk, which shall include consent of the nominee to serve, if  
14 elected, and a brief statement regarding the nominee. ~~In the event that a nomination~~  
15 ~~is submitted electronically, The~~ nominator should be aware that responsibility for  
16 such nomination rests with the nominator and that non-delivery is the sole  
17 responsibility of the nominator. Because the nominator has sole responsibility for  
18 delivery of a nomination, the nominator should obtain a receipt verifying successful  
19 electronic delivery of the nomination. The nominee is to give consent to only one  
20 nomination. In the event that the nominee is nominated for more than one position,  
21 the nominee may indicate to which nomination the nominee consents. The deadline  
22 for these nominations is ~~the close of the afternoon session of the first full day of the~~  
23 Assembly 4:30 pm on the day the Assembly convenes. The Clerk’s office shall issue  
24 a supplement to the Assembly’s Nominating Committee report ~~during the second~~  
25 day’s business sessions before noon the following day.

26  
27 So that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

28 ***RAO* 8-4 Nominating Committee**

29 i. Additional nominations ("floor nominations") may be submitted by registered  
30 Commissioners electronically on forms supplied by the Stated Clerk, which shall  
31 include consent of the nominee to serve, if elected, and a brief statement regarding  
32 the nominee. The nominator should be aware that responsibility for such nomination  
33 rests with the nominator and that non-delivery is the sole responsibility of the  
34 nominator. Because the nominator has sole responsibility for delivery of a  
35 nomination, the nominator should obtain a receipt verifying successful electronic  
36 delivery of the nomination. The nominee is to give consent to only one nomination.  
37 In the event that the nominee is nominated for more than one position, the nominee  
38 may indicate to which nomination the nominee consents. The deadline for these  
39 nominations is 4:30 pm on the day the Assembly convenes. The Clerk’s office shall  
40 issue a supplement to the Assembly’s Nominating Committee report before noon the  
41 following day.

42  
43 **Be it also resolved** that this would not take effect until 2027.

44  
45 **Rationale:**

- 1  
2 1. This change would give GA Commissioners more time to review the Nominating  
3 Committee's Supplemental Report. The *RAO's* current deadline for floor nominations is  
4 ordinarily on Wednesday at 4:30 and this change would back it up one day. The NC Supp  
5 Report is often uploaded to Sharefile late Wednesday evening, and elections are early  
6 Thursday morning (09:30 last year).  
7
- 8 2. One part of this proposal would eliminate the option to file hard-copy floor nominations,  
9 which are rarely used now. Last year, 100% of floor nominations were filed electronically.  
10
- 11 3. The other part on the floor nomination deadline would result in the NC Supp Report being  
12 uploaded to Sharefile about 10 hours earlier. Our current timetable is governed by the old  
13 procedure when floor nominations were *only* filed hard-copy onsite at GA. Because floor  
14 nominations can now be filed electronically and can be filed any time after the Clerk's  
15 office's mid-May uploading of the *GA Commissioner's Handbook*, there's no need to use  
16 the old, last-minute procedure described in *RAO* 8-4. (Per the NC Manual, the main NC  
17 Report with biographical summaries of its nominees is due at Stated Clerk's office by the  
18 second Saturday in April, about a month prior to the GA Commissioner Handbook upload.)  
19
- 20 4. By filing this Overture early, we hope it will give the NC sufficient time to adopt advice at  
21 its March 28, 2026, meeting and provide it to the 2026 Overtures Committee in Louisville,  
22 in the NC's initial report, which will be filed by April 11, 2026.  
23

24 *Approved at Pacific Northwest Presbytery's Stated Meeting on October 10, 2025, and*  
25 *assigned to an Overture Commission with authority to perfect and re-file if it deems necessary.*  
26 *Attested to by: TE Jerid Krulish, Clerk, Pacific NW Presbytery*

1 **OVERTURE 9** from the Hills and Plains Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 8-4.i to Highlight Proportionate Representation of Presbyteries by Floor  
3 Nominations”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the *Book of Church Order (BCO)* 14-1.9 establishes that the General Assembly's  
6 committees are to include proportionate representation of all Presbyteries, wherever  
7 possible; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, Presbyteries are encouraged to present nominations for Permanent Committees and  
10 Agencies with this principle in mind, typically submitting one teaching elder and one  
11 ruling elder for each committee or agency; and  
12

13 **Whereas**, the *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)* 8-4.i currently allows for additional  
14 nominations to be submitted from the floor of the Assembly, requiring the nominee's  
15 consent to serve and a brief statement; and  
16

17 **Whereas**, the current provisions for nominations from the floor do not explicitly require the  
18 nominator to demonstrate how such a nomination contributes to the principle of  
19 proportionate geographical representation; and  
20

21 **Whereas**, ensuring a broad and equitable geographical representation across all Committees  
22 and Agencies of the General Assembly is vital for the health and unity of the  
23 Presbyterian Church in America, and such a requirement would align floor  
24 nominations with the spirit of *BCO* 14-1.9;  
25

26 **Now therefore, be it resolved** that *Rules of Assembly Operations* 8-4.i amended as follows  
27 (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
28

29 i. Additional nominations may be submitted either (1) in writing or (2) electronically,  
30 in either case on forms supplied by the Stated Clerk, which shall include consent of  
31 the nominee to serve, if elected, ~~and~~ a brief statement regarding the nominee, and  
32 information regarding the nominee's Presbytery and an explanation of how this  
33 nomination contributes to the General Assembly's goal of proportionate representation  
34 of all Presbyteries as set forth in *BCO* 14-1.9. In the event that a nomination is  
35 submitted electronically, the nominator should be aware that responsibility for such  
36 nomination rests with the nominator and that non-delivery is the sole responsibility of  
37 the nominator. Because the nominator has sole responsibility for delivery of a  
38 nomination, the nominator should obtain a receipt verifying successful electronic  
39 delivery of the nomination. The nominee is to give consent to only one nomination. In  
40 the event that the nominee is nominated for more than one position, the nominee may  
41 indicate to which nomination the nominee consents. The deadline for these  
42 nominations is the close of the afternoon session of the first full day of the Assembly.  
43 The Clerk's office shall issue a supplement to the Assembly's Nominating Committee  
44 report during the second day's business sessions.  
45

1 So that the amended paragraph would read:  
2

3 i. Additional nominations may be submitted either (1) in writing or (2) electronically,  
4 in either case on forms supplied by the Stated Clerk, which shall include consent of  
5 the nominee to serve, if elected, a brief statement regarding the nominee, and  
6 information regarding the nominee's Presbytery and an explanation of how this  
7 nomination contributes to the General Assembly's goal of proportionate representation  
8 of all Presbyteries as set forth in *BCO* 14-1.9. In the event that a nomination is  
9 submitted electronically, the nominator should be aware that responsibility for such  
10 nomination rests with the nominator and that non-delivery is the sole responsibility of  
11 the nominator. Because the nominator has sole responsibility for delivery of a  
12 nomination, the nominator should obtain a receipt verifying successful electronic  
13 delivery of the nomination. The nominee is to give consent to only one nomination. In  
14 the event that the nominee is nominated for more than one position, the nominee may  
15 indicate to which nomination the nominee consents. The deadline for these  
16 nominations is the close of the afternoon session of the first full day of the Assembly.  
17 The Clerk's office shall issue a supplement to the Assembly's Nominating Committee  
18 report during the second day's business sessions.  
19  
20

21 *Adopted by the Hills and Plains Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 14, 2025*

22 *Attested by /s/ TE Aaron Raines, stated clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 10** from the Ohio Presbytery (to MNA)  
2 “Change the Boundaries of Pittsburgh Presbytery and The Ohio Presbytery”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the current official boundary description of the Pittsburgh Presbytery includes, “All  
5 of Ohio east and south of and including the counties of Columbiana, Carroll, and  
6 Monroe...”;  
7

8 **Whereas**, since that time, the Ohio Presbytery has been formed; and  
9

10 **Whereas**, in 2024, the only PCA church within the Ohio counties of the Pittsburgh Presbytery  
11 officially closed;  
12

13 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly transfers all Ohio counties currently  
14 within the bounds of the Pittsburgh Presbytery to the geographic bounds of Ohio  
15 Presbytery.  
16

17  
18 *Adopted by The Ohio Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 4, 2025.*

19 *Attested by /s/ TE Jason Piland, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 11** from the Ohio Presbytery (to CCB, OC, MNA)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 4-21.d to Require Assessment Data from MNA”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the Lord Jesus Christ charged Peter with the keys of the kingdom (Matt 16:19) and  
5 our confessional standards further outline this important responsibility as being held  
6 by Church officers (*WCF* 30);  
7

8 **Whereas**, elsewhere in Scripture elders are exhorted to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet  
9 5:2) by exercising “oversight”; and  
10

11 **Whereas**, it is impossible for commissioners to provide sufficient oversight without sufficient  
12 information and data;  
13

14 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly amends *RAO* 4-21.d by adding the  
15 following as a final numbered subsection (underlining for additions):  
16

17 6) The report to the General Assembly from the permanent Committee on Mission to  
18 North America (MNA) shall include the following data, updated annually: number of  
19 assessments by the MNA Assessment Center, number of final assessment ratings given  
20 for each assessment rating category, number of mission churches started,  
21 particularized, and dissolved with an MNA assessed planter along with the  
22 corresponding final assessment rating given to that planter. Minutes of the Committee  
23 should indicate that the data have been reviewed by the MNA Committee.  
24  
25

26 *Adopted by The Ohio Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 4, 2025.*

27 *Attested by /s/ TE Jason Piland, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 12** from the Chesapeake Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 21-4.a to Allow Alternatives to a Bachelor’s Degree for Ordination”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* 21-4.a currently requires a degree of Bachelor or Master from an approved  
5 college or university as part of the qualifications for ordination to the gospel ministry,  
6 in addition to a degree of Bachelor or Master from an approved theological seminary;  
7 and  
8

9 **Whereas**, the average inflation-adjusted cost of undergraduate tuition and fees at four-year  
10 public institutions has increased by over 160% since 1990, and at private nonprofit  
11 four-year institutions by over 120% during the same period, creating significant  
12 financial barriers for many otherwise qualified candidates;<sup>1</sup> and  
13

14 **Whereas**, national enrollment trends show that Associate’s degree programs and other non-  
15 traditional pathways now account for over 40% of undergraduate enrollment in the  
16 United States, reflecting the changing educational landscape;<sup>2</sup> and  
17

18 **Whereas**, over 55% of current pastors in the United States had a prior career before entering  
19 ministry,<sup>3</sup> and approximately 35% of U.S. congregations are served by bi-vocational  
20 pastors,<sup>4</sup> indicating a significant presence of second-career and non-traditional  
21 ministry pathways within the church; and  
22

23 **Whereas**, many candidates demonstrate a “competency of human learning” (*BCO* 8-2),  
24 pastoral maturity, leadership, and communication skills through full-time vocational  
25 work, which may serve as a valuable part of their ministerial formation; and  
26

27 **Whereas**, this overture seeks only to broaden the acceptable academic foundation for  
28 ministry, not to diminish the requirement for theological education or the rigorous  
29 Presbytery examinations already required in *BCO* 21-4; and  
30

31 **Whereas**, the PCA maintains rigorous theological examination standards for ordination  
32 candidates, including assessments in theology, the English Bible, original languages,  
33 church history, and church government (*BCO* 21-4), thereby ensuring ministerial  
34 competence regardless of academic background; and  
35

36 **Whereas**, maintaining the requirement for a theological seminary degree or its equivalent  
37 ensures the PCA continues to train ministers who are theologically sound and  
38 pastorally equipped;  
39

---

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, Table 330.10.  
[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22\\_330.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_330.10.asp)

<sup>2</sup> Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2023. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>

<sup>3</sup> Barna Group, *The State of Pastors*. <https://www.barna.com/research/half-pastors-prior-career/>

<sup>4</sup> Faith & Leadership, “Bivocationalism Has Historical Roots and Modern Benefits.”  
<https://faithandleadership.com/bivocationalism-has-historical-roots-and-modern-benefits>

1 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 21-4.a be amended to read as follows (underlining for  
2 additions):

- 3
- 4 a. An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present:
- 5 1) a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university,  
6 a diploma of Associate from some approved college or university together  
7 with credible evidence of not less than three (3) years of full-time  
8 vocational work experience, demonstrating maturity, leadership, and  
9 communication skills relevant to gospel ministry, or a General Education  
10 Diploma together with credible evidence of not less than (10) ten years of  
11 full-time vocational work experience, demonstrating maturity, leadership,  
12 and communication skills relevant to gospel ministry; and also
- 13
- 14 2) a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary  
15 or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of  
16 theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement from  
17 a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one  
18 of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.

19

20 No Presbytery shall omit any of these educational requirements except in  
21 extraordinary cases, and then only with a three-fourths (3/4) approval of the  
22 Presbytery. Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these educational  
23 requirements, it shall always make a record of the reasons for such omission  
24 and the parts omitted. The intern shall also present satisfactory testimonials  
25 as to the completion and approval of his internship in the practice of the  
26 ministry.

27

28

29 *Adopted by the Chesapeake Presbytery at its stated meeting, 9 September, 2025*

30 *Attested by TE Donald M. Dove, stated clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 13** from the Great Lakes Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 15-2 Regarding Session Commissions”  
3

4 **Whereas**, in the process of doing its ministry it may be appropriate for a church’s Session to  
5 appoint a commission of Session to assist in its work (*BCO* 15-1); and  
6

7 **Whereas**, a commission of Presbytery must consist of at least two teaching elders and two  
8 ruling elders, the *BCO* does not specify the constitution of a commission of Session;  
9 and  
10

11 **Whereas**, it is a common practice to have commissions of Sessions made up of only ruling  
12 elders; and  
13

14 **Whereas**, some have argued that the constitution of a commission of Session should be  
15 analogous to the constitution of a commission of Presbytery, therefore arguing that a  
16 Session commission should be constituted with both a teaching elder and a ruling  
17 elder; and  
18

19 **Whereas**, if a Session commission is constituted by analogy to Presbytery commissions some  
20 Sessions would be unable to form commissions because a Session can differ in  
21 membership (a Session may consist of only teaching or ruling elders), and  
22

23 **Whereas**, there is a difference in opinion on this matter in the PCA;  
24

25 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the *BCO* 15-2 be modified such that the following language  
26 be added as a third paragraph (underlining for additions):  
27

28 Every commission appointed by a Session shall consist of at least two elders, with  
29 any combination of teaching or ruling elders, and the quorum for such a  
30 commission shall be the greater of two elders or one-half of the membership of  
31 the commission.  
32  
33

34 *Adopted by the Great Lakes Presbytery at its stated meeting, September 20, 2025*

35 *Attested by TE Ryan Potter, stated clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 14** from the Southwest Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 7-3, 7-4, 9-2, and 9-7 Regarding Titles and Offices for Unordained  
3 People”  
4

5 **Be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly amend *BCO* 7-3, 7-4, 9-2, and 9-7 as follows  
6 (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
7

8 **7-3.** No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or  
9 receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed  
10 in the Scriptures. ~~Furthermore, u~~Unordained people shall not be referred to as, or  
11 given the titles of, the ordained offices of pastor/elder, or deacon. Furthermore,  
12 unordained people, whether publicly or privately, shall neither be elected,  
13 commissioned, appointed, installed, designated, or otherwise given the title of  
14 pastor, elder, or deacon, nor shall they be denominated with any synonymous title  
15 including but not limited to shepherd/shepherdess, eldress, pastoreess, minister,  
16 deaconess, or other designation which might reasonably communicate or imply  
17 the holding of the office of pastor, elder, or deacon, or their having the authority  
18 to exercise any of the functions thereof.  
19

20 **7-4.** No churches shall invent new types or classes of church offices or officers  
21 which are not either pastors/elders, or deacons. Moreover, no churches may,  
22 through congregational action, elect, commission, appoint, install, ordain, or  
23 designate any unordained individuals into any ecclesiastical roles or offices, or  
24 confer titles of church authority besides those of pastors/elders, or deacons,  
25 particularly roles that appear to exercise a general authority over adults in the  
26 congregation. Any other appointed administrative or ministry support roles (such  
27 as other church staff or volunteer positions) shall be appointed by the Session,  
28 and their given titles must not be subject to confusion with the titles or unique  
29 responsibilities of the ordained offices of pastor/elder, or deacon, or any variation  
30 or synonym thereof.  
31

32 **9-2.** It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick,  
33 to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop  
34 the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods  
35 of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects  
36 to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the  
37 congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church  
38 edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special  
39 importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action  
40 without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.  
41

42 In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority  
43 of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure  
44 deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders. It is highly  
45 undesirable for churches to persist without ordained deacons, and Presbyteries

1 should be diligent to assist all their churches in ordaining qualified deacons. If  
2 deacons cannot be ordained, then the ruling elders must directly execute the  
3 responsibilities of the deacons defined herein and may not delegate these  
4 responsibilities entirely to unordained staff or volunteers.  
5

6 **9-7.** It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint  
7 godly men and women of the congregation to assist the deacons in caring for the  
8 sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any  
9 distress or need. These assistants to the deacons are not officers of the church  
10 (*BCO* 7-2) and, as such, are not subjects for ordination (*BCO* 17). Therefore, these  
11 assistants may not be referred to as deacons or deaconesses or full members of  
12 the diaconate (or any translation or variation thereof), and in any communications  
13 of the church, care should be taken in order that they are clearly distinguished  
14 from the ordained deacons. It is also not allowable to appoint persons formally to  
15 be assistants to the deacons if there are no regularly ordained and installed  
16 deacons actively serving in the congregation.  
17

18 So that the amended passages would read:  
19

20 **7-3.** No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or  
21 receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed  
22 in the Scriptures. Unordained people shall not be referred to as, or given the titles  
23 of, the ordained offices of pastor/elder, or deacon. Furthermore, unordained  
24 people, whether publicly or privately, shall neither be elected, commissioned,  
25 appointed, installed, designated, or otherwise given the title of pastor, elder, or  
26 deacon, nor shall they be denominated with any synonymous title including but  
27 not limited to shepherd/shepherdess, eldress, pastoress, minister, deaconess, or  
28 other designation which might reasonably communicate or imply the holding of  
29 the office of pastor, elder, or deacon, or their having the authority to exercise any  
30 of the functions thereof.  
31

32 **7-4.** No churches shall invent new types or classes of church offices or officers  
33 which are not either pastors/elders, or deacons. Moreover, no churches may,  
34 through congregational action, elect, commission, appoint, install, ordain, or  
35 designate any unordained individuals into any ecclesiastical roles or offices, or  
36 confer titles of church authority besides those of pastors/elders, or deacons,  
37 particularly roles that appear to exercise a general authority over adults in the  
38 congregation. Any other appointed administrative or ministry support roles (such  
39 as other church staff or volunteer positions) shall be appointed by the Session,  
40 and their given titles must not be subject to confusion with the titles or unique  
41 responsibilities of the ordained offices of pastor/elder, or deacon, or any variation  
42 or synonym thereof.  
43

44 **9-2.** It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick,  
45 to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop

1 the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods  
2 of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects  
3 to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the  
4 congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church  
5 edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special  
6 importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action  
7 without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.

8  
9 In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority  
10 of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure  
11 deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders. It is highly  
12 undesirable for churches to persist without ordained deacons, and Presbyteries  
13 should be diligent to assist all their churches in ordaining qualified deacons. If  
14 deacons cannot be ordained, then the ruling elders must directly execute the  
15 responsibilities of the deacons defined herein and may not delegate these  
16 responsibilities entirely to unordained staff or volunteers.

17  
18 **9-7.** It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint  
19 godly men and women of the congregation to assist the deacons in caring for the  
20 sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any  
21 distress or need. These assistants to the deacons are not officers of the church  
22 (*BCO 7-2*) and, as such, are not subjects for ordination (*BCO 17*). Therefore, these  
23 assistants may not be referred to as deacons or deaconesses or full members of  
24 the diaconate (or any translation or variation thereof), and in any communications  
25 of the church, care should be taken in order that they are clearly distinguished  
26 from the ordained deacons. It is also not allowable to appoint persons formally to  
27 be assistants to the deacons if there are no regularly ordained and installed  
28 deacons actively serving in the congregation.

29  
30  
31 **RATIONALE**

32  
33 The existing sections of the *BCO* related to polity of officers have historically intended to  
34 limit the ordained offices of the church to the two types of officers, pastors/elders and deacons,  
35 and that these offices are limited to men only. However, there appear to be a number of  
36 churches within the PCA that are causing confusion regarding church offices by creating new  
37 positions for women with similar titles (such as “eldress”) and/or utilizing a similar process  
38 to have congregations elect and install women into various leadership roles, thereby  
39 functionally creating a second class of offices specifically for women (sometimes referred to  
40 as “functional female officers”). There have been several recent public efforts to document  
41 the type and extent of these practices in PCA congregations. According to that research, it  
42 appears that this is not simply a matter confined to a handful of churches, but rather practices  
43 that have spread to a significant minority of congregations, likely between 5-10% of PCA  
44 member churches.

1 Based on the Scriptures and the historic practices of the Reformed churches, the conviction of  
2 the PCA has always been, since its founding, to limit roles of congregational leadership over  
3 adults only to ordained men, in the two offices of pastor/elder and deacon, and not to allow  
4 women to hold these offices. It seems unfortunate to have to impose specific additional  
5 language in our *BCO* around this topic, but the reality is that the existing language is obviously  
6 insufficient to prevent some churches from coming up with creative ways to install women in  
7 positions of general leadership that our polity intends to prohibit. This overture is being  
8 introduced as a measure to improve clarity of the intention of the existing language within the  
9 *BCO* surrounding the unique leadership roles of the ordained offices, and as a measure to  
10 increase accountability to allow our denominational courts to ensure that local churches are  
11 practicing their polity in conformity with these requirements.

12  
13 Therefore, the proposed amendments to sections *BCO* 7-3 and 7-4 are intended to further  
14 clarify this understanding and to ban the invention of new offices for women (or unordained  
15 men), or the use of variants of existing titles for pastors/elders (such as “shepherdess”) or new  
16 confusing titles implying authority over the general congregation for appointed roles filled by  
17 unordained staff.

18  
19 With special respect to the deacons, some churches are utilizing the provisions of *BCO* 9-7 to  
20 install female assistants to the deacons of their church, and they refer to these female assistants  
21 as “deaconess” (or in some cases simply list them as members of an undifferentiated  
22 “diaconate” with no distinction between ordained deacons and these female assistants). While  
23 the existing language of *BCO* 7-3 would already seem to prohibit this, it is argued by some of  
24 these churches that technically the existing language only prohibits calling any unordained  
25 person a “deacon” but not a “deaconess” (although these are actually the same English word,  
26 only in gendered variants, such as waiter/waitress, actor/actress, etc.). The proposed  
27 amendment to 9-7 clarifies this issue and prohibits the use of “deaconess” or “member of the  
28 diaconate” for unordained deacons’ assistants.

29  
30 In other cases, churches simply dispense with ordained deacons and instead create “diaconal  
31 ministry” or “mercy ministry” or “care” teams, which take on the traditional functions of the  
32 diaconate, and are then staffed entirely by unordained men and women. In all such cases, it  
33 seems obvious that this is at best a confusing practice and is often designed either to blur the  
34 distinction between the ordained offices and unordained assistants, or again to create a new  
35 type of office specifically so women can fill it. The proposed amendments to *BCO* 9-2 and 9-  
36 7 clarify that it is not possible to dispense with ordained deacons in favor of an unordained set  
37 of diaconal assistants, but that the Session itself must fulfill the responsibilities of the deacons  
38 (as already defined in *BCO* 9-2) until deacons can be secured, and that deacons’ assistants  
39 may not be appointed if there are no ordained deacons.

40  
41 There may be PCA members or even churches that are under the conviction that women  
42 should be able to serve, either in name or in function, as pastors, elders, and deacons alongside  
43 the ordained men which our polity reserves for those positions. It would be better to proclaim  
44 these convictions openly and honestly and not cause internal division, rather than to covertly  
45 undermine the existing, settled polity of the PCA with respect to women in leadership, either

1 through practices that rely on technicalities or deception. If that is the case, it would be  
 2 healthier for those churches to affiliate with another branch of the visible church that already  
 3 allows for such practices, such as the ECO, the EPC, or the ARP, and go with our blessing.

4  
 5 Historically, our denomination has valued both unordained men and women exercising their  
 6 gifts and serving in positions of ministry support in their local churches, and we believe that  
 7 there are a wide variety of ways that can happen and still be in conformity with our polity  
 8 regarding the leadership roles reserved for the ordained offices. We encourage churches to  
 9 pursue opportunities for service and recognition for unordained persons, but to do so in a  
 10 manner that preserves clarity around the unique nature of the ordained offices in the church.

11  
 12 Note: all current BCO text taken from: [https://www.pcaac.org/book-of-church-order/part-1-](https://www.pcaac.org/book-of-church-order/part-1-the-form-of-government/)  
 13 [the-form-of-government/](https://www.pcaac.org/book-of-church-order/part-1-the-form-of-government/)

### 14 **Appendix**

15  
 16  
 17 For reference, here are some of the relevant titles given to unordained women on PCA church  
 18 public websites (as documented at the <https://www.savethepca.com/> website). Not all of these  
 19 titles are necessarily problematic, but many are questionable:

Title	# Instances
Deaconess	372
Worship Director/Leader	114
Women's Councilmember	98
Women's Leadership Team/Council	64
Women Shepherd	42
Elder Advisor	41
Shepherdess	34
Women's Shepherding Team	33
Women's Care Team	18
Women's Board	15
Director of Community	14
Director of Ministry	11
Director of Missions	10
Pastor Assistant	10

Overture 14, Southwest Florida Presbytery

Director of Discipleship	8
Director of Spiritual Formation	8
Director/Coordinator of Church Life	8
Ministry Coordinator	7
Director of Congregational Care	6
Hospitality Director/Leader	6
Servant Leader	6
Serve Team	6
Co-Laborer	5
Discipleship Committee	5
Executive Director	5
Leadership	5
College Minister	4
Director of Christian Education	4
Inreach Team	4
Pastoral Intern	4
Biblical Counselor	3
Director of Care	3
Ezer	3
Ministry Intern	3
Prayer Ministry Leader/Coordinator	3
Director of Assimilation	2
Director of Family Ministry	2
Director of Soul Care	2
Women's Leader	2
CG Strategy Manager	1
Circle Chair	1
Community Engagement Specialist	1
Director of Integration	1
Director of Justice and Mercy Ministries	1

Overture 14, Southwest Florida Presbytery

Director of Latino Ministries	1
Director of Parish Formation	1
Faithful Presence Coordinator	1
First Lady	1
Lead Pastor	1
Lead Planter	1
Leadership Coordinator	1
Ministry Leader	1
Senior Adults Ministry Director	1
Small Group Coordinator	1
Strategic Implementation Director	1
Supply Preacher	1
Team Leader	1
Trustee	1
Wise Counselor	1

1  
2  
3  
4

*Adopted by the Southwest Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 11, 2025*  
*Attested by /s/ TE Freddy Fritz, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 15** from the Southwest Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 42-4 and 43-3 to Clarify the Deadline for Filings”  
3

4 **Summary:** The current rules are ambiguous concerning the time for filing an appeal or  
5 complaint has lapsed. This proposal will simplify the question, both for parties and for  
6 reviewing courts, by implementing a simple change, namely requiring courts to provide their  
7 decision in writing to an affected person delivered in a prescribed mode. This change is apt to  
8 both preserve the rights of parties and ease the burden of the courts.  
9

10 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 42-4 and 43-3 be amended as follows (underlining for additions;  
11 ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
12

13 **42-4.** Notice of appeal may be given the court before its adjournment. Written notice  
14 of appeal, with supporting reasons, shall be filed by the appellant with both the clerk  
15 of the lower court and the clerk of the higher court, within thirty (30) days of written  
16 notification of the last court’s decision.  
17

18 Notification of the last court’s decision ~~shall be deemed to have occurred~~ occurs on  
19 the day of mailing (if certified, registered or express mail of a national postal service  
20 or any private service where verifying receipt is utilized), the day of hand delivery, or  
21 the day of confirmed receipt in the case of e-mail or facsimile. Furthermore,  
22 compliance with such requirements shall be deemed to have been fulfilled if a party  
23 cannot be located after diligent inquiry or if a party refuses to accept delivery. No  
24 attempt should be made to circularize the courts to which appeal is being made by  
25 either party before the case is heard.  
26

27 **43-3.** If, after considering a complaint, the court alleged to be delinquent or in error is  
28 of the opinion that it has not erred, and denies the complaint, the complainant may take  
29 that complaint to the next higher court. If the lower court fails to consider the  
30 complaint against it by or at its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has  
31 been filed with the clerk at least ten (10) days in advance, the complainant may take  
32 that complaint to the next higher court. If the complaint is filed with less than ten (10)  
33 days’ notice, the court may consider the complaint at a later meeting not more than 60  
34 days later. Written notice thereof shall be filed with both the clerk of the lower court  
35 and the clerk of the higher court within thirty (30) days of written notification of the  
36 last court’s decision.  
37

38 Notification of the last court’s decision ~~shall be deemed to have occurred~~ occurs on  
39 the day of mailing (if certified, registered or express mail of a national postal service  
40 or any private service where verifying receipt is utilized), the day of hand delivery, or  
41 the day of confirmed receipt in the case of e-mail or facsimile. Furthermore,  
42 compliance with such requirements shall be deemed to have been fulfilled if a party  
43 cannot be located after diligent inquiry or if a party refuses to accept delivery.  
44  
45

1 **RATIONALE:**

2  
3 The existing language of *BCO* 42-4 is confusing, especially for unrepresented censured  
4 individuals unfamiliar with Presbyterian polity. Navigating procedural complexities is  
5 difficult, particularly in understanding the timing and process for appealing a censure. The  
6 proposal aims to impose minimal burdens on church courts by requiring them to provide  
7 censured persons with written notification of their decisions. We can see a recent example of  
8 this in the case of *Paul Gozé v. Hills and Plains Presbytery* (SJC 2024-10) reported to the 52<sup>nd</sup>  
9 General Assembly.

10  
11 Historically, the appeal period was measured from the court’s “rising” or adjournment—  
12 meaning the conclusion of the court meeting. From 1973 to 1987, the time to file an appeal  
13 increased gradually from a few days to thirty days based on the court’s meeting date. This  
14 meant that for censures imposed in absentia, the appeal period could begin without the  
15 censured person’s knowledge.

16  
17 In 2013, the General Assembly changed this by adopting a new standard: the appeal period  
18 now begins upon “notification of the last court’s decision,” shifting from the date of the  
19 meeting to this new standard, broadly following Pacific Northwest Presbytery’s overture  
20 proposing that the 30-day clock start only when a person receives a copy of the court’s  
21 decision, delivered by certified mail, hand delivery, or verified electronic means. Pacific  
22 Northwest’s rationale was to provide a clear “bright line” marking when the appeal period  
23 begins—protecting appellants who otherwise might be unaware of the decision.

24  
25 Yet, contrary to its original intent, the adoption and later interpretation of “notification” has  
26 since caused confusion. Some interpret the in-person pronouncement of censure itself as  
27 sufficient “notification” to trigger the 30-day appeal period, relieving the court of providing a  
28 written decision of censure. Others believe that the appeal period does not begin until written  
29 notice is provided. This ambiguity risks unrepresented persons unintentionally losing their  
30 appeal rights and introduces unnecessary ambiguity into the higher courts’ evaluation of  
31 timeliness.

32  
33 Policy considerations favor expressly requiring written notification. Trials and censures cause  
34 stress and confusion; relying solely on oral pronouncements risks unfair forfeiture due to  
35 misunderstandings. Courts’ failure to put decisions into writing increases the risk of  
36 miscommunication or misapprehension.

37  
38 The burden of strict compliance with written notification rightly rests on a censuring court  
39 because censures terminate individuals’ rights and privileges within the Church. The current  
40 ambiguous language undermines the 2013 amendment’s purpose to create a clear starting  
41 point for counting the thirty days for appeals. For example, if a verdict is delivered in writing  
42 but the oral censure happens later, which marks the start of the appeal period? This confusion  
43 obfuscates the intended “bright line.”

1 The proposed change would better protect individuals’ rights, uphold graded ecclesiastical  
2 review, and improve clarity about when appeal rights expire. It places reasonable  
3 responsibility on church courts to reduce their decisions to writing and to deliver those  
4 decisions via approved methods. This avoids confusion, mitigates risk of lost rights by mistake  
5 or misunderstanding, and streamlines the higher courts' ability to assess the timeliness of  
6 appeals.

7  
8 In sum, requiring timely and proper written notification advances fairness, accountability, and  
9 transparency in church disciplinary appeals, especially benefiting those without legal  
10 representation.

11  
12  
13 *Adopted by the Southwest Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 11, 2025*  
14 *Attested by /s/ TE Freddy Fritz, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 16** from the Southwest Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 "Amend *BCO* 43 to Clarify Circularizing the Court"  
3

4 **Summary** - This change would move the following sentence from *BCO* 43-2 to 43-3 because  
5 it more properly refers to the matter before the higher/appellate court than the original court -  
6 "No attempt should be made to circularize the court to which complaint is being made by  
7 either party."  
8

9 *BCO* 43-2 and 43-3 are below showing where the change would be made.  
10

11 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 43-2 be amended as follows (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~  
12 for deletions):  
13

14 **43-2.** A complaint shall first be made to the court whose act or decision is alleged to  
15 be in error. Written notice of complaint, with supporting reasons, shall be filed with  
16 the clerk of the court within sixty (60) days following the meeting of the court. The  
17 court shall consider the complaint at its next stated meeting, or at a called meeting  
18 prior to its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has been filed with the  
19 clerk at least ten (10) days in advance. If the complaint is filed with less than ten (10)  
20 days' notice, the court may consider the complaint at a later meeting not more than 60  
21 days later. ~~No attempt should be made to circularize the court to which complaint is~~  
22 ~~being made by either party.~~  
23

24 **Be it further resolved** that *BCO* 43-3 be amended to read:  
25

26 **43-3.** If, after considering a complaint, the court alleged to be delinquent or in error is  
27 of the opinion that it has not erred, and denies the complaint, the complainant may take  
28 that complaint to the next higher court. If the lower court fails to consider the  
29 complaint against it by or at its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has  
30 been filed with the clerk at least ten (10) days in advance, the complainant may take  
31 that complaint to the next higher court. If the complaint is filed with less than ten (10)  
32 days' notice, the court may consider the complaint at a later meeting not more than 60  
33 days later. Written notice thereof shall be filed with both the clerk of the lower court  
34 and the clerk of the higher court within thirty (30) days of notification of the last  
35 court's decision.  
36

37 Notification of the last court's decision shall be deemed to have occurred on the day  
38 of mailing (if certified, registered or express mail of a national postal service or any  
39 private service where verifying receipt is utilized), the day of hand delivery, or the day  
40 of confirmed receipt in the case of e-mail or facsimile. Furthermore, compliance with  
41 such requirements shall be deemed to have been fulfilled if a party cannot be located  
42 after diligent inquiry or if a party refuses to accept delivery.  
43

44 No attempt should be made by any party to circularize a higher court reviewing a  
45 complaint.

1 **RATIONALE:**

2  
3 The prohibition against circularization has caused confusion since its 1984 adoption, and the  
4 current proposal aims to clarify and resolve these issues. Initially, before 1984, complaints  
5 against church decisions could only be filed with a higher court, not the court of original  
6 jurisdiction, and there was no ban on “circularizing.” The system at that time featured clear  
7 parties: a complainant and the court of original jurisdiction, with the higher court serving as a  
8 neutral arbiter.

9  
10 The 1984 amendment introduced a major change by requiring complaints to be filed first with  
11 the court of original jurisdiction, following a model inspired by Matthew 18, which  
12 encourages resolving disputes directly. This amendment also introduced the prohibition  
13 against “circularizing courts,” meaning neither party should attempt to influence courts before  
14 their case is formally heard. However, retaining language from the older system, such as  
15 defining complainant and respondent and requiring the appointment of a representative to  
16 defend the original court’s action, led to ambiguity when applied to original courts. It was  
17 unclear who the “parties” were prior to the court making a decision, and the practical effect  
18 was to inhibit open discussion within lower courts.

19  
20 This structural confusion was identified in 1999 by Pittsburgh Presbytery, which proposed  
21 clarifying that courts only need to appoint a respondent when a complaint ascends to a higher  
22 court. The General Assembly adopted this amendment in 2000, confirming that lower courts  
23 need not follow the formalities of higher appellate proceedings until a genuine dispute exists.

24  
25 The current proposal seeks to further mitigate the practical confusion caused by the  
26 circularization prohibition for courts of original jurisdiction. Not only does the very act of  
27 filing a complaint share the complainant’s reasons with the entire court, but open deliberation  
28 is a healthy part of resolving disputes internally, consistent with the spirit of Matthew 18.  
29 Prohibiting “circularization” before a formal adverse decision chills helpful dialogue and  
30 leads to unnecessary procedural formality.

31  
32 Importantly, the proposal does not affect the circularization prohibition regarding appeals, as  
33 appeals only go to higher courts and the clarity of rules there remains intact. If adopted, this  
34 amendment would allow courts of original jurisdiction in the PCA to freely deliberate and  
35 reconsider their actions regarding complaints, while prohibiting parties from attempting to  
36 sway higher (appellate) courts before a hearing. This targeted change preserves fair hearing  
37 procedures in appellate settings while restoring clarity and practical functionality to initial  
38 complaint proceedings within church courts.

39  
40  
41 *Adopted by the Southwest Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 11, 2025*  
42 *Attested by /s/ TE Freddy Fritz, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 17** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 5-2 Regarding the Dissolution of Mission Churches”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* 13-10 expressly requires a Presbytery to give at least sixty (60) days’ notice  
5 before the dissolution of a local church, allowing the congregation either to request  
6 withdrawal through the proper channels of Chapter 25 or to petition the Presbytery;  
7 and  
8

9 **Whereas**, *BCO* 25-10 expressly prohibits any officer or court from attempting to secure  
10 possession of the property of any congregation against its will; and  
11

12 **Whereas**, these rights are protected in other portions of the *BCO*, and adding specific  
13 references to them, together with requiring Presbyteries to follow the procedures  
14 clearly laid out, can help safeguard the rights of congregations, ensuring their  
15 fundamental protections against misuse of authority by higher courts; and  
16

17 **Whereas**, the current *BCO* 5-2 stipulates that church members should be enrolled and cared  
18 for according to the procedures of *BCO* 13-10, yet it does not require the sixty (60)  
19 days’ notice, nor does it reference the prohibition found in *BCO* 25-10;  
20

21 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 5-  
22 2.c by the additions that are underlined below.  
23

24 Should it become necessary, the Presbytery may dissolve the mission church  
25 according to the procedures of *BCO* 13-10 and *BCO* 25-10. Church members  
26 enrolled should be cared for according to the procedures of *BCO* 13-10.  
27

28 So that the amended *BCO* 5-2.c would read:  
29

30 Should it become necessary, the Presbytery may dissolve the mission church  
31 according to the procedures of *BCO* 13-10 and *BCO* 25-10. Church members  
32 enrolled should be cared for according to the procedures of *BCO* 13-10.  
33  
34

35 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

36 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 18** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 5-4 to Allow a Mother Church to Call a Church Planter”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* 5-2 states that ordinarily mission churches are established by presbyteries,  
5 and *BCO* 5-3 expresses the transitional nature of mission churches, providing for a  
6 temporary form of government and allowing for a Session of a particular church in a  
7 mother–daughter relationship with the mission church; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, *BCO* 5-4 specifies the origins from which the pastoral ministry for a mission church  
10 may be supplied, currently allowing only for the calling of a pastor through the  
11 Presbytery’s action, with pastoral service in a mission church dependent upon such a  
12 call; and  
13

14 **Whereas**, the mother–daughter model of church planting has proven highly successful within  
15 the PCA, and the relationship between the mother church and the daughter church  
16 often includes the use of a pastor who has previously served in some capacity at the  
17 mother church (for example, through a residency or other position); and  
18

19 **Whereas**, *BCO* Chapter 5 makes clear that mission churches are established by Presbyteries,  
20 but also recognizes that pastoral ministry may originate from various sources—either  
21 through Presbytery, through stated supply, or through qualified preachers approved by  
22 the temporary government; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, *BCO* 5-4 does not presently allow for the session of a mother church to issue a call  
25 to a church planter, even though in most cases the majority of funding for the mission  
26 church originates from the mother church;  
27

28 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 5-4  
29 to allow assistant pastors to serve in mission churches, permitting the call to  
30 originate from a mother church, with such a call still requiring the approval of  
31 Presbytery. *BCO* 5-4 would be amended as follows (underlining for additions;  
32 ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
33

34 **5-4.** Pastoral ministry for the mission church may be provided:

- 35 a. by a minister of the Presbytery called by Presbytery to serve as pastor,  
36 or  
37 b. by a minister of the Presbytery called by a Session of the ‘mother’  
38 church to serve as pastor (*BCO* 5-2.a.ii and *BCO* 5-3.b), or  
39 ~~bc.~~ by stated, student, or ruling elder supply (*BCO* 22-5, -6), or  
40 ~~ed.~~ by a series of qualified preachers approved by the temporary  
41 government (*BCO* 12-5.e).  
42

43 So that the amended *BCO* 5-4 would read:  
44

45 **5-4.** Pastoral ministry for the mission church may be provided:

Overture 18, Westminster Presbytery

- 1 a. by a minister of the Presbytery called by Presbytery to serve as pastor,
- 2 or
- 3 b. by a minister of the Presbytery called by a Session of the ‘mother’
- 4 church to serve as pastor (*BCO* 5-2.a.ii and *BCO* 5-3.b), or
- 5 c. by stated, student, or ruling elder supply (*BCO* 22-5, -6), or
- 6 d. by a series of qualified preachers approved by the temporary
- 7 government (*BCO* 12-5.e).
- 8
- 9

10 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

11 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 19** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 5-8 to Include Ecclesiastical Government”  
3

4 **Whereas**, mission churches are distinguished from particular churches in that they have no  
5 permanent governing body, and thus must be governed and supervised by others;  
6 however, this does not diminish the rights of the congregation nor the members of such  
7 a mission church; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, *BCO* 5-8 clearly stipulates that the intention of the Presbyterian Church in America  
10 is that mission churches enjoy the same status as particular churches in relation to civil  
11 government, but it does not specify that mission churches share the same status as  
12 particular churches in relation to ecclesiastical government;  
13

14 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 5-8  
15 by including the statement that all mission churches within the Presbyterian Church in  
16 America share the same status as particular churches in relation to both civil and  
17 ecclesiastical government. Amend *BCO* 5-8 by adding the underlined portion of the  
18 text below (underlining for additions):  
19

20 **5-8.** It is the intention of the Presbyterian Church in America that mission  
21 churches enjoy the same status as particular churches in relation to civil and  
22 ecclesiastical government.  
23

24 So that the amended *BCO* 5-8 would read:  
25

26 **5-8.** It is the intention of the Presbyterian Church in America that mission  
27 churches enjoy the same status as particular churches in relation to civil and  
28 ecclesiastical government.  
29

30  
31 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*  
32 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 20** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Add to *BCO* 5 a Section ‘C. Churches Without a Governing Body’”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* Chapter 5 clearly stipulates, under two headings, “Mission Churches” and  
5 “The Organization of a Particular Church,” but does not clearly outline the process for  
6 unique situations in which a particular church does not have a governing body, nor  
7 does it set forth the protections of the rights of the members, particularly under  
8 Preliminary Principle Number Six which states, the power to elect persons to the  
9 exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society; and  
10

11 **Whereas**, *BCO* 12-1 requires that the government of a particular church ordinarily be  
12 provided from among its own membership, and *BCO* 24 provides the process for  
13 electing elders, yet there is no stated process for situations in which this is temporarily  
14 impossible; and  
15

16 **Whereas**, it also does not address the unique situation in which a particular church or  
17 Presbytery desires to change its status to that of a mission church; and  
18

19 **Whereas**, this issue has arisen through the process of review and control, revealing the  
20 difficulty of both protecting the rights of members and fulfilling the Presbytery’s duty  
21 (*BCO* 13-9) to oversee congregations placed under their care; and  
22

23 **Whereas**, while such situations are infrequent, it is important to clearly stipulate and protect  
24 the rights of the members of the congregation while also ensuring that the Presbytery  
25 carries out its due diligence in shepherding those under its care;  
26

27 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery seeks to add an additional portion to Chapter 5 of the  
28 *Book of Church Order*, outlining the steps by which a Presbytery might handle such a  
29 situation, and ensuring those steps are consistent with the principles currently found  
30 in the chapter;  
31

32 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to add a new section  
33 C to *BCO* 5 with new paragraphs 5-11 to 5-14, as set forth below (underlining for additions).  
34

35 **C. Churches Without a Governing Body**

36 11. When a particular church, due to extraordinary circumstances, is unable to provide  
37 government (*BCO* 12-1) from among its own membership, the Presbytery may, at its  
38 discretion, appoint a transitory Session composed of elders from within the boundaries  
39 of the Presbytery. These elders shall serve until such time as the congregation elects  
40 temporary elders to serve as a provisional Session to exercise authority or until the  
41 church is able to reconstitute its Session according to the provisions of *BCO* 24.  
42

43 12. The transitory appointed Session shall, at the earliest convenience, call a  
44 congregational meeting to seek the congregation’s concurrence with the transitory  
45 Session and to initiate, if appropriate, the process for the election of elders in

1 accordance with BCO 24. If the will of the congregation is to affiliate with another  
2 branch of the church (BCO 2-2), the transitory Session shall call a congregational  
3 meeting for such a purpose (BCO 25-11).  
4

5 13. A particular church may be changed to a mission church only by a three-fourths (3/4)  
6 vote of the Presbytery. Members of the congregation, if any, shall be cited to appear  
7 at the stated meeting of Presbytery at which such action is to be considered. Members  
8 shall be given the opportunity to concur or petition the Presbytery regarding the status  
9 of the church. The Presbytery shall record in its minutes the specific reasons for the  
10 change of status.  
11

12 14. Any member in good standing of the church, at the time of the change in status, shall  
13 retain the right to file a complaint against the action of the Presbytery concerning the  
14 change in status, in accordance with the provisions of BCO 43, as they would have  
15 right if a Session took the action.  
16

17  
18 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

19 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 21** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 13-6 to Clarify Exams for Ministers from Another Denomination”  
3

4 **Whereas**, prior to the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, *BCO* 13-6 required applicants from other  
5 denominations to be examined thoroughly in their *knowledge* and *views* as required in  
6 *BCO* 21-4;  
7

8 **Whereas**, the recent amendment removed the specific “knowledge and views” language and  
9 instead requires that all portions of *BCO* 21-4 be followed;  
10

11 **Whereas**, ordinarily a minister transferring from another denomination for his “knowledge  
12 and views” examination does not prepare a theological thesis or an exegetical paper  
13 on an assigned portion of Scripture in the original languages, as is required for  
14 candidates under *BCO* 21-4;  
15

16 **Therefore**, Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 13-6 to clarify the  
17 minimum examination requirements for a minister transferring from another  
18 denomination. *BCO* 13-6.b would be amended as follows (underlining for additions;  
19 ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
20

21 b. If an applicant comes from another denomination, the Presbytery shall examine  
22 him thoroughly as required by the trials listed in *BCO* 21-4.a, 21-4.c(1), 21-4.c(4),  
23 and 21-4.e and any additional trials deemed necessary by the Presbytery. ~~and~~  
24 ~~require him~~ He shall also be required to answer in the affirmative the questions  
25 put to candidates at their ordination (*BCO* 21-5). Ordained ministers from other  
26 denominations being considered by Presbyteries for reception may come under  
27 the extraordinary provisions set forth in *BCO* 21-4.  
28

29 So that the amended *BCO* 13-6.b would read:  
30

31 b. If an applicant comes from another denomination, the Presbytery shall examine  
32 him thoroughly as required by the trials listed in *BCO* 21-4.a, 21-4.c(1), 21-4.c(4),  
33 and 21-4.e and any additional trials deemed necessary by the Presbytery. He shall  
34 also be required to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at  
35 their ordination (*BCO* 21-5). Ordained ministers from other denominations being  
36 considered by Presbyteries for reception may come under the extraordinary  
37 provisions set forth in *BCO* 21-4.  
38  
39

40 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

41 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*  
42

43 NOTE: If both this overture and Overture 25 pass, the references to *BCO* 21-4 will be adjusted  
44 as follows:

45 *BCO* 21-4.a [line 22] becomes *BCO* 21-3.a

46 *BCO* 21-4.c(1) [line 22] becomes *BCO* 21-4.b

Overture 21, Westminster Presbytery

- 1        *BCO* 21-4.c(4) [line 22] becomes *BCO* 21-4.d(3)
- 2        *BCO* 21-4.e [line 23]    becomes *BCO* 21-4.a
- 3        *BCO* 21-5 [line 25]        becomes *BCO* 21-6
- 4        *BCO* 21-4 [line 27]        becomes *BCO* 21-5

1 **OVERTURE 22** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 13-8 to Apply Only to Churches from Outside the PCA”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* 13-8 stipulates that before any church is received into a Presbytery, the  
5 church’s ruling elders must understand and sincerely adopt the doctrines and polity of  
6 the Presbyterian Church in America as contained in the Constitution, and requires that  
7 the ruling elders answer affirmatively the questions given to officers at their  
8 ordination;  
9

10 **Whereas**, “any church” in this context would also include a congregation already within the  
11 Presbyterian Church in America, whose ruling elders have previously made this  
12 affirmation and adopted the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church in  
13 America as contained in its Constitution;  
14

15 **Whereas**, when the General Assembly changes the bounds of Presbyteries, thereby moving a  
16 church from one Presbytery to another, this action should be regarded as immediate,  
17 without requiring the receiving Presbytery to examine the ruling elders of that  
18 particular church;  
19

20 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 13-  
21 8 by stipulating that this provision is only required when the church seeking admission  
22 into the Presbytery is from outside the Presbyterian Church in America (underlining  
23 for addition).  
24

25 **13-8.** The Presbytery, before receiving into its membership any church from outside  
26 of the Presbyterian Church in America, shall designate a commission to meet with the  
27 church’s ruling elders to make certain that the elders understand and can sincerely  
28 adopt the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church in America as contained in  
29 its Constitution. In the presence of the commission, the ruling elders shall be required  
30 to answer affirmatively the questions required of officers at their ordination.  
31

32 So that the amended *BCO* 13-8 would read:  
33

34 **13-8.** The Presbytery, before receiving into its membership any church from outside  
35 of the Presbyterian Church in America, shall designate a commission to meet with the  
36 church’s ruling elders to make certain that the elders understand and can sincerely  
37 adopt the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church in America as contained in  
38 its Constitution. In the presence of the commission, the ruling elders shall be required  
39 to answer affirmatively the questions required of officers at their ordination.  
40  
41

42 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*  
43 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 23** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Restructure and Renumber *BCO* 14 for Clarity and Ease of Reference”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* Chapter 14 has been proposed for amendment approximately forty (40) times  
5 during the fifty-plus years of the Presbyterian Church in America, with seven (7) of  
6 those proposed changes being ratified; and as a result, Chapter 14 is different from its  
7 original form in the *BCO*; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, *BCO* 14-1 currently contains fifteen (15) subsections that address a wide variety of  
10 topics, including the principles of the organization of the General Assembly, the  
11 Nominating Committee, the Permanent committees, personnel and salaries, the  
12 Theological Examination Committee, and the procedures by which business comes to  
13 the floor of the Assembly; and  
14

15 **Whereas**, these portions of Chapter 14 could more clearly and efficiently be presented as  
16 separate sections for easier reference; for example, what is currently referenced as  
17 *BCO* 14-1.12.b.4 could instead be referenced as *BCO* 14-3.2.d;  
18

19 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend Chapter  
20 14 of the *Book of Church Order* by restructuring and renumbering its contents as listed  
21 below, and to amend the cross-references to Chapter 14 found in other portions of the  
22 *BCO*, the *RAO*, the *OMSJC*, and the Corporate Bylaws accordingly (underlining for  
23 additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions).  
24

25 **14-1.** The General Assembly is the highest court of this Church, and  
26 represents in one body all the churches thereof. It bears the title of The General  
27 Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, and constitutes the bond of  
28 union, peace and correspondence among all its congregations and courts.  
29

30 Principles for the Organization of the Assembly:

- 31 1. The Church is responsible for carrying out the Great Commission.
- 32 2. The initiative for carrying out the Great Commission belongs to the  
33 Church at every court level, and the Assembly is responsible to encourage  
34 and promote the fulfillment of this ministry by the various courts.
- 35 3. The work of the Church as set forth in the Great Commission is one work,  
36 being implemented at the General Assembly level through equally  
37 essential committees.
- 38 4. It is the responsibility of every member and every member congregation  
39 to support the whole work of the denomination as they be led in their  
40 conscience held captive to the Word of God.
- 41 5. It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to evaluate needs and  
42 resources, and to act on priorities for the most effective fulfillment of the  
43 Great Commission.
- 44 6. The Church recognizes the right of individuals and congregations to labor  
45 through other agencies in fulfilling the Great Commission.

- 1           7. The Assembly's committees are to serve and not to direct any Church  
2           judicatories. They are not to establish policy, but rather execute policy  
3           established by the General Assembly.
- 4           8. The committees serve the Church through the duties assigned by the  
5           General Assembly.
- 6           9. The Assembly's committees are to include proportionate representation of  
7           all presbyteries, wherever possible.
- 8           10. The committees are to be established on the basis of an equal number  
9           between teaching and ruling elders.

10  
11 ~~11.~~**14-2.** A Nominating Committee shall be comprised of one representative  
12           elected by each Presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be  
13           assigned to a class by the stated clerk based on its date of formation. The members  
14           shall serve in classes of three year terms, alternating between ruling and teaching  
15           elders. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an elder of the same  
16           class, teaching or ruling.

17           This committee is to present all nominations for which it is responsible to  
18           the next meeting of the Assembly from a slate of men nominated by the  
19           Presbyteries. Presbyteries shall utilize the nominating forms provided by the  
20           stated clerk for their nominations. Each presbytery may present one teaching  
21           elder and one ruling elder for each committee or agency.

22           In addition to nominees for expired terms, the Committee shall nominate  
23           for each permanent committee one ruling and one teaching elder as alternates to  
24           fill any vacancies that may occur during the year. Each alternate should attend  
25           each meeting and fill any vacancy necessary to meet a quorum. In addition to the  
26           new nominees from the Presbyteries, alternates not assuming any vacancies  
27           during a year will be automatically considered by the Nominating Committee as  
28           candidates for nomination to that same committee.

29  
30 ~~12.~~**14-3.** The Assembly permanent committees are the Administrative  
31           Committee of General Assembly, Committee on Discipleship Ministries,  
32           Committee on Mission to North America, Committee on Mission to the World,  
33           and Committee on Reformed University Fellowship.

34           The Administrative Committee of General Assembly (AC) shall consist of  
35           twenty (20) members:

36           1a. Eleven members in classes elected through the standard nomination and  
37           election procedure,

38           2b. One member each from the following program committees or agencies:

39           a1. Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM);

40           b2. Covenant College (CC);

41           c3. Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS);

42           d4. Mission to North America (MNA);

43           e5. Mission to the World (MTW);

44           f6. PCA Foundation (PCAF);

45           g7. Geneva Benefits Group, Inc. (Geneva);

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- h8. Reformed University Fellowship (RUF);
- i9. Ridge Haven Conference Center (RH).

The eleven members at large shall serve a term of four years. The chairman of the Administrative Committee shall be one of its members at large.

Each program committee and agency shall designate its member each year at the last meeting of the committee or board before the meeting of General Assembly. The chief administrative officers of the program committees and agencies may attend any meeting of the Administrative Committee. They shall be entitled to the privilege of the floor but shall not have a vote and must be excluded when an executive session is called.

Committee on Discipleship Ministries, Committee on Mission to North America, Committee on Mission to the World, and Committee on Reformed University Fellowship shall consist of fifteen (15) men divided into five classes of three men each, with two men being TEs and one RE or two men being REs and one TE on alternate years, elected to serve five-year terms. Committees on Discipleship Ministries, Mission to North America, Mission to the World, and Reformed University Fellowship shall have one ruling and one teaching elder as alternates to fill any vacancy that may occur during the year.

Persons who have served for a full term, or for at least two years of a partial term, on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for re-election to an Assembly committee until one year has elapsed. (Exceptions may be permitted in agency bylaws approved by the Assembly.)

~~14-4.13.~~ The General Assembly establishes personnel salaries after hearing recommendations from the appropriate committee.

~~14-5.14.~~ The Assembly shall elect a six-man Theological Examining Committee (three teaching elders and three ruling elders of three classes of two men each). Nominations for this Committee will be presented by the Assembly's Nominating Committee.

This committee shall examine all first and second level administrative officers of committees, boards and agencies, and those acting temporarily in these positions who are being recommended for first time employment. They are to be examined in the areas of:

- 1a. Christian experience,
- 2b. Theology,
- 3e. The Sacraments,
- 4d. Church government,
- 5e. Bible content,
- 6f. Church history, and the
- 7g. History of the Presbyterian Church in America.

No person will begin work or move on the field without prior examination and approval by the General Assembly's Theological Examining Committee. No first level administrative officer will be presented to the Assembly for election who has not met the approval of this committee.

1  
2 **14-6.15**. All business shall ordinarily come to the floor of the Assembly for final  
3 action through committees of commissioners, except reports of the Standing  
4 Judicial Commission, the Committee on Constitutional Business, the Committee  
5 on Review of Presbytery Records, the Nominating Committee and Ad Interim  
6 committees, which shall come directly to the Assembly.

7  
8 **14-72**. The General Assembly, which is a permanent court, shall meet at least  
9 annually upon its own adjournment. It shall consist of all teaching elders in good  
10 standing with their Presbyteries, and ruling elders as elected by their Session.  
11 Each congregation is entitled to two ruling elder representatives for the first 350  
12 communing members or fraction thereof, and one additional ruling elder for each  
13 additional 500 communing members or fraction thereof.

14  
15 **14-83**. When an emergency shall require a meeting of the General Assembly  
16 earlier than the time to which it stands adjourned, the moderator shall issue a call  
17 for a special meeting at the request or with the concurrence of ten percent (10%)  
18 of the commissioners who had seats in the Assembly at its preceding meeting, of  
19 whom at least ten shall be teaching elders and at least ten ruling elders,  
20 representing at least one-third (1/3) of the Presbyteries. Should the moderator be  
21 for any reason unable to act, the stated clerk shall under the same requirements  
22 issue the call.

23 The members of the special meeting shall be the commissioners elected to  
24 the preceding meeting of the Assembly or their alternates. A Session, however,  
25 shall have the right to elect a commissioner or alternate in the stead of one who  
26 had died since the last meeting of the Assembly, or of one who has notified the  
27 moderator of the Session of his inability to serve. Notice of the special meeting  
28 shall be sent not less than twenty (20) days in advance to each commissioner and  
29 to the moderator of each Presbytery. In the notice the purpose of the meeting is to  
30 be stated and no other business is to be transacted.

31  
32 **14-94**. Each commissioner, before his name shall be enrolled as a member of  
33 the Assembly, shall produce appropriate credentials.

34  
35 **14-105**. Any one hundred (100) of these commissioners, of whom half shall be  
36 teaching elders and half ruling elders, representing at least one-third (1/3) of the  
37 Presbyteries, being met on the day and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum  
38 for the transaction of business.

39  
40 **14-116**. The General Assembly shall have power:  
41 **1a.** To receive and issue\* all appeals, references, and complaints  
42 regularly brought before it from the lower courts; to bear testimony  
43 against error in doctrine and immorality in practice, injuriously

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\* Editor's note: "Issue" means "settling the issue of the case".

- 1 affecting the Church; to decide in all controversies respecting  
2 doctrine and discipline;
- 3 2b. To give its advice and instruction, in conformity with the  
4 Constitution, in all cases submitted to it;
- 5 3e. To review the records of the Presbyteries, to take care that the lower  
6 courts observe the Constitution; to redress whatever they may have  
7 done contrary to order;
- 8 4d. To devise measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement  
9 of the Church;
- 10 5e. To erect new Presbyteries, and unite and divide those which were  
11 erected with their consent;
- 12 6f. To institute and superintend the agencies necessary in the general  
13 work of evangelization; to appoint ministers of such labors as fall  
14 under its jurisdiction;
- 15 7g. To suppress schismatical contentions and disputations, according  
16 to the rules provided therefor;
- 17 8h. To receive under its jurisdiction, with the consent of three-fourths  
18 (3/4) of the Presbyteries, other ecclesiastical bodies whose  
19 organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this Church;  
20 to authorize Presbyteries to exercise similar power in receiving  
21 bodies suited to become constituents of those courts, and lying  
22 within their geographical bounds respectively;
- 23 9i. To superintend the affairs of the whole Church;
- 24 10j. To correspond with other churches; to unite with other  
25 ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the  
26 doctrines and order of this Church, such union to be effected by a  
27 mode of procedure defined in *BCO* 26; and
- 28 11k. In general to recommend measures for the promotion of charity,  
29 truth and holiness through all the churches under its care.

30  
31 **14-127.** Actions of the General Assembly pursuant to the provision of BCO 14-  
32 6 such as deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and judicial decisions are to be  
33 given due and serious consideration by the Church and its lower courts when  
34 deliberating matters related to such action. Judicial decisions shall be binding and  
35 conclusive on the parties who are directly involved in the matter being  
36 adjudicated, and may be appealed to in subsequent similar cases as to any  
37 principle which may have been decided. (See BCO 3-5 and 6, and WCF 31:3.)

38  
39 **14-138.** The whole business of the Assembly being finished, and the vote taken  
40 for final adjournment, the moderator shall say from the chair:

41  
42 **By virtue of the authority delegated to me by the Church, I do now**  
43 **declare that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in**  
44 **America is adjourned, to convene at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day**  
45 **of \_\_\_\_\_ A. D.**

1  
2 After which he shall pray and return thanks, and pronounce or cause to be  
3 pronounced on those present the apostolic benediction.  
4

5 So that the amended *BCO* 14 would read as follows:  
6

7 **14-1.** The General Assembly is the highest court of this Church, and  
8 represents in one body all the churches thereof. It bears the title of The General  
9 Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, and constitutes the bond of  
10 union, peace and correspondence among all its congregations and courts.  
11

12 Principles for the Organization of the Assembly:

- 13 1. The Church is responsible for carrying out the Great Commission.
- 14 2. The initiative for carrying out the Great Commission belongs to the  
15 Church at every court level, and the Assembly is responsible to encourage  
16 and promote the fulfillment of this ministry by the various courts.
- 17 3. The work of the Church as set forth in the Great Commission is one work,  
18 being implemented at the General Assembly level through equally  
19 essential committees.
- 20 4. It is the responsibility of every member and every member congregation  
21 to support the whole work of the denomination as they be led in their  
22 conscience held captive to the Word of God.
- 23 5. It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to evaluate needs and  
24 resources, and to act on priorities for the most effective fulfillment of the  
25 Great Commission.
- 26 6. The Church recognizes the right of individuals and congregations to labor  
27 through other agencies in fulfilling the Great Commission.
- 28 7. The Assembly's committees are to serve and not to direct any Church  
29 judicatories. They are not to establish policy, but rather execute policy  
30 established by the General Assembly.
- 31 8. The committees serve the Church through the duties assigned by the  
32 General Assembly.
- 33 9. The Assembly's committees are to include proportionate representation of  
34 all presbyteries, wherever possible.
- 35 10. The committees are to be established on the basis of an equal number  
36 between teaching and ruling elders.  
37

38 **14-2.** A Nominating Committee shall be comprised of one representative  
39 elected by each Presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be  
40 assigned to a class by the stated clerk based on its date of formation. The members  
41 shall serve in classes of three year terms, alternating between ruling and teaching  
42 elders. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an elder of the same  
43 class, teaching or ruling.

44 This committee is to present all nominations for which it is responsible to  
45 the next meeting of the Assembly from a slate of men nominated by the

1 Presbyteries. Presbyteries shall utilize the nominating forms provided by the  
2 stated clerk for their nominations. Each presbytery may present one teaching  
3 elder and one ruling elder for each committee or agency.

4 In addition to nominees for expired terms, the Committee shall nominate  
5 for each permanent committee one ruling and one teaching elder as alternates to  
6 fill any vacancies that may occur during the year. Each alternate should attend  
7 each meeting and fill any vacancy necessary to meet a quorum. In addition to the  
8 new nominees from the Presbyteries, alternates not assuming any vacancies  
9 during a year will be automatically considered by the Nominating Committee as  
10 candidates for nomination to that same committee.

11  
12 **14-3.** The Assembly permanent committees are the Administrative  
13 Committee of General Assembly, Committee on Discipleship Ministries,  
14 Committee on Mission to North America, Committee on Mission to the World,  
15 and Committee on Reformed University Fellowship.

16 The Administrative Committee of General Assembly (AC) shall consist of  
17 twenty (20) members:

- 18 1. Eleven members in classes elected through the standard nomination and  
19 election procedure,
- 20 2. One member each from the following program committees or agencies:
  - 21 a. Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM);
  - 22 b. Covenant College (CC);
  - 23 c. Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS);
  - 24 d. Mission to North America (MNA);
  - 25 e. Mission to the World (MTW);
  - 26 f. PCA Foundation (PCAF);
  - 27 g. Geneva Benefits Group, Inc. (Geneva);
  - 28 h. Reformed University Fellowship (RUF);
  - 29 i. Ridge Haven Conference Center (RH).

30 The eleven members at large shall serve a term of four years. The chairman  
31 of the Administrative Committee shall be one of its members at large.

32 Each program committee and agency shall designate its member each year  
33 at the last meeting of the committee or board before the meeting of General  
34 Assembly. The chief administrative officers of the program committees and  
35 agencies may attend any meeting of the Administrative Committee. They shall be  
36 entitled to the privilege of the floor but shall not have a vote and must be excluded  
37 when an executive session is called.

38 Committee on Discipleship Ministries, Committee on Mission to North  
39 America, Committee on Mission to the World, and Committee on Reformed  
40 University Fellowship shall consist of fifteen (15) men divided into five classes  
41 of three men each, with two men being TEs and one RE or two men being REs  
42 and one TE on alternate years, elected to serve five-year terms. Committees on  
43 Discipleship Ministries, Mission to North America, Mission to the World, and  
44 Reformed University Fellowship shall have one ruling and one teaching elder as  
45 alternates to fill any vacancy that may occur during the year.

1           Persons who have served for a full term, or for at least two years of a partial  
2 term, on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be  
3 eligible for re-election to an Assembly committee until one year has elapsed.  
4 (Exceptions may be permitted in agency bylaws approved by the Assembly.)  
5

6           **14-4.**     The General Assembly establishes personnel salaries after hearing  
7 recommendations from the appropriate committee.  
8

9           **14-5.**     The Assembly shall elect a six-man Theological Examining Committee  
10 (three teaching elders and three ruling elders of three classes of two men each).  
11 Nominations for this Committee will be presented by the Assembly's Nominating  
12 Committee.

13           This committee shall examine all first and second level administrative  
14 officers of committees, boards and agencies, and those acting temporarily in these  
15 positions who are being recommended for first time employment. They are to be  
16 examined in the areas of:

- 17           1. Christian experience,
- 18           2. Theology,
- 19           3. The Sacraments,
- 20           4. Church government,
- 21           5. Bible content,
- 22           6. Church history, and the
- 23           7. History of the Presbyterian Church in America.

24           No person will begin work or move on the field without prior examination  
25 and approval by the General Assembly's Theological Examining Committee. No  
26 first level administrative officer will be presented to the Assembly for election  
27 who has not met the approval of this committee.  
28

29           **14-6.**     All business shall ordinarily come to the floor of the Assembly for final  
30 action through committees of commissioners, except reports of the Standing  
31 Judicial Commission, the Committee on Constitutional Business, the Committee  
32 on Review of Presbytery Records, the Nominating Committee and Ad Interim  
33 committees, which shall come directly to the Assembly.  
34

35           **14-7.**     The General Assembly, which is a permanent court, shall meet at least  
36 annually upon its own adjournment. It shall consist of all teaching elders in good  
37 standing with their Presbyteries, and ruling elders as elected by their Session.  
38 Each congregation is entitled to two ruling elder representatives for the first 350  
39 communing members or fraction thereof, and one additional ruling elder for each  
40 additional 500 communing members or fraction thereof.  
41

42           **14-8.**     When an emergency shall require a meeting of the General Assembly  
43 earlier than the time to which it stands adjourned, the moderator shall issue a call  
44 for a special meeting at the request or with the concurrence of ten percent (10%)  
45 of the commissioners who had seats in the Assembly at its preceding meeting, of

1 whom at least ten shall be teaching elders and at least ten ruling elders,  
2 representing at least one-third (1/3) of the Presbyteries. Should the moderator be  
3 for any reason unable to act, the stated clerk shall under the same requirements  
4 issue the call.

5 The members of the special meeting shall be the commissioners elected to  
6 the preceding meeting of the Assembly or their alternates. A Session, however,  
7 shall have the right to elect a commissioner or alternate in the stead of one who  
8 had died since the last meeting of the Assembly, or of one who has notified the  
9 moderator of the Session of his inability to serve. Notice of the special meeting  
10 shall be sent not less than twenty (20) days in advance to each commissioner and  
11 to the moderator of each Presbytery. In the notice the purpose of the meeting is to  
12 be stated and no other business is to be transacted.

13  
14 **14-9.** Each commissioner, before his name shall be enrolled as a member of  
15 the Assembly, shall produce appropriate credentials.

16  
17 **14-10.** Any one hundred (100) of these commissioners, of whom half shall be  
18 teaching elders and half ruling elders, representing at least one-third (1/3) of the  
19 Presbyteries, being met on the day and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum  
20 for the transaction of business.

21  
22 **14-11.** The General Assembly shall have power:

- 23 1. To receive and issue\* all appeals, references, and complaints  
24 regularly brought before it from the lower courts; to bear testimony  
25 against error in doctrine and immorality in practice, injuriously  
26 affecting the Church; to decide in all controversies respecting  
27 doctrine and discipline;
- 28 2. To give its advice and instruction, in conformity with the  
29 Constitution, in all cases submitted to it;
- 30 3. To review the records of the Presbyteries, to take care that the lower  
31 courts observe the Constitution; to redress whatever they may have  
32 done contrary to order;
- 33 4. To devise measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement  
34 of the Church;
- 35 5. To erect new Presbyteries, and unite and divide those which were  
36 erected with their consent;
- 37 6. To institute and superintend the agencies necessary in the general  
38 work of evangelization; to appoint ministers of such labors as fall  
39 under its jurisdiction;
- 40 7. To suppress schismatical contentions and disputations, according  
41 to the rules provided therefor;
- 42 8. To receive under its jurisdiction, with the consent of three-fourths  
43 (3/4) of the Presbyteries, other ecclesiastical bodies whose  
44 organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this Church;

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\* Editor's note: "Issue" means "settling the issue of the case".

1 to authorize Presbyteries to exercise similar power in receiving  
2 bodies suited to become constituents of those courts, and lying  
3 within their geographical bounds respectively;

- 4 9. To superintend the affairs of the whole Church;
- 5 10. To correspond with other churches; to unite with other
- 6 ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the
- 7 doctrines and order of this Church, such union to be effected by a
- 8 mode of procedure defined in *BCO* 26; and
- 9 11. In general to recommend measures for the promotion of charity,
- 10 truth and holiness through all the churches under its care.

11  
12 **14-12.** Actions of the General Assembly pursuant to the provision of *BCO* 14-  
13 6 such as deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and judicial decisions are to be  
14 given due and serious consideration by the Church and its lower courts when  
15 deliberating matters related to such action. Judicial decisions shall be binding and  
16 conclusive on the parties who are directly involved in the matter being  
17 adjudicated, and may be appealed to in subsequent similar cases as to any  
18 principle which may have been decided. (See *BCO* 3-5 and 6, and *WCF* 31:3.)

19  
20 **14-13.** The whole business of the Assembly being finished, and the vote taken  
21 for final adjournment, the moderator shall say from the chair:

22  
23 **By virtue of the authority delegated to me by the Church, I do now**  
24 **declare that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in**  
25 **America is adjourned, to convene at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day**  
26 **of \_\_\_\_\_ A. D.**

27  
28  
29 Below are the cross-references found in the *BCO* and *RAO* that would be amended with the  
30 restructuring of Chapter 14.

31  
32 *BCO* 15-4

33 Nominations and vacancies shall be filled according to *BCO* ~~14-1(11)~~ 14-2, with nominations  
34 allowed from the floor. No person may be elected if there is already a member of the  
35 commission from the same Presbytery; but if a person is elected and changes Presbytery, he  
36 may continue to serve his full term.

37  
38 *RAO* 3-5.g

39 He must understand and be committed to the proposition set out in *BCO* ~~14-1,3~~ 14-1.3: “The  
40 work of the Church as set forth in the Great Commission is one work. . .” Therefore, such  
41 person must recognize and be committed to implementing the important principle of the  
42 interdependency of each court, Committee, and Agency of the PCA.

1 *RAO 4-5*

2 The membership of Committees or Agencies shall be limited to the constitutional provisions  
3 for the permanent Committees or Agencies (~~BCO 14-1.12~~ 14-3): namely, that those who have  
4 served for at least a full term, or at least two years of a partial term on one of the Assembly's  
5 permanent Committees or Agencies shall not be eligible for re-election to an Assembly  
6 Committee or Agency until one year has elapsed, unless provision has been approved by the  
7 Agency bylaws. Nominations shall be handled according to the ~~BCO 14-1.11~~ 14-2. These  
8 provisions shall not apply to ad interim committees, study committees or other committees  
9 appointed.

10  
11 *RAO 8-3*

12 In accordance with ~~BCO 14-1.14~~ 14-5 there shall be a Theological Examining Committee  
13 composed of three teaching elders and three ruling elders of three classes of two men each.  
14 There shall also be one teaching elder and one ruling elder as alternates to fill any vacancy  
15 that may occur during the year.

16  
17 This committee shall conduct its work as specified in ~~BCO 14-1.14~~ 14-5. Furthermore this  
18 committee shall record all nominees' differences to our denominational standards in their own  
19 words, as set forth in *RAO 16-3.e.7*. Those differences shall be included in this committee's  
20 annual report which is submitted to the General Assembly for approval.

21  
22 *RAO 14-2*

23 Each presbytery shall, prior to the meeting of the Assembly, elect one of its commissioners to  
24 each of these committees of commissioners (cf. 14-1), dividing them as to ruling and teaching  
25 elders by a formula established by the Stated Clerk. In the event that presbytery does not have  
26 sufficient teaching elders to supply the committees thus assigned, the presbytery may, at its  
27 own discretion, elect ruling elders to these committees (or vice versa, may elect teaching  
28 elders for insufficient ruling elders). In the event that presbytery is not able to supply members  
29 for all the committees, the presbytery may select the committees to which they wish to appoint  
30 representatives. Commissioners serving on permanent Committees or Agencies or sub-  
31 committees of the Assembly or the staffs thereof are not eligible to serve on any of these  
32 committees of commissioners. For the purpose of defining those ineligible for service in  
33 committees of commissioners, permanent Committee or Agency "staff" is to be understood  
34 as persons required to be examined by the Theological Examining Committee (~~BCO 14-1.12~~  
35 14-5) and all permanent Committee and Agency support personnel. All commissioners should  
36 bear in mind Robert's Rules of Order regarding abstaining from voting on a question of direct  
37 personal interest (RONR (12th ed.) 45:4-5).

38  
39 *RAO 16-3.9*

40 Minutes of executive sessions are not exempt from the general requirement that presbytery's  
41 actions shall be recorded in the Presbytery's minutes and that these minutes (even if kept in a  
42 separate section on executive sessions) shall be submitted to the General Assembly for review  
43 (~~BCO 13-11; 14-6.e~~ 14-11.3; 40-1). Presbytery may ask that the Committee on Review of  
44 Presbytery Records deal with these minutes confidentially. However, any exceptions to these  
45 minutes must be submitted to the General Assembly through the normal procedures.

Overture 23, Westminster Presbytery

1

2

3 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

4 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 24** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 15-2 to Clarify that Presbytery Itself Must Conduct Ordination Exams”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* 15-2 sets forth the limits of what a commission may do, stating that if an  
5 ordination is to be carried out by a commission, the Presbytery is required to conduct  
6 the previous examination; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, this wording does not explicitly prohibit a commission from conducting the entire  
9 examination for a candidate for ordination; and  
10

11 **Whereas**, the examination for ordination is a significant responsibility of the Presbytery, and  
12 it is important that the Presbytery itself conduct and sustain the trials required for  
13 ordination; and  
14

15 **Whereas**, the current language could be clarified to ensure that the full ordination examination  
16 is conducted before the Presbytery itself, while still permitting committees to conduct  
17 thorough preliminary examinations;  
18

19 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 15-  
20 2 to read (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
21

22 ~~When the ordination of a minister is committed to a commission, the Presbytery~~  
23 ~~itself shall conduct the previous examination. Presbytery shall always conduct the~~  
24 final trials of examination for ordination. A committee of Presbytery may conduct  
25 preliminary examinations, but the examination required for ordination must be  
26 sustained before the Presbytery itself.  
27

28 So that the amended *BCO* 15-2 would read:  
29

30 **15-2.** Among the matters that may be properly executed by commissions are the  
31 taking of the testimony in judicial cases, the ordination of ministers, the  
32 installation of ministers, the visitation of portions of the church affected with  
33 disorder, and the organization of new churches.  
34

35 Every commission appointed by Presbytery shall consist of at least two teaching  
36 elders and two ruling elders, and the quorum shall be one more than half its  
37 membership unless otherwise determined by the Presbytery. However, should a  
38 Presbytery clothe a commission with judicial powers and authority to conduct  
39 judicial process, or with power to ordain or install a teaching elder of the Gospel,  
40 the quorum of such commission shall not be less than two teaching elders and two  
41 ruling elders. The quorum for a commission appointed as an interim session need  
42 not conform to the requirements of a judicial commission, but only to those of a  
43 session (*BCO* 12-1). Presbytery shall always conduct the final trials of  
44 examination for ordination. A committee of Presbytery may conduct preliminary

1 examinations, but the examination required for ordination must be sustained  
2 before the Presbytery itself.

3

4

5 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

6 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 25** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Restructure and Amend *BCO* 21-1 through 21-4 for Clarity, Consistency, and Ease  
3 of Reference”  
4

5 **Whereas**, *BCO* Chapter 21 has been proposed for amendment thirty-six (36) times in the  
6 history of the PCA, with seven (7) of those proposals being ratified; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, *BCO* 21 clearly outlines the process for the ordination and installation of ministers,  
9 yet over time it has become less clear in flow and organization due to multiple  
10 amendments inserted in various places, resulting in overlapping content, repeated  
11 clauses, and disjointed section order; and  
12

13 **Whereas**, these accumulated changes have made it more difficult for Presbyteries, candidates,  
14 and clerks to quickly locate and apply the relevant provisions; and  
15

16 **Whereas**, the proposed amendment does not alter the substance of the ordination process but  
17 simply restructures and renumbers the chapter for clarity, consistency, and ease of  
18 reference; and  
19

20 **Whereas**, such restructuring will reduce redundancy, improve logical flow, and aid in the  
21 proper application of the *BCO*’s requirements for ordination and installation; and  
22

23 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend Chapter  
24 21 of the *Book of Church Order* by restructuring and renumbering it as set forth below,  
25 and renumber the remaining of *BCO* 21 accordingly, and to amend any cross-  
26 references to Chapter 21 in other portions of the *BCO*, *RAO*, and *OMSJC* accordingly  
27 (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions).  
28

29 *Clarify: it appears candidate/intern are used fluently throughout this section, and it might be*  
30 *better to update terminology to reflect a constant phrase throughout this portion, for it could*  
31 *be an intern, a candidate (under care) completed his internship, licentiate, or an ordained*  
32 *minister from another denomination.*  
33  
34

35 **21-1.** No minister, licentiate or candidate shall receive a call from a church but by  
36 the permission of his Presbytery. When a call has been presented to the  
37 Presbytery, if found in order and the Presbytery deems it for the good of the  
38 Church, they shall place it in the hands of the person to whom it is addressed.  
39

40 Ordinarily, a minister, licentiate, or candidate ~~or licentiate~~ may not be granted  
41 permission by the Presbytery to move on to the field to which he has been called,  
42 prior to his examination for licensure or ordination, or, in the case of a minister,  
43 ~~Likewise an ordained minister from another Presbyterian Church in America~~  
44 ~~Presbytery or another denomination, ordinarily shall not move on to the field to~~  
45 ~~which he has been called~~ until examined and received by Presbytery. When a

1 church has called a man to serve as their pastor, Presbytery shall take immediate  
2 steps for his ordination and/or installation.

3  
4 ~~21-2. When an intern has completed his internship to the satisfaction of the~~  
5 ~~Presbytery, and has accepted a call, the Presbytery shall take immediate steps for~~  
6 ~~his ordination.~~

7  
8 ~~21-23.~~ No Presbytery shall ordain any intern to the office of minister of the Word  
9 with reference to his laboring within the bounds of another Presbytery, but shall  
10 furnish him with the necessary testimonials, and require him to repair to the  
11 Presbytery within whose bounds he expects to labor, that he may submit himself  
12 to its authority, according to the Constitution of the Church.

13  
14 **21-3.4. Ordination Requirements and Procedures**

- 15 a. An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present a diploma  
16 of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also  
17 a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological  
18 seminary or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course  
19 of theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement  
20 from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly  
21 and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America. No  
22 Presbytery shall omit any of these educational requirements except in  
23 extraordinary cases, and then only with a three-fourths (3/4) approval of  
24 the Presbytery. Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these  
25 educational requirements, it shall always make a record of the reasons for  
26 such omission and the parts omitted. The intern shall also present  
27 satisfactory testimonials as to the completion and approval of his  
28 internship in the practice of the ministry.
- 29 b. Every candidate for ordination shall ordinarily have met the requirements  
30 of the Assembly's approved curriculum. Ordinarily, the intern shall have  
31 been examined in most of the following trials when he was licensed. If  
32 the Presbytery previously approved all parts of the licensure examination,  
33 it need not re-examine the intern in those areas at this time. If there were  
34 areas of weakness, which the Presbytery noted, or if any member of the  
35 Presbytery desires to do so, the intern may be examined on particular  
36 points again. Additionally, the intern shall be examined on any parts  
37 required for ordination which were not covered in his examination for  
38 licensure. In all cases, he should be asked to indicate whether he has  
39 changed his previous views concerning any points in the *Confession of*  
40 *Faith, Catechisms, and Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church  
41 in America.

42  
43 ~~21-4e.~~ Presbytery shall conduct a careful examination of the trials for ordination,  
44 or transfer from another denomination, which shall consist of:

- 45 (1) ~~A careful examination as to:~~

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a. Experiential religion

(1~~a~~) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),

(i) In the examination of the candidate's personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the candidate must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

b. His knowledge of:

(1~~b~~) ~~his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,~~

(i) Presbytery may accept a seminary degree that includes study in the original languages in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages.

(2~~e~~) Bible content,

(3~~d~~) theology,

(4~~e~~) the Sacraments,

(5~~f~~) Church history,

(6~~g~~) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and

(7~~h~~) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

~~A Presbytery may accept a seminary degree which includes study in the original languages in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages.~~

c. His views

(1) While our Constitution does not require the candidate's affirmation of every statement and/or proposition of doctrine in our *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms*, it is the right and responsibility of the Presbytery to determine if the candidate is out of accord with any of the fundamentals of these doctrinal standards and, as a consequence, may not be able in good faith sincerely to receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures (cf. BCO 21-6, Q.2; 24-6, Q.2).

1           (2) Therefore, in examining a candidate for ordination, the Presbytery  
2           shall inquire not only into the candidate's knowledge and views in  
3           the areas specified above, but also shall require the candidate to  
4           state the specific instances in which he may differ with the  
5           Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements  
6           and/or propositions. The court may grant an exception to any  
7           difference of doctrine only if in the court's judgment the  
8           candidate's declared difference is not out of accord with any  
9           fundamental of our system of doctrine because the difference is  
10           neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion.

11           d. Practical and theological competence

12           (12) He shall prepare a thesis on some theological topic assigned by  
13           Presbytery.

14           (23) The candidate shall prepare an exegesis on an assigned portion of  
15           Scripture, requiring the use of the original language or languages.

16           (34) He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery  
17           or committee thereof, upon three-fourths (3/4) vote.

18           No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except  
19           in extraordinary cases, and then only with three-fourths (3/4)  
20           approval of Presbytery.

21           ~~d. Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make~~  
22           ~~a record of the reasons for such omissions and of the trial parts omitted.~~

23           ~~e. In the examination of the candidate's personal character, the presbytery~~  
24           ~~shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful~~  
25           ~~attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as~~  
26           ~~well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear~~  
27           ~~testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof~~  
28           ~~by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over~~  
29           ~~sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-~~  
30           ~~23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful~~  
31           ~~temptations publicly, the candidate must exercise great care not to~~  
32           ~~diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as~~  
33           ~~though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify~~  
34           ~~to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).~~

35           ~~f. While our Constitution does not require the candidate's affirmation of~~  
36           ~~every statement and/or proposition of doctrine in our *Confession of Faith*~~  
37           ~~and *Catechisms*, it is the right and responsibility of the Presbytery to~~  
38           ~~determine if the candidate is out of accord with any of the fundamentals~~  
39           ~~of these doctrinal standards and, as a consequence, may not be able in~~  
40           ~~good faith sincerely to receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and~~  
41           ~~*Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in~~  
42           ~~the Holy Scriptures (cf. BCO 21-5, Q.2; 24-6, Q.2).~~

43           ~~g. Therefore, in examining a candidate for ordination, the Presbytery shall~~  
44           ~~inquire not only into the candidate's knowledge and views in the areas~~  
45           ~~specified above, but also shall require the candidate to state the specific~~

1 instances in which he may differ with the *Confession of Faith* and  
2 *Catechisms* in any of their statements and/or propositions. The court may  
3 grant an exception to any difference of doctrine only if in the court's  
4 judgment the candidate's declared difference is not out of accord with any  
5 fundamental of our system of doctrine because the difference is neither  
6 hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion.

7 h.—The Presbytery, being fully satisfied of his qualifications for the sacred  
8 office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought, if practicable,  
9 to be in that church of which he is to be the pastor.

10 i. ~~The extraordinary clauses should be limited to extraordinary circumstances~~  
11 ~~of the church or proven extraordinary gifts of the man. Presbyteries~~  
12 ~~should exercise diligence and care in the use of these provisions in order~~  
13 ~~that they not prevent the ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly~~  
14 ~~exceptional circumstances, nor ordain (nor receive from other~~  
15 ~~denominations BCO 13-6) a person who is inadequately prepared for the~~  
16 ~~ministry.~~

17  
18 21-5. No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of the above trials or  
19 examinations for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with  
20 three-fourths (3/4) approval of Presbytery. Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any  
21 of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons for such omissions and  
22 of the trial parts omitted.

23  
24 The extraordinary clauses should be limited to extraordinary circumstances of the  
25 church or proven extraordinary gifts of the man. Presbyteries should exercise  
26 diligence and care in the use of these provisions in order that they not prevent the  
27 ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly exceptional circumstances, nor  
28 ordain (nor receive from other denominations (BCO 13-6) a person who is  
29 inadequately prepared for the ministry.

30  
31 So that the amended *BCO* 21-1 through 21-5 would read as follows, with the subsequent  
32 paragraphs of *BCO* 21 renumbered accordingly:

33  
34 **21-1.** No minister, licentiate or candidate shall receive a call from a church but by  
35 the permission of his Presbytery. When a call has been presented to the  
36 Presbytery, if found in order and the Presbytery deems it for the good of the  
37 Church, they shall place it in the hands of the person to whom it is addressed.

38  
39 Ordinarily, a minister, licentiate, or candidate may not be granted permission by  
40 the Presbytery to move on to the field to which he has been called, prior to his  
41 examination for licensure or ordination, or, in the case of a minister,—until  
42 examined and received by Presbytery. When a church has called a man to serve  
43 as their pastor, Presbytery shall take immediate steps for his ordination and/or  
44 installation.

45

1           **21-2.** No Presbytery shall ordain any intern to the office of minister of the Word  
2 with reference to his laboring within the bounds of another Presbytery, but shall  
3 furnish him with the necessary testimonials, and require him to repair to the  
4 Presbytery within whose bounds he expects to labor, that he may submit himself  
5 to its authority, according to the Constitution of the Church.  
6

7           **21-3. Ordination Requirements and Procedures**

8           a. An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present a diploma  
9 of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also  
10 a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological  
11 seminary or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course  
12 of theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement  
13 from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly  
14 and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America. No  
15 Presbytery shall omit any of these educational requirements except in  
16 extraordinary cases, and then only with a three-fourths (3/4) approval of  
17 the Presbytery. Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these  
18 educational requirements, it shall always make a record of the reasons for  
19 such omission and the parts omitted. The intern shall also present  
20 satisfactory testimonials as to the completion and approval of his  
21 internship in the practice of the ministry.

22           b. Every candidate for ordination shall ordinarily have met the requirements  
23 of the Assembly's approved curriculum. Ordinarily, the intern shall have  
24 been examined in most of the following trials when he was licensed. If  
25 the Presbytery previously approved all parts of the licensure examination,  
26 it need not re-examine the intern in those areas at this time. If there were  
27 areas of weakness, which the Presbytery noted, or if any member of the  
28 Presbytery desires to do so, the intern may be examined on particular  
29 points again. Additionally, the intern shall be examined on any parts  
30 required for ordination which were not covered in his examination for  
31 licensure. In all cases, he should be asked to indicate whether he has  
32 changed his previous views concerning any points in the *Confession of*  
33 *Faith, Catechisms, and Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church  
34 in America.  
35

36           **21-4.** Presbytery shall conduct a careful examination of the trials for ordination, or  
37 *transfer* from another denomination, which shall consist of:

38           a. Experiential religion

39           (1a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal  
40 character and family management (based on the qualifications set  
41 out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),

42           (i) In the examination of the candidate's personal character, the  
43 presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious  
44 concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical  
45 struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful

1 desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance  
2 upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the  
3 Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress  
4 over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit  
5 (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain,  
6 when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the  
7 candidate must exercise great care not to diminish the  
8 seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as  
9 though they were matters of little consequence, but rather  
10 should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in  
11 holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

12 b. His knowledge of:

- 13 (1) the Greek and Hebrew languages,  
14 (i) Presbytery may accept a seminary degree that includes study  
15 in the original languages in lieu of an oral examination in the  
16 original languages.  
17 (2) Bible content,  
18 (3) theology,  
19 (4) the Sacraments,  
20 (5) Church history,  
21 (6) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and  
22 (7) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the  
23 church.

24 c. His views

- 25 (1) While our Constitution does not require the candidate's affirmation  
26 of every statement and/or proposition of doctrine in our Confession  
27 of Faith and Catechisms, it is the right and responsibility of the  
28 Presbytery to determine if the candidate is out of accord with any  
29 of the fundamentals of these doctrinal standards and, as a  
30 consequence, may not be able in good faith sincerely to receive and  
31 adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church as  
32 containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures (cf.  
33 *BCO* 21-6, Q.2; 24-6, Q.2).  
34 (2) Therefore, in examining a candidate for ordination, the Presbytery  
35 shall inquire not only into the candidate's knowledge and views in  
36 the areas specified above, but also shall require the candidate to  
37 state the specific instances in which he may differ with the  
38 Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements  
39 and/or propositions. The court may grant an exception to any  
40 difference of doctrine only if in the court's judgment the  
41 candidate's declared difference is not out of accord with any  
42 fundamental of our system of doctrine because the difference is  
43 neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion.

44 d. Practical and theological competence

- 1 (1) He shall prepare a thesis on some theological topic assigned by  
2 Presbytery.
- 3 (2) The candidate shall prepare an exegesis on an assigned portion of  
4 Scripture, requiring the use of the original language or languages.
- 5 (3) He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery  
6 or committee thereof, upon three-fourths (3/4) vote.

7 The Presbytery, being fully satisfied of his qualifications for the sacred office,  
8 shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought, if practicable, to be in that  
9 church of which he is to be the pastor.

10  
11 **21-5.** No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of the above trials or  
12 examinations for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with  
13 three-fourths (3/4) approval of Presbytery. Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any  
14 of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons for such omissions and  
15 of the trial parts omitted.

16  
17 The extraordinary clauses should be limited to extraordinary circumstances of the  
18 church or proven extraordinary gifts of the man. Presbyteries should exercise  
19 diligence and care in the use of these provisions in order that they not prevent the  
20 ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly exceptional circumstances, nor  
21 ordain (nor receive from other denominations (*BCO* 13-6) a person who is  
22 inadequately prepared for the ministry.

23  
24  
25 Below are the cross-references found in the *BCO* and *RAO* that would be amended with the  
26 restructuring of Chapter 21.

27  
28 *BCO* 5-5.a

29 If there is a minister approved by Presbytery to serve the mission church as its pastor (*BCO*  
30 5-4.a), each member so received shall be understood to assent to the call of that minister and  
31 to affirm the promises made to the pastor in *BCO* ~~21-10~~ 21-11.

32  
33 *BCO* 13-6.b-c

34 b. If an applicant comes from another denomination, the Presbytery shall examine him  
35 thoroughly as required by the trials listed in *BCO* ~~21-4~~ 21-3, 21-4 and require him to  
36 answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination. Ordained  
37 ministers from other denominations being considered by Presbyteries for reception may  
38 come under the extraordinary provisions set forth in ~~21-4~~ 21-3, 21-4.

39  
40 c. In every case, Presbyteries shall require each ordained minister entering the Presbytery  
41 to state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and  
42 Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions, which differences the court  
43 shall judge in accordance with *BCO* ~~21-4.f-g~~ 21-4.c (see also *RAO* 16-3.e.7.a-d).

44  
45 NOTE: If both this overture and Overture 21 pass, the references to *BCO* 21-4 in *BCO* 13-6

1 will be adjusted accordingly:

2        *BCO* 21-4.a    becomes    *BCO* 21-3.a  
 3        *BCO* 21-4.c(1) becomes    *BCO* 21-4.b  
 4        *BCO* 21-4.c(4) becomes    *BCO* 21-4.d(3)  
 5        *BCO* 21-4.e    becomes    *BCO* 21-4.a  
 6        *BCO* 21-5        becomes    *BCO* 21-6  
 7        *BCO* 21-4        becomes    *BCO* 21-5

8  
 9 *BCO* 18-2

10 Every applicant for the ministry must put himself under the care of Presbytery, which should  
 11 ordinarily be the Presbytery that has jurisdiction of the church of which he is a member. The  
 12 endorsement of his Session must be given to the Presbytery, consisting of testimonials  
 13 regarding his Christian character and promise of usefulness in the ministry. The endorsement  
 14 should also describe the activities of ministry the applicant has participated in with brief  
 15 evaluation.

16  
 17 Every applicant for care shall be a member of the congregation whose session provides an  
 18 endorsement for at least six months before filing his application, except in those cases deemed  
 19 extraordinary by the Presbytery.

20  
 21 Every applicant must file his application with the clerk of the Presbytery at least one month  
 22 before the meeting of the Presbytery. An applicant for care may not be received under care  
 23 and examined for ordination at the same meeting of the Presbytery, since he must serve a  
 24 period of at least one year of internship prior to ordination (see *BCO* 19-7 and ~~21-4~~ 21-3 An  
 25 applicant for internship is obliged to be under care and may be licensed to preach the Gospel;  
 26 further, one who is not already under care may be taken under care, be licensed to preach the  
 27 Gospel, and become an intern at the same meeting of Presbytery.

28  
 29 *BCO* 18-4

30 The candidate continues to be a private member of the church and subject to the jurisdiction  
 31 of the Session, but as respects his preparatory training for the ministry he is under the oversight  
 32 of the Presbytery. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery to show a kindly and sympathetic  
 33 interest in him, and to give him counsel and guidance in regard to his studies, his practical  
 34 training, and the institutions of learning he should attend. In no case may a candidate omit  
 35 from his course of study any of the subjects prescribed in the Form of Government as tests for  
 36 ordination without obtaining the consent of Presbytery (see *BCO* ~~21-4~~ 21-3); and where such  
 37 consent is given the Presbytery shall record the fact and the reasons therefore.

38  
 39 *BCO* 39-3

40 While affirming that the Scripture is “the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion  
 41 are to be determined” (*WCF* 1.10), and that the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in  
 42 America is “subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inerrant Word  
 43 of God” (*BCO* Preface, III), and while affirming also that this Constitution is fallible  
 44 (*WCF* 31.3), the Presbyterian Church in America affirms that this subordinate and fallible  
 45 Constitution has been “adopted by the church” (*BCO* Preface, III) “as standard expositions of

1 the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice” (*BCO* 29-1) and as setting  
2 forth a form of government and discipline “in conformity with the general principles of  
3 biblical polity” (*BCO* ~~21-5.3~~ 21-6.3). To insure that this Constitution is not amended, violated  
4 or disregarded in judicial process, any review of the judicial proceedings of a lower court by  
5 a higher court shall be guided by the following principles:  
6

7 *RAO* 16-3.e.6-7

8 6. Minutes of Presbytery examinations for ordination (*BCO* 21-4) and/or transfer (*BCO*  
9 13-6) must record that Presbytery accomplished the requirements of *BCO* ~~21-4.e~~ 21-  
10 4.a(1). A statement such as “The examination in experiential religion (*BCO* ~~21-4.e.(1)(a)~~  
11 21-4.a.(1)) covered all the items specified in section e(1) of *BCO* 21-4.a” would be  
12 sufficient.  
13

14 7. Minutes of presbytery shall record that each candidate being examined for licensure,  
15 ordination, or transfer from another denomination was required to “state the specific  
16 instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of  
17 their statements and/or propositions” (*BCO* 13-6.c; 19-2; 21-4.c). Presbytery minutes shall  
18 record ministers’ and ministerial candidates’ stated differences with our Standards in their  
19 own words. Each presbytery shall also record whether:

- 20 a) the candidate stated that he had no differences; or
  - 21 b) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be merely semantic; or
  - 22 c) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out  
23 of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (*BCO* 19-2; 21-4.c); or
  - 24 d) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be “out of accord,” that is, “hostile  
25 to the system” or “strick[ing] at the vitals of religion” (*BCO* 19-2; 21-4.c).
- 26  
27

28 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

29 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 26** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 26-2 to Only Count Presbyteries Who Submit Votes”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the *Book of Church Order* currently requires “the advice and consent of two-thirds  
5 (2/3) of the Presbyteries” for certain actions; and  
6

7 **Whereas**, under *Robert’s Rules of Order*, abstentions are not counted in the total vote, only  
8 votes actually cast are considered (RONR § 44:3); and  
9

10 **Whereas**, a Presbytery that fails to submit a vote is not abstaining but is absent, and counting  
11 such Presbyteries in the total would effectively treat their silence as a “no” vote; and  
12

13 **Whereas**, if a Presbytery desires to have its voice heard on a proposed action, the best way to  
14 accomplish this is to cast a vote rather than remain silent; and  
15

16 **Whereas**, if a Presbytery fails to submit its vote and later desires to cast it, the General  
17 Assembly may defer the action for one year (*BCO* 26-6); and  
18

19 **Whereas**, fairness and sound parliamentary procedure require that the two-thirds calculation  
20 be based only on Presbyteries that officially submit their vote;  
21

22 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 26-  
23 2.2 to specify that the two-thirds (2/3) requirement applies only to Presbyteries that  
24 submit their vote prior to the convening of the next General Assembly (underlining for  
25 additions):  
26

27 2. The advice and consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting Presbyteries.  
28

29 *Adopted by the Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025.*

30 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*  
31

1 **OVERTURE 27** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 34-1 Regarding GA Assuming Original Jurisdiction”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* 34-1 has been proposed for amendment eleven (11) times in the history of the  
5 PCA, yet none of those amendments have been ratified by the General Assembly; and  
6

7 **Whereas**, the serious nature of *BCO* 34-1 is to protect the Church as a whole in matters  
8 concerning doctrine or public scandal, yet in its current form it provides little practical  
9 means for other Presbyteries to have the General Assembly assume original  
10 jurisdiction in such cases; and  
11

12 **Whereas**, Preliminary Principle #3 states: “Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the  
13 visible Church, which is His body, has appointed officers not only to preach the Gospel  
14 and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both  
15 of truth and duty. It is incumbent upon these officers and upon the whole Church in  
16 whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing  
17 in all cases the rules contained in the Word of God”; and  
18

19 **Whereas**, these “officers” are not limited to those serving in a particular court, but include all  
20 the officers of the whole Church acting corporately for its edification and purity; and  
21

22 **Whereas**, the current low numerical threshold for triggering original jurisdiction does not  
23 reflect the gravity of such cases or stipulate the kind of action required by the initiating  
24 presbyteries; and  
25

26 **Whereas**, at the founding of the PCA, the request of two Presbyteries represented  
27 approximately 12.5% of the whole, whereas today it represents only about 2.3% of  
28 presbyteries, an unbalanced ratio given the seriousness of assuming original  
29 jurisdiction; and  
30

31 **Whereas**, following biblical principles of discipline, a Presbytery should have the right to  
32 adjudicate a report of false teaching or heinous sin concerning a teaching elder within  
33 its bounds before original jurisdiction is assumed by a higher court; and  
34

35 **Whereas**, it is still appropriate for a higher court to assume original jurisdiction if the  
36 Presbytery fails to indict after receiving credible reports from multiple Presbyteries,  
37 and it is reasonable to raise that number to three (3) Presbyteries to increase the number  
38 of witnesses to such false teaching or heinous sin; and  
39

40 **Whereas**, it is also right for the General Assembly, upon receiving such a request, to have the  
41 option to refuse original jurisdiction but require the lower court to institute process by  
42 indicting the teaching elder, and then to review their actions through the proper  
43 channels;  
44

1 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 34-  
2 1 set forth below (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):

3  
4 **34-1.** Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which  
5 he is a member. However, if the Presbytery receives a report from another  
6 Presbytery concerning the false teaching or heinous sin of a teaching elder under  
7 its jurisdiction and fails to indict, the Presbytery that submitted the report may  
8 request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction; that is, to initially  
9 receive, hear, and determine the matter. The General Assembly may assume  
10 original jurisdiction upon the request of three (3) Presbyteries concerning the  
11 same matter. Alternatively, the General Assembly may require the original  
12 Presbytery to indict the teaching elder and submit a record of the case to the  
13 General Assembly for review. ~~refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public~~  
14 ~~scandal and two other Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume~~  
15 ~~original jurisdiction (to first receive and initially hear and determine), the General~~  
16 ~~Assembly shall do so.~~

17  
18 So that the amended *BCO* 34-1 would read:

19  
20 **34-1.** Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which  
21 he is a member. However, if the Presbytery receives a report from another  
22 Presbytery concerning the false teaching or heinous sin of a teaching elder under  
23 its jurisdiction and fails to indict, the Presbytery that submitted the report may  
24 request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction; that is, to initially  
25 receive, hear, and determine the matter. The General Assembly may assume  
26 original jurisdiction upon the request of three (3) Presbyteries concerning the  
27 same matter. Alternatively, the General Assembly may require the original  
28 Presbytery to indict the teaching elder and submit a record of the case to the  
29 General Assembly for review.

30  
31  
32 *Adopted by the Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025.*

33 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 28** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)

2 “Add *BCO* 41-7 to Provide a Right to Complain when a Presbytery Acts on a  
3 Reference”

4  
5 **Whereas**, when a reference is made from a Session to a Presbytery, and the Presbytery takes  
6 up that reference for action, the effect is that one significant right has been denied to  
7 the members of that church; namely, the ability to file a complaint against the action  
8 of the Session; and

9  
10 **Whereas**, there are currently no requirements in the *BCO* for a Session to give notice to the  
11 members of the congregation when it makes such a reference to Presbytery; and

12  
13 **Whereas**, in acting upon a reference, the Presbytery effectively carries out the duties of the  
14 lower court, and in such circumstances members should not lose the right to complain  
15 merely because the original action was referred rather than decided by the Session;  
16 and

17  
18 **Whereas**, the right to file a complaint is a fundamental provision of church polity, designed  
19 to ensure accountability, safeguard the rights of members, and promote the peace and  
20 purity of the church; and

21  
22 **Whereas**, providing members with a clear right to complain in cases where a reference  
23 removes that opportunity would align with the principles of fairness, due process, and  
24 the accountability of church courts;

25  
26 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend the *Book*  
27 *of Church Order* by adding a new section, *BCO* 41-7, to read (underlining for  
28 additions):

29  
30 41-7. When a reference, with final disposition, is made from a Session to a  
31 Presbytery, the members of the congregation retain the right to complain against  
32 any action of the Presbytery related to the reference, as if the Session itself had  
33 taken the action.

34  
35  
36 *Adopted by the Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025.*

37 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 29** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 42 to Clarify Between Verbal and Written Notice of Appeal”  
3

4 **Whereas**, Chapter 42 stipulates various kinds of notice of appeal, including verbal notice  
5 given before the adjournment of the meeting and written notice officially submitted to  
6 the court; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, *BCO* 42-6 seeks to protect the rights of a member who believes the court has acted  
9 in an unjust or unprocedural manner and who has given or filed a notice of appeal; and  
10

11 **Whereas**, the current wording of *BCO* 42-6 does not specifically indicate which type of notice  
12 of appeal suspends the judgment of the lower court;  
13

14 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 42-  
15 4 to clarify the distinction between verbal notice of appeal and the written notice of  
16 appeal described in *BCO* 42-6 as follows (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for  
17 deletions);  
18

19 **42-4.** Verbal ~~N~~notice of appeal may be given to the court before its  
20 adjournment...  
21

22 So that the amended *BCO* 42-4 would read:

23 **42-4.** Verbal notice of appeal may be given to the court before its adjournment...  
24  
25

26 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery also overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO*  
27 42-6 to specify the different types of notice of appeal and how each type suspends the  
28 judgment of the lower court for specific periods, depending on the nature of the notice  
29 given by the appellant. (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions)  
30

31 **42-6.** Verbal ~~N~~notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment  
32 of the lower court for thirty (30) days of the court’s decision. Written notice of  
33 appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until  
34 the case has been finally decided in the higher court...  
35

36 So that the amended *BCO* 42-6 would read:

37 **42-6.** Verbal notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of  
38 the lower court for thirty (30) days of the court’s decision. Written notice of  
39 appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until  
40 the case has been finally decided in the higher court...  
41  
42  
43

44 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*  
45 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 30** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 46-6 to Require the Recording of the Reception of One Dismissed to  
3 Another Presbytery”  
4

5 **Whereas**, *BCO* 46-6 clearly states that the man being dismissed shall remain under the  
6 jurisdiction of the Presbytery dismissing him until he is received by another  
7 presbytery; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, if a report concerning such a man should arise, the court holding his original  
10 jurisdiction must be clearly known and recorded; and  
11

12 **Whereas**, while it is recorded in the minutes when a man is dismissed by a Presbytery, it is  
13 not currently expressly required that the reception of that man by another Presbytery  
14 be recorded;  
15

16 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 46  
17 by requiring a Presbytery to record in its minutes when a minister, licentiate, or  
18 candidate has been received by another Presbytery (Underline for addition).  
19

20 **46-6.** When a Presbytery shall dismiss a minister, licentiate or candidate, the name  
21 of the Presbytery to which he is dismissed shall be given in the certificate, and he  
22 shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery dismissing him until received  
23 by the other. The Presbytery shall record in its minutes the date of reception of  
24 the minister, licentiate, or candidate who was dismissed.  
25  
26

27 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*  
28 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 31** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 58-5 to Specify that Ruling Elders Shall Distribute the Elements”  
3

4 **Whereas**, our *Confession of Faith* (*WCF* 29.3), *Larger Catechism* (*LC* 169, 173, and 176),  
5 and the declarations of our own denomination affirm that the Lord’s Supper is to be  
6 administered by ministers, and the keys of the Kingdom and the sacraments are  
7 entrusted to the ordained offices of the Church (Matthew 16:19); and  
8

9 **Whereas**, the role of the Session in discipline directly pertains to the serving of the Supper  
10 (*BCO* 30-3; cf. *WCF* 30.1–4); and  
11

12 **Whereas**, it is the responsibility of the Session to admit persons to the sealing ordinance of  
13 the Lord’s Supper (*BCO* 12-5.a; 57), not only upon their initial admission but  
14 throughout their walk, ensuring that members partake in a worthy manner, so as not to  
15 eat and drink judgment upon themselves (1 Corinthians 11:27–32); and  
16

17 **Whereas**, since the beginning of Presbyterianism, the administering of the sacraments has  
18 never been placed in the hands of the non-ordained membership (see also the Scots  
19 Confession of 1560, Chapter 22); and  
20

21 **Whereas**, in the Presbyterian tradition the passing of the elements by the laity has historically  
22 been done while seated, while those standing in front of the congregation represent the  
23 administering and serving role; having non-ordained persons stand with the minister  
24 and serve the Supper confuses the role of the ordained office; and  
25

26 **Whereas**, Charles Hodge affirmed the common Presbyterian practice when he wrote: “*It will*  
27 *be said, and very properly said, that it is practically this which is done in the mode of*  
28 *celebrating the Supper which is now in ordinary use among us. When the minister*  
29 *takes his place behind the table bearing the elements, and the elders range themselves*  
30 *in front of it or at its sides, and thence convey the elements to the people—are we not*  
31 *all gathered about the table of the Lord?*”; and  
32

33 **Whereas**, there is no positive Scriptural warrant for non-ordained members to distribute and  
34 serve communion that would encourage a change to our historic practice; and  
35

36 **Whereas**, the Directory for Worship (*BCO* 58-5) states that “*the elders in a convenient place*  
37 *together*”, thereby implying their responsibility for the oversight and distribution of  
38 the Lord’s Supper;  
39

40 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *BCO* 58-  
41 5 and the explanatory footnote to provide clear direction as to who shall ordinarily  
42 distribute the elements of the Lord’s Supper to the congregation. (underlining for  
43 addition, including the footnote)  
44

1           **58-5.** The table, on which the elements are placed, being decently covered, and  
2 furnished with bread and wine, and the communicants orderly and gravely sitting  
3 around it (or in their seats before it), the elders in a convenient place together, the  
4 minister should then set the elements apart by prayer and thanksgiving. Apart  
5 from extra-ordinary circumstances, ruling elders shall assist the minister in  
6 distributing<sup>1</sup> the elements, for they share the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:19,  
7 cf. BCO 12-5.a).

8  
9           <sup>1</sup> Distributing refers to the act of handing the elements to multiple communicants.  
10 It does not refer to the passive action of passing trays or elements down rows or  
11 pews.

12  
13  
14 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

15 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 32** from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS,  
2 Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF)

3 “Amend *RAO* 14-3 for the Review of Committee and Agency Standing Rules and  
4 Manuals”  
5

6 **Whereas**, the *BCO* clearly stipulates that the assemblies of the Committees of the General  
7 Assembly are to serve and not to direct any church judicatories, and are not to establish  
8 policy but rather to execute policy established by the General Assembly (*BCO* 14-1.7);  
9

10 **Whereas**, a Committee or Agency of the General Assembly is not authorized to establish  
11 policy, yet may in effect, do so by adopting manuals or standing rules that are not  
12 currently subject to review by the Assembly; and such documents, if left unreviewed,  
13 can set precedents or establish practices that are followed without the direct directive  
14 of the General Assembly;  
15

16 **Whereas**, through the process of review, the General Assembly, through its Committees of  
17 Commissioners, examines the minutes of the permanent Committees; however, those  
18 Committees may follow rules established in their manuals or standing rules that do not  
19 appear in the minutes under review, thus lacking essential context;  
20

21 **Whereas**, the standard practice of the Committee to Review Presbytery Records is not only  
22 to review the minutes of the Presbyteries but also the standing rules that establish the  
23 policies carried out by the Presbytery;  
24

25 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *RAO* 14-  
26 3 to require that permanent Committees and Agencies submit not only their minutes  
27 but also their standing rules or manuals for review by their Committee of  
28 Commissioners. (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions)  
29

30 **14-3.** Minutes, and standing rules or manuals, of the permanent Committee or  
31 Agency shall be submitted to the committee of commissioners for review. Copies  
32 of the ~~minutes~~ records shall be sent by the Stated Clerk to the members of  
33 committees of commissioners one month prior to the opening of the General  
34 Assembly.  
35

36  
37 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

38 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 OVERTURE 33 from the Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 16-7.h Regarding Minority Reports from RPR”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *Robert’s Rules of Order* (RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 51:64–70) stipulates that only those  
5 members of a committee who voted in the minority, that is, who did not concur with  
6 the majority recommendation, may sign a minority report; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, while *Robert’s Rules of Order* is subordinate to our specific directions in the *BCO*  
9 and *RAO*, the principle remains valid that only those who did not concur with the  
10 majority should be permitted to sign or indicate an intention to file a minority report;  
11 and  
12

13 **Whereas**, *RAO* 16-7.h presently reads that “any member” of the Committee on Review of  
14 Presbytery Records may either indicate an intention to file, or stipulates six members  
15 as the minimum required to file a minority report within the stated time after  
16 adjournment of the CRPR meeting; and  
17

18 **Whereas**, it should be clarified that only those members of the RPR Committee who voted in  
19 the minority on the Presbytery report as a whole shall be permitted to indicate an  
20 intention to file or to sign a minority report to be presented to the General Assembly;  
21

22 **Therefore**, Westminster Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend *RAO* 16-  
23 7.h by adding a provision specifying that only members who voted in the minority on  
24 the Presbytery report as a whole may indicate the intention to file or sign a minority  
25 report of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. (Underlining for addition)  
26

27 ***RAO* 16-7**

28 h. Minority Reports

29 1) With respect to any recommendation, prior to a recess or adjournment of  
30 the Review of Presbytery Records Committee following the adoption of said  
31 recommendation, any member of the committee who voted in the minority  
32 on the Presbytery as a whole may indicate an intention to file a minority  
33 report by giving notice to the chairman.  
34

35 2) The minority report, from at least six (6) members of the committee who  
36 voted in the minority on the Presbytery as a whole, must be filed with the  
37 chairman of the committee and the office of the Stated Clerk of General  
38 Assembly not more than seven (7) days after the adjournment of the RPR  
39 Committee meeting.  
40

41  
42 *Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*  
43 *Attested by /s/ TE Thomas E. Rickard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 34** from the Savannah River Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 9-2 Regarding the Expectation of the Establishment of a Diaconate”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the floor debate at the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly revealed there is some confusion  
5 within the Presbyterian Church in America about whether a diaconate ought  
6 ordinarily to be established; and,  
7

8 **Whereas**, the difference in practice regarding the diaconate is causing tension among the  
9 brothers in the PCA,  
10

11 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the PCA amend the *Book of*  
12 *Church Order* 9-2 as follows (~~strike through~~ for deletions, underlining for additions):  
13

14 **9-2.** It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to  
15 the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the  
16 grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of  
17 collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to  
18 which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the  
19 congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church  
20 edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special  
21 importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without  
22 the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.  
23

24 In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority  
25 of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible ~~for any reason to secure deacons,~~  
26 to secure the appointment of a sufficient number of Deacons due to the absence of  
27 spiritually qualified men (*BCO* 9-3), the duties of the office shall devolve upon the  
28 ruling elders, and not upon unordained persons within the church.  
29

30 So that the amended passage would read:  
31

32 **9-2.** It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to  
33 the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the  
34 grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of  
35 collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to  
36 which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the  
37 congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church  
38 edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special  
39 importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without  
40 the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.  
41

42 In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority  
43 of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible to secure the appointment of a  
44 sufficient number of Deacons due to the absence of spiritually qualified men (*BCO*  
45 9-3), the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders, and not upon

1 unordained persons within the church.

2

3 *Adopted by the Savannah River Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 21, 2025*

4 *Attested by RE W. Glynn Dyer, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 35** from the Illiana Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 31-2 to Establish a Deadline for the Issuing of an Indictment”  
3

4 **Whereas**, Scripture teaches that justice should be administered promptly and without  
5 unnecessary delay (Ecclesiastes 8:11; Deuteronomy 16:19–20); and  
6

7 **Whereas**, prolonged investigations without resolution can cause unnecessary harm to the  
8 peace, purity, and unity of the Church, as well as to the reputations and ministries of  
9 those involved; and  
10

11 **Whereas**, the current language of *BCO* 31-2 provides for investigation and indictment but  
12 does not specify a time frame for the issuance of an indictment after sufficient  
13 evidence is found; and  
14

15 **Whereas**, providing a reasonable deadline for the issuance of an indictment will encourage  
16 diligence, promote fairness, and prevent further injustice in the courts of the church;  
17 and  
18

19 **Whereas**, the language of this amendment derives partially from the same language of *BCO*  
20 42-7 when a clerk fails to submit “the Record of the Case” to a higher court,  
21

22 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the following amendment be made to *BCO* 31-2 (underlining  
23 for additions):  
24

25 **31-2.** If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong  
26 presumption of the guilt of the party involved, the court shall institute process, and  
27 shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare the indictment and to conduct the case. The  
28 prosecutor shall draft the indictment promptly, and the indictment shall be filed with  
29 the clerk of the court within sixty (60) days following the meeting of the court. This  
30 prosecutor shall be a member of the court, except that in a case before the Session, he  
31 may be any communing member of the same congregation with the accused. If the  
32 prosecutor neglects to file an indictment, he shall receive proper rebuke by the court  
33 and shall be dismissed from his duties as the prosecutor of the case, and the court  
34 shall appoint a new prosecutor to prepare an indictment and to conduct the case.  
35

36  
37 *Adopted by the Illiana Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 17, 2026.*

38 *Attested by TE Scott Edburg, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 36** from the Catawba Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Add *BCO* 8-11 and 9-8 Regarding the Exercise of the Duties and Authority of Elder  
3 and Deacon”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the Holy Scriptures clearly teach that the offices of elder and deacon are to be held  
6 by qualified men who meet the biblical standards set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and  
7 Titus 1:5-9:  
8

9 **Whereas**, the *Book of Church Order* 7-2 explicitly states that "The ordination of elders and  
10 deacons is limited to qualified men," reflecting the PCA's commitment to  
11 complementarian ecclesiology and the distinct roles of men and women in the church;  
12

13 **Whereas**, *BCO* 8 outlines the elder's role in teaching, ruling, and shepherding the flock,  
14 functions that carry spiritual authority and are reserved for ordained men;  
15

16 **Whereas**, *BCO* 9 describes the diaconate as an ordained office of sympathy and service, with  
17 deacons exercising authority in matters of mercy ministry, property management, and  
18 financial oversight under the supervision of the Session;  
19

20 **Whereas**, some PCA congregations have allowed women to perform functions substantially  
21 similar to those of deacons and elders—such as leading mercy ministries, functioning  
22 as members of the Session, or exercising oversight in diaconal teams—without  
23 ordination or the formal titles, thereby circumventing the biblical and constitutional  
24 restrictions on women's ordination;  
25

26 **Whereas**, this practice risks blurring the distinctions between ordained offices and unordained  
27 service, potentially leading to confusion among the congregation, erosion of biblical  
28 gender roles, and inconsistency across the denomination;  
29

30 **Whereas**, while godly women are encouraged to serve the church in various capacities, such  
31 service must not equate to or substitute for the ordained functions of deacons and  
32 elders;  
33

34 **Whereas**, in an increasingly egalitarian culture that blurs God-ordained distinctions between  
35 men and women, the PCA has a biblical mandate to faithfully witness to the truth of  
36 God's Word by upholding complementarian ecclesiology, thereby providing a clear  
37 testimony for future generations and guarding against doctrinal drift as seen in other  
38 denominations;  
39

40 **Whereas**, recent General Assembly actions, including the affirmation of Overture 26 (2023),  
41 have clarified that titles associated with ordained offices are reserved for ordained  
42 men, yet further guidance is needed to address the performance of duties without titles;  
43

44 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the following paragraph be inserted after *BCO* 8-10  
45 (underlining for additions):

1  
2 **8-11.** The duties and authority of elders, including, but not limited to, leading  
3 in congregational worship, voting in Session meetings, and shepherding the  
4 congregation, shall be exercised only by ordained elders. Women and unordained  
5 men shall not exercise ruling authority, perform the functions of the ordained  
6 office, or be commissioned, appointed, or installed in any manner that implies  
7 parity with or equivalence to ordained elders.  
8

9 **Be it further resolved** that the following paragraph be inserted after *BCO 9-7* (underlining  
10 for additions):  
11

12 **9-8.** The duties and authority of the diaconate, including, but not limited to,  
13 leadership in mercy ministries, voting in diaconal meetings, financial  
14 distributions, and property oversight, shall be exercised only by ordained deacons.  
15 Women and unordained men shall not exercise independent authority in these  
16 matters, perform the functions of the ordained office, or be commissioned,  
17 appointed, or installed in any manner that implies parity with or equivalence to  
18 ordained deacons.  
19

20 **Be it further resolved** that Presbyteries be encouraged to review the practices of their  
21 congregations for alignment with these amendments and report any necessary  
22 corrections to their next stated meeting.  
23

24  
25 *Adopted by the Catawba Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 24, 2026*

26 *Attested by TE Scott Deneen, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 37** from the Pacific Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 9-3 to Allow Women to Serve as Ordained Deacons”  
3

4 **Whereas** there has long been a sincere diversity of views among Reformed churches as to  
5 what Scripture says about the role of women in diaconal ministry;  
6

7 **Whereas** there seems to be strong evidence that the word *διάκονον* in Romans 16:1 is used in  
8 a technical manner to describe an office Phoebe holds rather than in a general  
9 descriptive manner;  
10

11 **Whereas** many conservative, complementarian scholars (e.g., John Piper, Mark Dever,  
12 Andreas Köstenberger, and Tom Schreiner) understand the biblical texts that touch on  
13 diaconal ministry to allow for women to serve in that role, specifically 1 Timothy 3:11  
14 and Romans 16:1;  
15

16 **Whereas** women who served as deacons are mentioned as far back as c. 111 A.D. (Pliny’s  
17 Letter to Trajan) and subsequently throughout church history;  
18

19 **Whereas** many conservative Reformed theologians and exegetes have argued that qualified  
20 women may be permitted to serve as deacons (e.g., John Calvin, B.B Warfield, Robert  
21 Strimple, John Frame, Ed Clowney);  
22

23 **Whereas** the Westminster Confession does not specifically address the office of deacon;  
24

25 **Whereas** the Westminster Confession 20.2 does speak of Christian liberty and not  
26 unnecessarily binding the consciences of men;  
27

28 **Whereas** it is in line with the historical spirit of the PCA to be a grassroots denomination and  
29 to defer to the judgment of local sessions in decisions regarding congregational  
30 ministry;  
31

32 **Whereas** several conservative, Reformed denominations, some within NAPARC, allow  
33 women to serve as deacons (i.e., Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, The  
34 Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ), The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North  
35 America, and the International Presbyterian Church);  
36

37 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the PCA amend *BCO* 9-3 as follows in order to allow local  
38 Sessions to decide whether qualified women should be allowed to serve as deacons  
39 (underlining for additions; ~~strike through~~ for deletions):  
40

41 **9-3.** To the office of deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen  
42 ~~men~~ members of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly  
43 spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment...  
44  
45

1 **Therefore, be it also resolved** that that the following 12 conforming amendments be made:  
2 *BCO* 5-9.c, 7-2, 17-3, 24-1, 24-6, 24-7, 24-8, 24-9, 24-10, 36-7, 37-1 and 37-6  
3 (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions)  
4

5 **5-9.c** When the temporary government determines that among the members  
6 of the mission congregation there are ~~men~~ some who appear qualified as officers,  
7 the nomination process shall begin and the election conclude following the  
8 procedures of *BCO* 24 so far as they may be applicable.  
9

10 **7-2.** The ordinary and perpetual classes of office in the Church are elders  
11 and deacons.... The office of deacon is not one of rule, but rather of service both  
12 to the physical and spiritual needs of the people. In accord with Scripture, ~~these~~  
13 ~~offices are open to men only~~ the office of elder is open to men only.  
14

15 **17-3.** As every ecclesiastical office, according to the Scriptures, is a special  
16 charge, no ~~man~~ one shall be ordained unless it be to the performance of a definite  
17 work.  
18

19 **24-1.** Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and  
20 deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session,  
21 communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session,  
22 keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active ~~male~~ member  
23 who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Nominees for  
24 the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the  
25 qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall be examined in:

- 26 a. ~~his~~ Christian experience, especially ~~his~~ personal character and family  
27 management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and  
28 Titus 1:6-9),
- 29 b. ~~his~~ knowledge of Bible content,
- 30 c. ~~his~~ knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained  
31 in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface  
32 III, *The Constitution Defined*),
- 33 d. the duties of the office to which ~~he~~ the member has been nominated, and
- 34 e. ~~his~~ willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO*  
35 24-6).  
36

37 In the examination of the nominee's personal character, the Session shall give  
38 specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given  
39 to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful  
40 desires. The nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with  
41 Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace  
42 to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm  
43 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23)....

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Notwithstanding the above, the Session may render a decision on Christian experience at any point in the process, and based on that decision, may judge ~~him~~ a candidate ineligible for that election....

**24-6.** The day having arrived, ...  
... The ruling elder or deacon elect having answered in the affirmative, the minister shall address to the members of the church the following question:

**Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this ~~brother~~ person as a ruling elder (or deacon) and do you promise to yield ~~him~~ all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which ~~his office~~ such office is entitled, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, ~~entitles him~~? ...**

... Prayer being ended, the members of the Session (and the deacons, if the case be that of a deacon) shall take the newly ordained officer by the hand, saying in words to this effect:

**We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with us.**

The minister shall then say:

**I now pronounce and declare that \_\_\_\_\_ has been regularly elected, ordained and installed a ruling elder (or deacon) in this church, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America; and that as such ~~he~~ is entitled to all encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen....**

**24-7.** Ordination to the offices of ruling elder or deacon is perpetual; nor can such offices be laid aside at pleasure; nor can any person be degraded from either office but by deposition after regular trial; yet a ruling elder or deacon may have reasons which ~~he deems~~ are valid for being released from the active duties of ~~his~~ the office. In such a case the Session, after conference with ~~him~~ the officer and careful consideration of the matter, may, if it thinks proper, accept ~~his~~ a resignation and dissolve the official relationship which exists between ~~him~~ the officer and the church.

The ruling elder or deacon, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, may become unacceptable in ~~his~~ an official capacity to a majority of the church ~~which he serves~~....

1           **24-8.**     When a ruling elder or deacon who has been released from ~~his~~ an  
2 official relation is again elected to ~~his~~ an office in the same or another church, ~~he~~  
3 that person shall be installed after the above form with the omission of ordination.

4  
5           **24-9.**     When a ruling elder or deacon cannot or does not for a period of one  
6 year perform the duties of ~~his~~ the office, ~~his~~ the official relationship shall be  
7 dissolved by the Session and the action reported to the congregation.

8  
9           **24-10.**    When a deacon or ruling elder by reason of age or infirmity desires to  
10 be released from the active duties of the office, the officer may request the Session  
11 to grant a designation of he may at his request and with the approval of the Session  
12 ~~be designated~~ deacon or elder emeritus. When so designated, ~~he~~ the person is no  
13 longer required to perform the regular duties of ~~his~~ that office, but may continue  
14 to perform certain of these duties on a voluntary basis, if requested by the Session  
15 or a higher court. Persons who hold emeritus offices may attend Diaconate or  
16 Session meetings if desired, and may participate fully in the discussion of any  
17 issues, but may not vote. ~~He may attend Diaconate or Session meetings, if he so~~  
18 ~~desires, and may participate fully in the discussion of any issues, but may not~~  
19 ~~vote.~~

20  
21           **36-7.**     The censure of deposition shall be administered by the moderator in the  
22 words following:

23  
24                   **Whereas, \_\_\_\_\_, a teaching elder of this Presbytery (or**  
25 **ruling elder or deacon of this church), has been proved, by**  
26 **sufficient evidence to be guilty of the sin of \_\_\_\_\_, we,**  
27 **the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery (or Church Session), do adjudge**  
28 **~~him~~ disqualified for the office of the Christian ministry (or ruling**  
29 **eldership, or diaconship), and therefore we do hereby, in the name**  
30 **and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, depose from the**  
31 **office of a teaching elder (or ruling elder or deacon) the said**  
32 **\_\_\_\_\_, and do prohibit ~~him from exercising~~ the exercise**  
33 **of any of the functions thereof.**

34  
35           If the censure includes suspension or excommunication, the moderator shall  
36 proceed to say:

37  
38                   **We do moreover, by the same authority, suspend the said**  
39 **\_\_\_\_\_ from the Sacraments of the Church, until ~~he shall~~**  
40 **exhibit satisfactory evidence of sincere repentance is exhibited,**

41           or

42                   **We do moreover, by the same authority, exclude the said**  
43 **\_\_\_\_\_ from the Sacraments, and cut ~~him~~ off from the**  
44 **fellowship of the Church....**

1           **37-1.**     A person who has been definitely suspended from office shall be  
2           restored by the court at the end of the term of ~~his~~ the suspension by declaring  
3           words of the following import to ~~him~~ the suspended officer: ...

4  
5           **37-6.**     When a ruling elder or deacon has been absolved from the censure of  
6           deposition, ~~he~~ that officer cannot be allowed to resume the exercise of ~~his~~ office  
7           in the church without re-election by the people....

8  
9  
10       *Adopted by the Pacific Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 24, 2026*

11       *Attested by TE Jerrard Heard, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 38** from the Metro Atlanta Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 7-3 and add 9-8 to Allow Sessions Flexibility Regarding the Diaconate”  
3  
4 **Whereas** our Reformed tradition prizes the principle that we must neither permit what God  
5 in his Word prohibits, nor prohibit what God in his Word permits; and  
6  
7 **Whereas** Scripture teaches that the office of elder is reserved for qualified men only, and that  
8 the offices of elder and deacon are distinct; and  
9  
10 **Whereas** there are only three passages in the New Testament where the Greek word *diakonos*  
11 may refer to the particular office of deacon (Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and  
12 Romans 16:1); and  
13  
14 **Whereas** two of these passages explicitly refer to godly women serving the Church in some  
15 capacity of diaconal work (1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Romans 16:1), even if they are  
16 not occupying the office of deacon; and  
17  
18 **Whereas** some of the most conservative, Reformed and complementarian churchmen have  
19 reached the exegetical conclusion that these passages permit women to serve in the  
20 role of deacon as equals to men (e.g., Robert Strimple, John Frame, Ed Clowney,  
21 John Piper, Mark Dever, Andreas Köstenberger, and Tom Schreiner); and  
22  
23 **Whereas** the PCA is in formal relationship with other conservative Reformed denominations  
24 of like faith and practice through its NAPARC membership and the Council  
25 includes denominations (e.g., The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP),  
26 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), and The  
27 Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ)), which have had a longstanding practice of  
28 allowing women to serve as deacons; and  
29  
30 **Whereas** the Westminster Confession and Catechisms do not specifically address the office  
31 of deacon; and  
32  
33 **Whereas** the Westminster Confession 20.2 does speak of Christian liberty and not  
34 unnecessarily binding the consciences of men; and  
35  
36 **Whereas** our *Book of Church Order* is subordinate to the superior authority of God’s Word;  
37 and  
38  
39 **Whereas** *BCO* 9-7 already recognizes the vital ministry of women who assist deacons “in  
40 caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners and others who may be  
41 in any distress or need”; and  
42  
43 **Whereas** no small number of churches in the PCA, including some former RPC(ES) churches,  
44 have for decades commissioned or appointed women to serve in the ways described

1 in *BCO* 9-7, but calling them deacons or deaconesses, according to their careful  
2 study of biblical teaching; and  
3

4 **Whereas** the PCA’s 2017 Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Women Serving in the  
5 Ministry of the Church to the 45<sup>th</sup> General Assembly formally examined the  
6 practice above and deemed it not prohibited by the *BCO*; and  
7

8 **Whereas** a spirit of charity towards differing views on this topic has guided the practice and  
9 rulings of the PCA since its founding, but the practice of such differing views was  
10 made more difficult by the passage of Overture 26 at the 51<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of  
11 the PCA in 2024; and  
12

13 **Whereas** the heart behind this overture is to continue that spirit of charity by allowing  
14 Sessions appropriate liberty to choose one of several biblically defensible practices  
15 related to the diaconate; but explicitly not to explore and amend the PCA’s exegesis,  
16 definitions, and conclusions on ordination and church offices; and  
17

18 **Whereas** since “neither the Bible nor the Constitution confer on the office of deacon any  
19 authority of rule, then there is no promise of obedience to the deacons implied” in  
20 the congregational vow taken in *BCO* 24-6 while installing elders and deacons (as  
21 recognized in Morton H. Smith's *Commentary on the PCA Book of Church Order*);  
22 and  
23

24 **Whereas** since the office that comprises the courts of Presbyterian polity is that of the  
25 *presbuteros* or elder (*BCO* 10-1), flexibility of understanding and practice related  
26 to deacons need not hinder the ability of our congregations to engage in shared life,  
27 ministry, and mission;  
28

29 **Therefore, be it resolved** to amend *BCO* 7-3, add footnotes to *BCO* 24-1 and *BCO* 24-6, and  
30 add *BCO* 9-8 as follows (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions) in  
31 order to allow Sessions to decide whether to have a diaconate made up of:  
32

- 33 1) only ordained men serving in the office of deacon;
- 34 2) ordained men serving in the office of deacon and commissioned or  
35 appointed women who are not officers but may bear the title of deacon; or
- 36 3) only commissioned men and women who are not officers but may bear the  
37 title of deacon.  
38

39 **7-3.** No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein,  
40 or receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed  
41 in the Scriptures. Furthermore, unordained people shall not be referred to as, or  
42 given the titles of, the ordained offices of pastor/elder; and they shall be referred  
43 to as, or given the title of, deacon only when their Session has explicitly chosen  
44 to apply this title to unordained people, or deacon.  
45

1 **9-8.** At the discretion of a Session, the diaconate of any church may consist  
2 of 1) only ordained men serving in the office of deacon; 2) ordained men serving  
3 in the office of deacon and commissioned or appointed women who are not  
4 officers but may bear the title of deacon; or 3) only commissioned or appointed  
5 men and women who are not officers but may bear the title of deacon. For an  
6 unordained person commissioned or appointed as part of a diaconate, neither this  
7 status nor the title of deacon shall be understood to transfer should they move to  
8 a different congregation.

9  
10 **24-1.** Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and  
11 deacon in the following manner:<sup>1</sup> At such times as determined by the Session,  
12 communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session,  
13 keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member  
14 who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Nominees for  
15 the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the  
16 qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall be examined in:

17  
18 <sup>1</sup> The details of this section pertain to the election of church officers. If  
19 a Session determines to commission or appoint men and/or women who  
20 are not officers but may bear the title of deacon (BCO 9-8), such men  
21 and/or women may be subject to a similar process at the discretion of  
22 the Session.

23  
24 **24-6.** The day having arrived, and the Session being convened in the presence of  
25 the congregation, a sermon shall be preached after which the presiding minister  
26 shall state in a concise manner the warrant and nature of the office of ruling elder,  
27 or deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained and the duties to be  
28 fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> Having done this, he shall propose to the candidate, in the presence of  
29 the church, the following questions, namely: ...

30  
31 <sup>2</sup> The details of this section pertain to the ordination of church officers.  
32 If a Session determines to commission or appoint men and/or women  
33 who are not officers but may bear the title of deacon (BCO 9-8), then  
34 the process for commissioning or appointing shall be determined by the  
35 Session.

36  
37 *Adopted by the Metro Atlanta Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 27, 2026*

38 *Attested by /s/ TE Randall Schlichting, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 39** from the Central Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO 22* to Affirm the Consent of the Governed for Assistant Pastors”

3  
4 **Whereas**, The *Book of Church Order 22-1* states that the “various pastoral relations are pastor,  
5 associate pastor, assistant pastor”; and

6  
7 **Whereas**, the pastor and associate pastor are elected by the congregation and become  
8 members of the Session (*BCO 22-2*) but the assistant pastor is called by the Session  
9 and is not a member of the Session (*BCO 22-3*); and

10  
11 **Whereas**, assistant pastors exercise ministerial authority in preaching the Word and  
12 administering the Sacraments and exercise governing authority as members of  
13 Presbytery and as commissioners to General Assembly; and

14  
15 **Whereas**, all elders, both teaching and ruling, being of one class of office have parity of office  
16 (*BCO 8-9*); and

17  
18 **Whereas**, the Apostles did not appoint church officers without the consent of the governed  
19 (*Acts 6:3*; *Acts 14:23*); and

20  
21 **Whereas**, preliminary principle 6 of The *Book of Church Order* states “the power to elect  
22 persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society”  
23 (see also *BCO 3-1*); and

24  
25 **Whereas**, *BCO 16-2* further states “the right of God’s people to recognize by election to office  
26 those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore, no man can be placed over a church in any  
27 office without the election, or at least the consent of that church”; and

28  
29 **Whereas**, the idea of an assistant pastor being called by the Session and not being called by  
30 the congregation is contrary to historic Presbyterian polity; and

31  
32 **Whereas**, the first time the assistant pastor relation was codified in American Presbyterianism  
33 was in 1945 in the nineteenth edition of the PCUS’ *Book of Church Order* (see chapter  
34 xxiv, paragraph 126); and

35  
36 **Whereas**, assistant pastors are not infrequently called to serve PCA churches for many  
37 years—even decades—without the direct consent of the congregations they shepherd  
38 as teaching elders; and

39  
40 **Whereas**, the present Overture improves Overture 10 from the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, which  
41 was referred back to the Central Florida Presbytery for refinement and potential  
42 resubmission.

43

1 **Therefore, be it resolved** to amend the *BCO* by adding/striking the following language of  
2 *BCO* 22-3 and 22-4 to read as follows (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for  
3 deletions):  
4

5 **22-3.** An assistant pastor is called by the Session, by the permission and  
6 approval of Presbytery, under the provisions of *BCO* 20-1 and 13-2, with  
7 Presbytery membership being governed by the same provisions that apply to  
8 pastors. The Session may call an assistant pastor to serve only for a definite  
9 period, set at the time of his call, ordinarily not to exceed 5 years. Should the  
10 Session wish to retain an assistant pastor beyond that definite period, it shall  
11 recommend him to the congregation for election as an associate pastor. If the  
12 assistant pastor does not receive a majority vote, the Session shall move to  
13 dissolve the assistant pastor's call in accordance with *BCO* 23. ~~He~~ The assistant  
14 pastor is not a member of the Session, but may be appointed on special occasions  
15 to moderate the Session under the provisions of *BCO* 12-4.  
16

17 **22-4.** The relationship of the associate pastor to the church is determined by  
18 the congregation. The relationship of the assistant pastor to the church is  
19 determined by the Session (though not indefinitely, see *BCO* 22-3). The  
20 dissolution of the relationship of both is governed by the provision of *BCO* 23.  
21

22 **Editorial Comment:** The General Assembly explicitly provided that the calls of  
23 assistant pastors established prior to June 22, 2027, are not subject to the changes  
24 it makes to *BCO* 22. (By order of the 54<sup>th</sup> General Assembly).  
25  
26

27 *Adopted by the Central Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 20, 2026*  
28 *Attested by TE Don Mountan, Stated Clerk*  
29

**Comparison of the current overture with Overture 2025-10**

<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<p>“Amend BCO to affirm the consent of the governed regarding Assistant Pastors”</p>	<p>“Amend BCO to affirm the consent of the governed regarding Assistant Pastors”</p>	
<p>Whereas, <i>The Book of Church Order</i> 22-1 states that the “various pastoral relations are Pastor, Associate Pastor, Assistant Pastor”, and</p>	<p>Whereas, <i>The Book of Church Order</i> 22-1 states that the “various pastoral relations are pastor, associate pastor, assistant pastor”; and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style edit only (capitalization consistency with BCO).</li> </ul>
<p>Whereas, the Pastor and Associate Pastor are elected by the congregation and become members of the Session (<i>BCO</i> 22-2) but the Assistant Pastor is called by the Session and is not a member of the Session (<i>BCO</i> 22-3); and</p>	<p>Whereas, the pastor and associate pastor are elected by the congregation and become members of the Session (<i>BCO</i> 22-2) but the assistant pastor is called by the Session and is not a member of the Session (<i>BCO</i> 22-3); and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style edit only (capitalization consistency with BCO).</li> </ul>
<p>Whereas, Assistant Pastors are members of Presbytery; vote on both the church’s higher courts, and exercise ministerial authority in preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments; and</p>	<p>Whereas, assistant pastors exercise ministerial authority in preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments and exercise governing authority as members of Presbytery and as commissioners to General Assembly; and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewritten for clarity and precision.</li> <li>• Removes phrase “<i>vote on both the church’s higher courts</i>” and replaces with “<i>exercise governing authority</i>”.</li> <li>• Adds explicit mention of <i>commissioners to General Assembly</i>.</li> </ul>
<p>Whereas, all Elders, both Teaching and Ruling, being of one class of office have parity of office (<i>BCO</i> 8-9); and</p>	<p>Whereas, all elders, both teaching and ruling, being of one class of office have parity of office (<i>BCO</i> 8-9); and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style edit only (capitalization consistency with BCO).</li> </ul>

<p>Whereas, the Apostles did not appoint church officers without the consent of the governed (Acts 6:3; Acts 14:23); and</p>	<p>Whereas, the Apostles did not appoint church officers without the consent of the governed (Acts 6:3; Acts 14:23); and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<p>Whereas, preliminary principle 6 of <i>The Book of Church Order</i> states “the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society” (see also BCO 3-1); and</p>	<p>Whereas, preliminary principle 6 of <i>The Book of Church Order</i> states “the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society” (see also BCO 3-1); and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<p>Whereas, the idea of an Assistant Pastor being called by the Session and not being called by the congregation is contrary to historic Presbyterian polity; and</p>	<p>Whereas, <i>BCO</i> 16-2 further states “the right of God’s people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or at least the consent of that church”; and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional supporting rationale from BCO 16-2.</li> </ul>
<p>Whereas, the first time the Assistant Pastor relation was codified in American Presbyterianism was in 1945 in the nineteenth edition of the PCUS’ <i>Book of Church Order</i> (see chapter xxiv, paragraph 126); and</p>	<p>Whereas, the first time the assistant pastor relation was codified in American Presbyterianism was in 1945 in the nineteenth edition of the PCUS’ <i>Book of Church Order</i> (see chapter xxiv, paragraph 126); and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style edit only (capitalization consistency with BCO).</li> </ul>
<p>Whereas, Assistant Pastors are not infrequently called to serve PCA churches for many years—even decades—without the direct consent of the congregations they shepherd as teaching elders;</p>	<p>Whereas, assistant pastors are not infrequently called to serve PCA churches for many years—even decades—without the direct consent of the congregations they shepherd as teaching elders; and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style edit only (capitalization consistency).</li> </ul>

	<p>Whereas, the present Overture improves Overture 10 from the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, which was referred back to the Central Florida Presbytery for refinement and potential resubmission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedural note.</li> </ul>
<p>Therefore, be it resolved to amend the BCO by adding/striking the following language of BCO 22-3 and 22-4 to read as follows:</p>	<p>Therefore, be it resolved to amend the BCO by adding/striking the following language of BCO 22-3 and 22-4 to read as follows:</p>	

<p>22-3. An assistant pastor is called by the Session, by the permission and approval of Presbytery, under the provisions of BCO 20-1 and 132, with Presbytery membership being governed by the same provisions that apply to pastors. <u>The Session may call an Assistant Pastor only to serve for a definite period not exceeding five years. Should the Session wish to renew the assistant pastor's call beyond five years, it shall call a congregational meeting to seek the consent of the governed in support of his continued ministry. In this case, congregational consent shall be indicated by a three-fourths majority vote. The renewal of a call as an Assistant Pastor is subject to Presbytery approval. If no three-fourths majority is secured, the Session shall conclude that the assistant pastor does not have adequate support from the congregation for a continued ministry among them, and shall move immediately to dissolve his call, in accordance with the provisions of BCO</u></p> <p>23. <del>He</del> The assistant pastor is not a member of the Session, but may be appointed on special occasions to moderate the Session under the provisions of BCO 12-4.</p>	<p>22-3. An assistant pastor is called by the Session, by the permission and approval of Presbytery, under the provisions of BCO 20-1 and 13-2, with Presbytery membership being governed by the same provisions that apply to pastors. <u>The Session may call an assistant pastor to serve only for a definite period, set at the time of his call, ordinarily not to exceed 5 years. Should the Session wish to retain an assistant pastor beyond that definite period, it shall recommend him to the congregation for election as an associate pastor. If the assistant pastor does not receive a majority vote, the Session shall move to dissolve the assistant pastor's call in accordance with BCO 23. <del>He</del> The assistant pastor is not a member of the Session, but may be appointed on special occasions to moderate the Session under the provisions of BCO 12-4.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More concise</li> <li>• Removes requirement for 3/4 congregational vote for renewal.</li> <li>• Clarifies that the length of the definite call is set at time of the call and ordinarily should not exceed 5 years.</li> <li>• Keeps structure simpler, aligning with BCO's existing categories.</li> </ul>
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<p>22-4. The relationship of the associate pastor to the church is determined by the congregation. The relationship of the Assistant Pastor to the church is determined by the Session (though not indefinitely, see BCO 22-3). The dissolution of the relationship of both is governed by the provision of BCO 23.</p>	<p>22-4. The relationship of the associate pastor to the church is determined by the congregation. The relationship of the assistant pastor to the church is determined by the Session (though not indefinitely, see BCO 22-3). The dissolution of the relationship of both is governed by the provision of BCO 23.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style edit only (capitalization consistency).</li> </ul>
	<p>Editorial Comment: The General Assembly explicitly provided that the calls of assistant pastors established prior to June 22, 2027 are not subject to the changes it makes to BCO 22. (By order of the 54<sup>th</sup> General Assembly).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adds editorial comment that specifies effective-date to avoid retroactive application.</li> <li>• This editorial comment follows existing constitutional precedent. See e.g., the editorial comment after BCO 24-10.</li> </ul>

1 **OVERTURE 40** from the Savannah River Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM,  
2 MNA, MTW, RUF)

3 “Amend *RAO* 4-9 to Set Calendar Year Terms for Stated Clerk and Coordinators”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the permanent committees of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) are vital  
6 to the ongoing ministry and mission of the denomination, with their coordinators  
7 serving as key administrative and spiritual leaders, and the Stated Clerk being vital to  
8 the ongoing operations of the denomination; and  
9

10 **Whereas**, the *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)* currently require that program Committee  
11 coordinators and the Stated Clerk be elected or re-elected annually by the General  
12 Assembly (*RAO* 4-9); and  
13

14 **Whereas**, this annual reelection structure creates significant uncertainty for the men serving  
15 as coordinators and the Stated Clerk, who must face the possibility of being removed  
16 from their role during the Assembly, potentially leaving them without employment or  
17 clarity about their future within days; and  
18

19 **Whereas**, this uncertainty places strain not only on the coordinators and their families but  
20 also on the commissioners of the Assembly, many of whom are hesitant to vote against  
21 a coordinator’s reelection out of concern for the personal and vocational consequences  
22 to the man, rather than purely on the merits of his performance or suitability for  
23 continued leadership; and  
24

25 **Whereas**, such dynamics can inadvertently undermine open, fair, and dispassionate  
26 deliberation and decision-making on the floor of the Assembly; and  
27

28 **Whereas**, defining terms of service for permanent committee coordinators and the Stated  
29 Clerk according to the calendar year (January 1 - December 31) would provide  
30 appropriate lead time for transitions, reduce vocational volatility, and allow the  
31 Assembly to vote without the burden of immediate personal consequences; and  
32

33 **Whereas**, in the early years of the denomination, the relatively small size of the PCA allowed  
34 for more informal transition practices, but as the Assembly has grown and the  
35 responsibilities of coordinators and the Stated Clerk have expanded, greater structural  
36 clarity has become necessary to uphold trust, fairness, and administrative health,  
37

38 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in  
39 America amend the *Rules of Assembly Operations* 4-9 as follows (~~strike through~~ for  
40 deletions, underlining for additions):  
41

42 **4-9.** The four program Committees shall nominate annually a coordinator for  
43 election by the General Assembly. The Administrative Committee shall nominate  
44 annually a Stated Clerk for election by the General Assembly. If the nominee has  
45 not been examined by the Theological Examining Committee, such an examination

1 must take place prior to the election when it is a first time employment. ~~A new~~  
2 ~~coordinator shall assume office at the end of the Assembly meeting, or at such time~~  
3 ~~thereafter as designated by the General Assembly. The term of service for all~~  
4 ~~coordinators of permanent committees and the Stated Clerk shall begin on January~~  
5 ~~1 and end on December 31 of the same calendar year.~~  
6

7 In the event that a coordinator or Stated Clerk is not re-elected by the General  
8 Assembly, his current term shall continue through December 31 of that year.  
9 Beginning January 1 of the following year, the permanent Committee shall appoint  
10 a provisional coordinator, who shall not be a candidate for the permanent position  
11 for the following year, and shall present a candidate for coordinator at the next  
12 General Assembly.  
13

14 So that the amended passage would read:

15  
16 **4-9.** The four program Committees shall nominate annually a coordinator for  
17 election by the General Assembly. The Administrative Committee shall nominate  
18 annually a Stated Clerk for election by the General Assembly. If the nominee has  
19 not been examined by the Theological Examining Committee, such an examination  
20 must take place prior to the election when it is a first time employment. The term of  
21 service for all coordinators of permanent committees and the Stated Clerk shall begin  
22 on January 1 and end on December 31 of the same calendar year.  
23

24 In the event that a coordinator or Stated Clerk is not re-elected by the General  
25 Assembly, his current term shall continue through December 31 of that year.  
26 Beginning January 1 of the following year, the permanent Committee shall appoint  
27 a provisional coordinator, who shall not be a candidate for the permanent position  
28 for the following year, and shall present a candidate for coordinator at the next  
29 General Assembly.  
30

31 **And be it further resolved** that this amendment, if adopted, shall take effect immediately and  
32 apply to all future elections and re-elections of permanent committee coordinators.  
33

34  
35 *Adopted by the Savannah River Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 24, 2026*

36 *Attested by RE W. Glynn Dyer, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 41** from the Savannah River Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM,  
2 MNA, MTW, RUF)

3 “Amend *RAO* 4-9 to Require 2/3 Majority to Elect Stated Clerk and Coordinators”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the permanent committees and the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in  
6 America (PCA) play a vital role in carrying out the ministry and mission of the  
7 denomination between meetings of the General Assembly; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, the coordinators of these permanent committees serve as the chief administrative  
10 officers and are entrusted with significant leadership responsibilities that influence the  
11 direction, tone, and effectiveness of the committees’ work; and  
12

13 **Whereas**, the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in America serves as the chief  
14 administrative officer of the Administrative Committee and the chief clerical officer  
15 of the General Assembly, responsible for overseeing denominational records,  
16 coordinating Assembly business, maintaining official communications and archives,  
17 and ensuring the proper execution of Assembly directives; and  
18

19 **Whereas**, the *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)* currently specify procedures for electing  
20 permanent committee coordinators (*RAO* 4-9), requiring only a simple majority for  
21 election or re-election; and  
22

23 **Whereas**, the increasing scope and visibility of coordinator roles requires that those who serve  
24 in such positions do so with the clear and broad confidence of the Assembly; and  
25

26 **Whereas**, it is essential that committee coordinators and the Stated Clerk have not merely  
27 institutional legitimacy but also a demonstrated mandate from the General Assembly  
28 in order to carry out their duties with credibility, moral authority, and effectiveness;  
29 and  
30

31 **Whereas**, requiring a two-thirds majority for election or re-election would ensure that only  
32 those candidates who can command widespread support from the commissioners are  
33 appointed to such strategic roles; and  
34

35 **Whereas**, historically, the General Assembly has recognized the value of supermajority  
36 requirements in matters requiring broad consensus and significant trust, such as  
37 constitutional amendments (*BCO* 26-2, 3), discipline (*BCO* 31-10; 34-8, 10), certain  
38 judicial appeals (*BCO* 42-6); modifications to permanent Committee and Agency  
39 budgets (*RAO* 4-11), etc.; and  
40

41 **Whereas**, the call for greater consensus in leadership elections echoes the Presbyterian  
42 principle of mutual submission and shared governance, ensuring that those in positions  
43 of influence serve not by mere majority rule but by the collective wisdom and unity of  
44 the broader church; and  
45

1 **Whereas**, in previous General Assemblies, the church has experienced seasons of tension  
2 surrounding coordinator elections, and a heightened threshold for election could foster  
3 greater peace, confidence, and unity in such decisions,  
4

5 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in  
6 America amend the *Rules of Assembly Operations* 4-9 as follows (underlining for  
7 additions):  
8

9 **4-9.** The four program Committees shall nominate annually a coordinator for  
10 election by the General Assembly. The Administrative Committee shall nominate  
11 annually a Stated Clerk for election by the General Assembly. If the nominee has  
12 not been examined by the Theological Examining Committee, such an examination  
13 must take place prior to the election when it is a first time employment. A new  
14 coordinator shall assume office at the end of the Assembly meeting, or at such time  
15 thereafter as designated by the General Assembly.  
16

17 A coordinator of a permanent Committee, and the Stated Clerk, shall be elected or  
18 re-elected only by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the commissioners present  
19 and voting.  
20

21 So that the amended passage would read:  
22

23 **4-9.** The four program Committees shall nominate annually a coordinator for  
24 election by the General Assembly. The Administrative Committee shall nominate  
25 annually a Stated Clerk for election by the General Assembly. If the nominee has  
26 not been examined by the Theological Examining Committee, such an examination  
27 must take place prior to the election when it is a first time employment. A new  
28 coordinator shall assume office at the end of the Assembly meeting, or at such time  
29 thereafter as designated by the General Assembly.  
30

31 A coordinator of a permanent Committee, and the Stated Clerk, shall be elected or  
32 re-elected only by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the commissioners present and  
33 voting.  
34

35 **And be it further resolved** that this amendment, if adopted, shall take effect immediately and  
36 apply to all future elections and re-elections of permanent committee coordinators.  
37

38  
39 *Adopted by the Savannah River Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 24, 2026*

40 *Attested by RE W. Glynn Dyer, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 42** from the Northern California Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Restore the Reference to the Westminster Standards at the end of *BCO* 29-1”  
3

4 **Be it resolved** that the Fifty-Third General Assembly direct the Stated Clerk to restore the  
5 phrase “as interpreted in these Standards” to the end of the final sentence of *BCO* 29-1, so that  
6 it again reads as in the original version, as follows (underlining for additions):  
7

8 **29-1.** An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the doctrines or  
9 practice of a Church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of  
10 God. The *Confession of Faith* and the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* of the  
11 Westminster Assembly, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and  
12 worship are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in America as standard expositions of  
13 the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought  
14 to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which  
15 cannot be proved to be such from Scripture as interpreted in these Standards.  
16

17 **Rationale:**  
18

- 19 1. In the original 1973 PCA Book of Church Order, the paragraph currently numbered as  
20 *BCO* 29-1 reads exactly as written above.  
21
- 22 2. TE Per Almquist in his new book *Our Bond of Union: A Commentary on the Book of*  
23 *Church Order of the Presbyterian Church of America* (2025) remarks that “[n]either  
24 this author nor the PCA Historical Center has been able to locate any action by the  
25 General Assembly to remove that phrase” (p.247).  
26
- 27 3. The missing phrase was first adopted by the Presbyterian Church in 1879, and it was  
28 extensively discussed in F.P. Ramsay, *An Exposition of the Form of Government and*  
29 *the Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Presbyterian  
30 Committee of Publication, 1898), pp. 177–180.  
31
- 32 4. The late TE Morton Smith in his classic book *Commentary on the PCA Book of Church*  
33 *Order* (6<sup>th</sup> ed., 2007) expounds upon this topic as follows:  
34 The *Westminster Confession and Catechisms* are the agreed upon  
35 formularies as to what the Presbyterian Church believes the Scripture  
36 teaches. These then become the particular guide to the courts of how  
37 an offense is to be judged. If the Church were to find a member out of  
38 accord with Scripture on a point not covered by the Standards, she is  
39 free to amend her Standards so as to include this matter as one of  
40 offense. Until she does so, however, she restrains herself by this  
41 definition of an offense to handle only those matters contrary to the  
42 Scripture and to our Standards. This is not at all to suggest that the  
43 Standards are on a par with the Scripture, but it is to indicate what being  
44 a constitutional church means. By adopting a constitution, the church  
45 sets the limits of her judicial process. She also sets the standards by

1 which an offense is to be judged. It is the Scripture as understood by  
2 the Church in her constitutional standards. (pp.291–292)

3  
4 TE Smith thus signifies the importance of interpreting Scripture via the Westminster  
5 Standards for the purpose of judicial process as an essential feature of being a  
6 constitutional church in obedience to Christ alone.

- 7  
8 5. Our brothers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) have a similar provision in  
9 their *Book of Discipline*: “An offense which is serious enough to warrant a trial is...  
10 (3) an offense in the area of doctrine for the ordained officer which would constitute a  
11 violation of the system of doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures as that system of  
12 doctrine is set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms” (OPC *BCO*, *Book of*  
13 *Discipline* Chapter III, Section 7.b).  
14  
15 6. Without the missing phrase, an officer or member of the PCA could be charged with  
16 an offense based solely upon contested readings of Scripture, such as drinking alcohol  
17 (Ephesians 5:18) or serving in the military (Exodus 20:13), even though the Standards  
18 (e.g., *WLC* 136) do not define such actions as offenses.  
19  
20 7. Despite the lack of any verified action to remove the missing phrase, it does not appear  
21 in our modern editions of *BCO* 29-1.  
22  
23 8. Ratification by the Presbyteries should not be required in order to restore language to  
24 *The Book of Church Order* that was never properly removed. However, if CCB deems  
25 ratification by the Presbyteries to be required, then the Presbytery would welcome  
26 such an amendment by the Overtures Committee.  
27

28  
29 *Adopted by the Northern California Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 6, 2026.*  
30 *A Northern California Overture Commission was authorized to perfect and re-file if it deems*  
31 *necessary.*

32 *Attested by TE John Kong, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 43** from the Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM,  
2 MNA, MTW, RUF)

3 “Amend *RAO* 4-9 so that Coordinators of Committees are Elected to 4-year Terms”  
4

5 **Be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA amend *RAO* 4-9 as shown below. Proposed additions are  
6 shown underlined; deletions shown by ~~striketrough~~.

7  
8 **RAO Article IV – Committees and Agencies**  
9

10 **4-9.** The four program Committees shall nominate ~~annually~~ a coordinator for  
11 election by the General Assembly for a four-year term. The Administrative  
12 Committee shall also nominate ~~annually~~ a Stated Clerk for election by the  
13 General Assembly for a four-year term. These men may serve multiple,  
14 successive terms if reelected to such. If the nominee has not been examined  
15 by the Theological Examining Committee, such an examination must take  
16 place prior to the election when it is a first time employment. ~~A~~ After  
17 election, a new coordinator or Stated Clerk shall assume office at the end  
18 of the Assembly meeting, or at such time thereafter as designated by the  
19 General Assembly.  
20

21 **Rationale**  
22

- 23 1. It's more reasonable to elect a Clerk and Coordinators for 4-years rather than annually.  
24 Note: The 11 members of AC are elected for four-year terms and the members of CDM,  
25 MNA, MTW, and RUF are elected to 5-year terms.  
26
- 27 2. In order to do their job, the Clerk and some Coordinators need to live near the PCA office—  
28 or visit it frequently. It's not reasonable to relocate a family for a one-year term.  
29
- 30 3. The *RAO* does not require the Presidents or Executive Directors of our five Agencies to be  
31 renominated and reelected every year (i.e., Covenant College, Covenant Theological  
32 Seminary, Geneva Benefits Group, PCA Foundation, and Ridge Haven).  
33
- 34 4. In the rare instance where a man needs to be replaced during his term for cause, the  
35 Permanent Committee can still recommend such to the General Assembly.  
36
- 37 5. This change would be effective with the elections at the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA in Louisville in 2026.  
38 Proposed *RAO* changes are usually considered on Tuesday evening, before any elections  
39 on Wednesday and Thursday.  
40
- 41 6. The initial, new terms would expire for these men at the same GA (2030). But over time  
42 these would likely stagger as men leave those roles of their own volition prior to expiration  
43 of a term.  
44  
45

Overture 43, Pacific Northwest Presbytery

- 1 *Adopted by the Pacific Northwest Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 6, 2026.*
- 2 *Revised and adopted by an Overtures Commission on February 10, 2026.*
- 3 *Attested by TE Jerid Krulish, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 44** from the Covenant Presbytery (to MNA)  
2 “Divide Covenant Presbytery into Two Presbyteries”  
3

4 **Whereas**, Covenant Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America exists for the glory of  
5 God and the furtherance of His Kingdom here on earth; and  
6

7 **Whereas**, Covenant Presbytery has grown to 46 churches, with nearly 7,000 communicant  
8 members, covering portions of three states (western Tennessee, northern Mississippi,  
9 and the preponderance of Arkansas) with counties that require a 7+ hour drive (Fort  
10 Smith AR to Starkville MS) separating its outermost churches; and  
11

12 **Whereas**, the 16<sup>th</sup> General Assembly adopted guidelines for the multiplication of existing  
13 Presbyteries into new Presbyteries, which guidelines provide a set of ideals governing  
14 the development of new Presbyteries; and  
15

16 **Whereas**, the 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly published a more thorough articulation of *Guidelines for*  
17 *Forming New Presbyteries through the Division or Multiplication of Existing*  
18 *Presbyteries*;  
19

20 **Whereas**, Covenant Presbytery has exceeded thirty (30) congregations;  
21

22 **Whereas**, Covenant Presbytery may be divided at the Mississippi River to create a  
23 geographically consistent Presbytery that encompasses most of the state of Arkansas,  
24 with a strong sense of regional identity;  
25

26 **Whereas**, Covenant Presbytery’s creation of a new yet-to-be-named Presbytery that  
27 encompasses most of the state of Arkansas will foster church planting and regional  
28 development in that state;  
29

30 **Whereas**, the new yet-to-be-named Presbytery would presently consist of nine churches and  
31 one mission work, plus an additional congregation that is petitioning Covenant  
32 Presbytery for entrance in early 2026, and would consist of over 1200 total members;  
33

34 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the General Assembly pursuant to 14-6.e of the *Book of Church*  
35 *Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America remove the counties from the State of  
36 Arkansas from the existing bounds of Covenant Presbytery, and  
37

38 **Therefore, be it further resolved** that the General Assembly erect the “Arkansas Presbytery”  
39 (or some such titled new Presbytery), establishing the boundaries of such Presbytery  
40 to include all the counties in the state of Arkansas, except for Benton, Carroll,  
41 Washington, Madison, and Boone, and  
42

43 **Therefore, be it further resolved** that the General Assembly authorize the conduct of  
44 business by this newly established church court, effective July 1, 2026, consistent with  
45 Chapter 13 of the *Book of Church Order* and such other provisions as may apply.

1

2

3 *Adopted by the Covenant Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 10, 2026*

4 *Attested by TE Robert Browning, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 45** from the Covenant Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 8-4.i to Require that Floor Nominations for Committees and Agencies  
3 Come from Previously Submitted Presbytery Nominees”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)* 8-4 currently permits floor nominations  
6 for individuals not included in the Nominating Committee’s report; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, the Nominating Committee receives and evaluates nominations from each  
9 Presbytery, which commends men for service on the Permanent Committees and  
10 Agencies of the PCA; and  
11

12 **Whereas**, the Nominating Committee has responsibilities to consider nominees’  
13 qualifications as well as the number of men representing different Presbyteries on our  
14 committees and boards, ensuring regional and Presbytery representation; and  
15

16 **Whereas**, the current process allows for the possibility of floor nominations for individuals  
17 who have not been examined or commended by a Presbytery, and whose qualifications  
18 have not been reviewed through the ordinary means of connectional government; and  
19

20 **Whereas**, the representative nature of Presbyterian polity calls for officers and representatives  
21 to be nominated by the courts of the church, not self-nominated or nominated without  
22 prior ecclesiastical review; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, this overture seeks to preserve the Assembly’s ability to elect individuals other than  
25 those recommended by the Nominating Committee, while ensuring that all  
26 nominations have passed through the same ordinary channel of Presbytery oversight  
27 and recommendation;  
28

29 **Therefore be it resolved**, that *RAO* 8-4.i be amended by adding the following sentence  
30 (additions underlined):  
31

32 Such additional nominations shall only be considered valid if the individual nominated  
33 was previously submitted by a Presbytery for consideration by the Nominating  
34 Committee but was not included in the Committee’s final report.  
35

36 So that the amended *RAO* 8-4.i would read:  
37

- 38 i. Additional nominations may be submitted either (1) in writing or (2) electronically,  
39 in either case on forms supplied by the Stated Clerk, which shall include consent of  
40 the nominee to serve, if elected, and a brief statement regarding the nominee. In the  
41 event that a nomination is submitted electronically, the nominator should be aware that  
42 responsibility for such nomination rests with the nominator and that non-delivery is  
43 the sole responsibility of the nominator. Because the nominator has sole responsibility  
44 for delivery of a nomination, the nominator should obtain a receipt verifying  
45 successful electronic delivery of the nomination. The nominee is to give consent to

1 only one nomination. In the event that the nominee is nominated for more than one  
2 position, the nominee may indicate to which nomination the nominee consents. The  
3 deadline for these nominations is the close of the afternoon session of the first full day  
4 of the Assembly. The Clerk’s office shall issue a supplement to the Assembly’s  
5 Nominating Committee report during the second day’s business sessions. Such  
6 additional nominations shall only be considered valid if the individual nominated was  
7 previously submitted by a Presbytery for consideration by the Nominating Committee  
8 but was not included in the Committee’s final report.

9  
10 Rationale:

- 11  
12 1. Upholds Presbyterian process: Requiring that floor nominations originate from individuals  
13 already nominated by their Presbyteries ensures that all candidates have first been  
14 examined and commended by a local court of the church. This aligns with our  
15 connectional polity and the representative nature of church government.  
16
- 17 2. Promotes fairness and transparency: When floor nominations may be made for individuals  
18 who were never vetted through the regular nomination process, it risks undermining  
19 both the Committee on Nominations and the Presbyteries that participated in good  
20 order. This amendment provides a clear and fair standard, reducing confusion or  
21 perception of improvised decision-making.  
22
- 23 3. Encourages broader participation without bypassing structure: This overture does not  
24 restrict the number or variety of individuals eligible for nomination. It simply requires  
25 that all nominations—whether included in the Committee’s final report or not—have  
26 come through the Presbyteries. Thus, the Assembly retains its right to elect someone  
27 other than the committee’s recommendation, while ensuring the nomination reflects  
28 prior deliberation and accountability.  
29
- 30 4. Brings consistency with other Assembly procedures: The General Assembly already  
31 operates under a pattern in which a committee’s recommendation is treated as a  
32 majority report, with the possibility of minority reports. Floor nominations, when  
33 limited to individuals previously submitted by Presbyteries, function analogously to a  
34 minority report—providing an alternate recommendation from within the same  
35 process rather than introducing an entirely new path.  
36
- 37 5. Parallels what the Assembly did with “personal resolutions”: In 2016, the Assembly  
38 amended our *RAO* to prevent personal resolutions that take the form of overtures,  
39 except for those that had been previously considered and rejected by the  
40 commissioners’ Presbytery (*RAO* 11-10). This proposal on floor nominations follows  
41 a similar logic, namely, Presbyteries have the right to propose nominations and should  
42 not be bypassed in that process.  
43  
44

45 *Adopted by the Covenant Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 10, 2026*

1 *Attested by TE Robert Browning, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 46** from the New York State Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Add *BCO* 29-5 on Public Allegations without Prior Reporting to the Court of  
3 Jurisdiction as Probable Violations of the Ninth Commandment”  
4

5 **Be it resolved** that the following paragraph be added to *BCO* 29 as 29-5 (underlining for  
6 additions):  
7

8 29-5. Any public statement made outside of a court of the Church, alleging an  
9 offense or unconstitutional action of a church, Presbytery, agency, committee, or  
10 individual member of the PCA that is not first reported to the court of original  
11 jurisdiction (ordinarily after the reporter has made a reasonable effort to contact  
12 the alleged errant entity or individual to potentially clear up the matter) shall be  
13 considered a probable violation of the ninth commandment and an offense under  
14 this chapter to be addressed by normal judicial process (*BCO* 31, etc.).  
15

16 Rationale:  
17

18 1. Unfortunately, we’ve gone pretty far astray in controlling our tongues and pens in public  
19 when compared to the duties and prohibitions of the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment as described in  
20 *Westminster Larger Catechism* 144 and 145. The goal of this Overture is to try to bring us  
21 back.  
22

23 2. Before we take allegations to social media, podcasts, or blogs, we should first follow the  
24 proper channels we’ve agreed to in our Constitution for raising sins, errors, and constitutional  
25 violations. This is not to say that we can never speak publicly about sin and error, but it says  
26 that an effort to follow the proper procedure must be attempted first.  
27

28 Q. 144. What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?

29 A. The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting  
30 of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own:  
31 appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and  
32 fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in  
33 all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and  
34 rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely  
35 acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving  
36 of good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them;  
37 discouraging tale-bearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good  
38 name, and defending it when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; study and  
39 practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.  
40

41 Q. 145. What are sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?

42 A. The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the  
43 good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving  
44 false evidence, suborning false witnesses; wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil  
45 cause; out-facing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence; calling evil good,

1 and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the  
2 righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery; concealing the truth; undue  
3 silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for a reproof from  
4 ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a  
5 wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal  
6 expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering,  
7 backbiting, detracting, tale-bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and  
8 partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vain-  
9 glorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly of ourselves or others; denying the  
10 gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating  
11 of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities;  
12 raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears  
13 against just defence; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any,  
14 endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful  
15 contempt; fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are  
16 of good report; and practicing or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can  
17 in others, such things as procure an ill name.

18  
19  
20 *Adopted by the New York State Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 31, 2026*

21 *Attested by RE John VanVoorhis, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 47** from the Suncoast Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 8-4.i to Require that Floor Nominations for Committees and Agencies  
3 Come from Previously Submitted Presbytery Nominees”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)* 8-4 currently permits floor nominations  
6 for individuals not included in the Nominating Committee’s report; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, the Nominating Committee receives and evaluates nominations from each  
9 presbytery, which commends men for service on the Permanent Committees and  
10 Agencies of the PCA; and  
11

12 **Whereas**, the current process allows for the possibility of floor nominations for individuals  
13 who have not been examined or commended by a presbytery, and whose qualifications  
14 have not been reviewed through the ordinary means of connectional government; and  
15

16 **Whereas**, the representative nature of Presbyterian polity calls for officers and representatives  
17 to be nominated by the courts of the church, not self-nominated or nominated without  
18 prior ecclesiastical review; and  
19

20 **Whereas**, this overture seeks to preserve the Assembly’s ability to elect individuals other than  
21 those recommended by the Nominating Committee, while ensuring that all  
22 nominations have passed through the same ordinary channel of presbytery oversight  
23 and recommendation;  
24

25 **Therefore be it resolved**, that *RAO* 8-4.i be amended by adding the following sentence  
26 (underlining for additions):  
27

28 Such additional nominations shall only be considered valid if the individual  
29 nominated was previously submitted by a Presbytery for consideration by the  
30 Nominating Committee but was not included in the Committee’s final report.  
31

32 So that the amended *RAO* 8-4.i would read:  
33

34 i. Additional nominations may be submitted either (1) in writing or (2) electronically,  
35 in either case on forms supplied by the Stated Clerk, which shall include consent of  
36 the nominee to serve, if elected, and a brief statement regarding the nominee. In the  
37 event that a nomination is submitted electronically, the nominator should be aware that  
38 responsibility for such nomination rests with the nominator and that non-delivery is  
39 the sole responsibility of the nominator. Because the nominator has sole responsibility  
40 for delivery of a nomination, the nominator should obtain a receipt verifying  
41 successful electronic delivery of the nomination. The nominee is to give consent to  
42 only one nomination. In the event that the nominee is nominated for more than one  
43 position, the nominee may indicate to which nomination the nominee consents. The  
44 deadline for these nominations is the close of the afternoon session of the first full day  
45 of the Assembly. The Clerk’s office shall issue a supplement to the Assembly’s

1 Nominating Committee report during the second day’s business sessions. Such  
2 additional nominations shall only be considered valid if the individual nominated was  
3 previously submitted by a Presbytery for consideration by the Nominating Committee  
4 but was not included in the Committee’s final report.  
5  
6

7 **Rationale:**

- 8 **1. Upholds Presbyterian process:** Requiring that floor nominations originate from  
9 individuals already nominated by their Presbyteries ensures that all candidates have  
10 first been examined and commended by a local court of the church. This aligns with  
11 our connectional polity and the representative nature of church government.  
12  
13 **2. Promotes fairness and transparency:** When floor nominations may be made for  
14 individuals who were never vetted through the regular nomination process, it risks  
15 undermining both the Nominating Committee and the Presbyteries that participated in  
16 good order. This amendment provides a clear and fair standard, reducing confusion or  
17 perception of improvised decision-making.  
18  
19 **3. Encourages broader participation without bypassing structure:** This overture  
20 does not restrict the number or variety of individuals eligible for nomination. It simply  
21 requires that all nominations—whether included in the Committee’s final report or  
22 not—have come through the Presbyteries. Thus, the Assembly retains its right to elect  
23 someone other than the committee’s recommendation, while ensuring the nomination  
24 reflects prior deliberation and accountability.  
25  
26 **4. Brings consistency with other Assembly procedures:** The General Assembly  
27 already operates under a pattern in which a committee’s recommendation is treated as  
28 a majority report, with the possibility of minority reports. Floor nominations, when  
29 limited to individuals previously submitted by Presbyteries, function analogously to a  
30 minority report—providing an alternate recommendation from within the same  
31 process rather than introducing an entirely new path.  
32  
33

34 *Adopted by the Suncoast Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 10, 2026*  
35 *Attested by TE David L. Stewart, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 48** from the Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 7-2 and 7-3 Regarding Commissioning and Titling of Unordained  
3 Persons”  
4

5 **Whereas**, in accordance with Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-16), the Presbyterian  
6 Church in America professes that there are only two offices in the Church, and that  
7 these offices are open to men only (*BCO* 7-2),  
8

9 **Whereas**, the *BCO* was recently amended to restrict referring to unordained persons or giving  
10 them titles in connection with the ordained offices of pastor/elder or deacon (*BCO* 7-  
11 3),  
12

13 **Whereas**, the laying on of hands is only ever referenced in our *BCO* in connection to ordained  
14 office (*BCO* 17-2, 21-7, 24-6),  
15

16 **Whereas**, officers are elected by the congregation (*BCO* 20-3, 24-1) and assistants to the  
17 deacons are appointed by the Session (*BCO* 9-7), yet many churches appear to elect  
18 women to unordained leadership roles,  
19

20 **Whereas**, the practice of commissioning women as “deaconesses” and “shepherdesses”  
21 appears to persist, even in connection to the laying on of hands,  
22

23 **Therefore, be it resolved**, that Northwest Georgia Presbytery overture the 53<sup>rd</sup> General  
24 Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to amend *BCO* 7-2 as follows  
25 (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
26

27 **7-2.** The ordinary and perpetual classes of office in the Church are elders and deacons.  
28 Within the class of elder are the two orders of teaching elders and ruling elders. The  
29 elders jointly have the government and spiritual oversight of the Church, including  
30 teaching. Only those elders who are specially gifted, called and trained by God to  
31 preach may serve as teaching elders. The office of deacon is not one of rule, but rather  
32 of service both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people. In accord with  
33 Scripture, these offices are open to men only-, and thus it is unlawful for any court to  
34 commission or otherwise appoint, or for a congregation to elect or otherwise approve,  
35 a woman as a deaconess, shepherdess, or any other pretended office.  
36

37 So that the amended section will read as follows:  
38

39 **7-2.** The ordinary and perpetual classes of office in the Church are elders and deacons.  
40 Within the class of elder are the two orders of teaching elders and ruling elders. The  
41 elders jointly have the government and spiritual oversight of the Church, including  
42 teaching. Only those elders who are specially gifted, called and trained by God to  
43 preach may serve as teaching elders. The office of deacon is not one of rule, but rather  
44 of service both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people. In accord with  
45 Scripture, these offices are open to men only, and thus it is unlawful for any court to

1 commission or otherwise appoint, or for a congregation to elect or otherwise approve,  
2 a woman as a deaconess, shepherdess, or any other pretended office.

3  
4 **Be it further resolved**, that Northwest Georgia Presbytery overture the 53rd General  
5 Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to amend *BCO* 7-3 as follows  
6 (underlining for additions; ~~strike through~~ for deletions):

7  
8 **7-3.** No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or  
9 receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the  
10 Scriptures. Furthermore, unordained people shall not be referred to as, or given the  
11 titles of, the ordained offices of pastor/elder, or deacon-, nor may they be assigned  
12 other titles which by their nature imply the authority of those offices.

13  
14 So that the amended section will read as follows:

15  
16 **7-3.** No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or  
17 receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the  
18 Scriptures. Furthermore, unordained people shall not be referred to as, or given the  
19 titles of, the ordained offices of pastor/elder, or deacon, nor may they be assigned other  
20 titles which by their nature imply the authority of those offices.

21  
22 **Therefore, be it further resolved**, that such practices of women's leadership addressed by  
23 the above amendment should be considered an irregularity subject to review and  
24 control of higher courts according to *BCO* 40-3.

25  
26  
27 *Adopted by the Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its 59<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting, January 17, 2026*  
28 *Attested by TE Robby Baxter, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 49** from the Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 13-1 and 14-2 to Increase Ruling Elder Representation at Presbytery  
3 and GA”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the Presbyterian Church in America professes that there are only two offices in the  
6 Church, and that there is parity between the “teaching” and “ruling” elder orders of  
7 the first office (*BCO* 7-1),  
8

9 **Whereas**, “The Concerned Presbyterians” played an important part of the founding of our  
10 denomination and were concerned, among other things, with the decline in ruling elder  
11 participation at the presbytery and General Assembly levels,  
12

13 **Whereas**, ruling elder participation at the PCA’s first General Assembly in 1973 was 54  
14 percent of the Assembly (Zoe S. Erler for byFaith, February 27, 2018),  
15

16 **Whereas**, ruling elder participation has declined since and has remained around 20-30 percent  
17 of the General Assembly in recent years and this proposed amendment seeks to  
18 provide for increased RE participation without mandating additional expenses or  
19 affecting other balances,  
20

21 **Whereas**, a substantial increase in participation by additional ruling elders would  
22 correspondingly result in a substantial increase in revenue for the PCA Administrative  
23 Committee,  
24

25 **Therefore be it resolved** that *BCO* 13-1 & 14-2 be amended as follows (underlining  
26 for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
27

28 **BCO 13-1.**

29 **13-1.** The Presbytery consists of all the teaching elders and churches  
30 within its bounds that have been accepted by the Presbytery. When the  
31 Presbytery meets as a court it shall comprise all teaching elders and  
32 ruling elders as elected by their Session. Each congregation is entitled  
33 to ~~two~~ ~~(2)~~ three (3) ruling elder representatives for the first 350  
34 communing members or fraction thereof, and one additional ruling  
35 elder for each additional 500 communing members or fraction thereof.  
36

37 **BCO 14-2.**

38 **14-2.** The General Assembly, which is a permanent court, shall meet at  
39 least annually upon its own adjournment. It shall consist of all teaching  
40 elders in good standing with their Presbyteries, and ruling elders as  
41 elected by their Session. Each congregation is entitled to ~~two~~ three  
42 ruling elder representatives for the first 350 communing members or  
43 fraction thereof, and one additional ruling elder for each additional 500  
44 communing members or fraction thereof.  
45

1 So that if adopted the amended paragraphs would read:

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**13-1.** The Presbytery consists of all the teaching elders and churches within its bounds that have been accepted by the Presbytery. When the Presbytery meets as a court it shall comprise all teaching elders and ruling elders as elected by their Session. Each congregation is entitled to three (3) ruling elder representatives for the first 350 communing members or fraction thereof, and one additional ruling elder for each additional 500 communing members or fraction thereof.

**14-2.** The General Assembly, which is a permanent court, shall meet at least annually upon its own adjournment. It shall consist of all teaching elders in good standing with their Presbyteries, and ruling elders as elected by their Session. Each congregation is entitled to three ruling elder representatives for the first 350 communing members or fraction thereof, and one additional ruling elder for each additional 500 communing members or fraction thereof.

20 *Adopted by the Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its 59<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting, January 17, 2026*  
21 *Attested by TE Robby Baxter, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 50** from the Mississippi Valley Presbytery (to OC)  
2 “Call for a Day of Fasting and Prayer for Revival and Renewal of the Church”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the urgent present need of the unconverted around us, and the persistent divisions  
5 and relative spiritual poverty of the church are a source of great grief to all who love  
6 the Lord Jesus Christ; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, Christ told us that “the fields are white unto harvest” (John 4:35), and that “the  
9 harvest is plentiful” and commanded us to “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest”  
10 to send more laborers (Matt. 9:38); and  
11

12 **Whereas**, the Scriptures abundantly testify that our God delights to hear and answer the  
13 prayers of his people (Prov. 15:29; Ps. 17:6, 65:2, 116:1; Jer. 29:13; Matt. 7:7; John  
14 14:13-14; 1 John 5:14); and  
15

16 **Whereas**, the Word of God clearly teaches the instrumentality of prayer in the fulfilment of  
17 the divine design (Romans 15:30; 2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19); and  
18

19 **Whereas**, in Scripture, seasons of renewed blessing and gospel fruit have frequently followed  
20 the humble, repentant, united prayers of God’s people (Num. 20:16; Judges 3:9, 4:3,  
21 6:7, 10:10; 2 Chron. 13:14; Ps. 107:6, 13, 19, 28; Acts 1:14, 2:42, 4:24-31, 12:12-17,  
22 13:1-3); and  
23

24 **Whereas**, throughout church history the blessing of God has often followed the efforts of the  
25 church to unite in prayer for the revival of religion; therefore  
26

27 **Be it resolved** that the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley overture the 53<sup>rd</sup> General  
28 Assembly to call upon the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America to  
29 appoint a time most convenient to them during the month of September 2026, to  
30 observe a solemn day of fasting and prayer for the revival and renewal of the church.  
31

32 On this day, Presbyteries, congregations, RUF campus chapters, officers, and members of the  
33 Presbyterian Church in America shall be urged to humble themselves before the  
34 LORD, fast and pray, and seek his mercy in heartfelt repentance over ministerial sins,  
35 the sins of officers, members, and whole congregations. Earnest prayer should be made  
36 for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, the blessing of heaven on the preached word,  
37 the conversion of the lost, the planting of faithful churches at home, and the success  
38 of the gospel in our communities, on college campuses, and on the mission field  
39 around the world.  
40

41 **Be it further resolved** that Presbyteries of the PCA be urged to hold a solemn convocation  
42 on the day appointed, at which the fast may conclude. This convocation shall include  
43 the praise of the triune God, the preaching of the Word, and a season of prayer for the  
44 concerns stated above.  
45

Overture 50, Mississippi Valley Presbytery

1 **Be it further resolved** that the Moderator of the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly be empowered to  
2 appoint one Teaching and one Ruling Elder to assist him in the preparation and  
3 dissemination of guidance for the prayers of the PCA on this occasion.  
4

5 **Be it further resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly invite the sister churches of NAPARC  
6 to join her during the month of September in seeking the mercy and favor of God in  
7 the revival and renewal of Christ's church in America; and that, as prudence and  
8 opportunity allow, presbyteries extend an invitation to like-minded evangelical  
9 churches in their regions to participate .  
10

11  
12 *Adopted by the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley at its stated meeting, February 3, 2026*  
13 *Attested by TE Chris Wright, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 51** from the Mississippi Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 5 to add a Section on ‘Assisted Churches’”  
3

4 **Whereas**, The Presbyterian Church in America has experienced healthy growth both  
5 geographically and numerically over the last 53 years, adjusting to changing  
6 demographics and an ever-shifting population that has resulted in the decline of several  
7 congregations across our denomination; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, the Preliminary Principles of *The Book of Church Order* states that “our blessed  
10 Savior, for the edification of the visible Church, which is His body, has appointed  
11 officers...”, and that this edification should aim for the encouraging equipping, and  
12 enlarging of all churches in their various situations and challenging providences and  
13 for the safeguarding and shepherding of the members of these churches; and  
14

15 **Whereas**, *The Book of Church Order* provides two categories for “Mission Churches” and  
16 “Particular Churches” that primarily focus on upward growth and expansion, but does  
17 not provide any category for those in decline and facing situations whereby they may  
18 lack a governing body and thus lacking the clarity and categories needed to best assist  
19 these churches; and  
20

21 **Therefore**, The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley seeks to add an additional category to  
22 Chapter 5 of *The Book of Church Order* to define what churches would need the  
23 assistance of the Presbytery and to provide the necessary steps to best assist them in  
24 their need;  
25

26 **Therefore**, The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to  
27 add a new section C to *BCO* 5 with paragraphs 5-11.a to 5-11.c, as set forth below  
28 (*underlining* for additions).  
29

30 **C. Assisted Churches**

31  
32 **5-11.**

33 a. An assisted church is a church that has only one ruling elder and no pastor and  
34 has been assigned by Presbytery a *BCO* 15-1 commission to serve as a temporary  
35 Session of that church (cf., *BCO* 5-3.c). The church’s one ruling elder shall be a  
36 member of that temporary Session.  
37

38 b. In such cases, the Presbytery shall acknowledge the condition of the church as  
39 an assisted church and shall determine one or more of the following courses of  
40 action, as it deems most conducive to the peace, purity, and progress of the  
41 church:

- 42 1. To encourage and assist the church toward the election and training of  
43 additional ruling elders;  
44 2. To recommend dissolution, merger, or other reorganization of the church,  
45 should such action appear necessary (*BCO* 13-9.f).

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7

c. The Presbytery shall review the status of an assisted church at least annually and shall record its actions and determinations in its minutes.

*Adopted by the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley at its stated meeting, February 3, 2026*  
*Attested by TE Chris Wright, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 52** from the Mississippi Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Add *BCO* 7-4 Prohibiting the Creation of Ecclesiastical Offices”  
3

4 **Whereas**, “some circumstances concerning the worship and government of the church are to  
5 be ordered according to the light of nature and the general principles of the Word of  
6 God” (WCF 1.6), thus permitting the church to employ qualified men and women in  
7 various forms of un-ordained Christian service according to the dictates of Christian  
8 prudence; and  
9

10 **Whereas**, “Christ, as King, has given to His Church officers, oracles and ordinances; and  
11 especially has He ordained therein His system of doctrine, government, discipline and  
12 worship, all of which are either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and  
13 necessary inference may be deduced therefrom; and to which things He commands  
14 that nothing be added, and that from them naught be taken away” (*BCO*, Preface 1.),  
15 thus the church is not free to invent offices; and  
16

17 **Whereas**, “Ecclesiastical power, which is wholly spiritual, is twofold. The officers exercise  
18 it sometimes severally, as in preaching the Gospel, administering the Sacraments,  
19 reproofing the erring, visiting the sick, and comforting the afflicted, which is the power  
20 of order; and they exercise it sometimes jointly in Church courts, after the form of  
21 judgment, which is the power of jurisdiction” (*BCO* 3-2), thus making it clear that,  
22 apart from the power to choose its officers, which power resides in the people (*BCO*  
23 3-1), the exercise of ecclesiastical power is placed in the hands of the officers alone;  
24 and  
25

26 **Whereas**, “All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or by representation,  
27 is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith  
28 and practice. No church judicatory may make laws to bind the conscience.” (*BCO*  
29 Preliminary Principle 7), thus no officers may be imposed upon the church, and only  
30 those offices ordained by God in Holy Scripture may serve in the government of the  
31 church; and  
32

33 **Whereas**, “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and  
34 commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in  
35 matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such  
36 commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring  
37 of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of  
38 conscience, and reason also” (WCF 20.2), thus to impose invented officers upon the  
39 church, without the warrant of the Word of God, is to violate the consciences of the  
40 people; therefore  
41

42 **Be it resolved** that the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley overture the 53<sup>rd</sup> General  
43 Assembly to amend *BCO* 7, by inserting an additional paragraph, to read as follows  
44 (underlining for additions):  
45

1 7-4. Courts of the church are warranted by the general principles of the Word of  
2 God and the dictates of Christian prudence to make use of qualified men and women  
3 in a variety of un-ordained ministry positions. However, since Christ, as King and  
4 Head of the church, has given officers to His Church, and has appointed His system of  
5 church government in Holy Scripture, church courts are not free to create ecclesiastical  
6 offices. Neither may a court of the church vest any part of the church power granted  
7 to officers by the rite of ordination in any un-ordained person, or intrude such persons  
8 upon the church or the consciences of its members, whether by means of popular  
9 election, or the use of vows not mandated by the Word of God and the constitution of  
10 the Presbyterian Church in America.

11  
12  
13 *Adopted by the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley at its stated meeting, February 3, 2026*  
14 *Attested by TE Chris Wright, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 53** from the Great Lakes Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 16 to Prohibit Members of RPR from Participating in GA Debate on the  
3 RPR Report”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the members of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) do the  
6 difficult and tedious work of examining Presbytery minutes wherein they have the  
7 opportunity to address any differences they have during the committee meeting; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, if a member of RPR is not satisfied with the Committee’s judgment they have the  
10 opportunity to file a minority report to be brought before the General Assembly (*RAO*  
11 16-7); and  
12

13 **Whereas**, members of the Overtures Committee are prevented from participating in debate  
14 during the Overtures report to GA with the exception of the chairman of Overtures or  
15 his designee (*RAO* 15-8.f); and  
16

17 **Whereas**, the RPR report consumed a considerable amount of time during the General  
18 Assembly, in part because some members of RPR addressed the same issues before  
19 the General Assembly they already had the opportunity to address in Committee; and  
20

21 **Therefore**, be it resolved by the 53<sup>rd</sup> PCA General Assembly that the *RAO* be modified such  
22 that the following language be added under the current section 16:  
23

24 **16-12. Presentation of the Report of the Committee on Review of Presbytery**  
25 **Records to the General Assembly:** At the presentation of the RPR report to the  
26 General Assembly, a member of the RPR Committee may not participate in debate  
27 unless he is the designee of the chairman with respect to the presentation of a particular  
28 recommendation or presenting a minority report. With respect to any recommendation,  
29 this restriction may be removed for a particular member of the RPR Committee upon  
30 the adoption of a non-debatable motion to that effect by majority vote.  
31

32  
33 *Adopted by the Great Lakes Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 10, 2026*

34 *Attested by TE Ryan Potter, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 54** from the Hills and Plains Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 42-2 to Clarify that a Person Judged Contumacious has the Right of  
3 Complaint Not Appeal”  
4

5 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 42-2 be amended as follows (underlining for additions, ~~strikethrough~~  
6 for deletions):  
7

8 **42-2.** The only parties entitled to an appeal are those who have submitted to a regular  
9 trial, those appealing a censure in a *BCO* 38-1 case without process, and those  
10 appealing a *BCO* 34-10 divestiture without censure. If the court has dealt with the party  
11 as contumacious, the party may not appeal but may complain against the court.  
12

13 So that the amended passage would read:  
14

15 **42-2.** The only parties entitled to an appeal are those who have submitted to a regular  
16 trial, those appealing a censure in a *BCO* 38-1 case without process, and those  
17 appealing a *BCO* 34-10 divestiture without censure. If the court has dealt with the party  
18 as contumacious, the party may not appeal but may complain against the court.  
19

20 **RATIONALE:**

21 This addition to the Rules of Discipline is necessary, beneficial, and good.  
22

23 In a recent case, an initial panel of the Standing Judicial Commission was assigned a *BCO* 43  
24 complaint from an accused whose Session found him contumacious. The accused complained  
25 to the Session first, then raised the complaint to the Presbytery, and ultimately to the General  
26 Assembly. The SJC panel, however, in an unprecedented action in the history of the SJC,  
27 interpreted the complaint as a *BCO* 42 appeal and reheard the case, though no formal judgment  
28 (*BCO* 32-15) was ever made on the original indictment. This addition is necessary to clarify  
29 that an entire case cannot be reheard by an appellate court if the trial has not been completed  
30 in the court of original jurisdiction, due to the original court’s determination that the accused  
31 has been contumacious (*BCO* 32-6 and 34-3).  
32

33 It is beneficial because it clarifies the narrow definition of an appeal found in *BCO* 42-1: “the  
34 transfer to a higher court of a judicial case on which judgment has been rendered in a lower  
35 court...” in harmony with the explanation of “judgment” at the end of a trial in *BCO* 32-15,  
36 while still preserving the right of the accused to demonstrate to an appellate court that the  
37 court of original jurisdiction erred in its finding of contumacy. It preserves the right and  
38 responsibility of courts of first resort to maintain order during a trial, and if an appellate court  
39 deems its determination of contumacy to be unfounded, to continue the trial as the court of  
40 original jurisdiction without having the case removed from them. It also preserves the  
41 grassroots nature and graded court system of our ecclesiology by preventing a higher court  
42 from reinterpreting and retrying a case in which lower courts have not had the opportunity to  
43 fulfill their duties of exercising discipline and oversight.  
44

Overture 54, Hills and Plains Presbytery

1 Finally, the proposed change is good because it is simple and clear, and in keeping with the  
2 best historical interpretation of our Rules of Discipline. It will serve to clarify our rules and  
3 preserve the peace and purity of the PCA.

4

5

6 *Adopted by the Hills and Plains Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 10, 2026*

7 *Attested by TE Aaron Raines, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 55** from the Southwest Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 22-3 and 23-1 Concerning the Tenure of Assistant Pastors”  
3

4 **Whereas**, *BCO* 22-3 presently defines the call and status of assistant pastors as called by the  
5 Session with Presbytery’s permission and approval, noting that assistant pastors are  
6 not members of the Session though they may be appointed to moderate on special  
7 occasions (cf. *BCO* 12-4); and  
8

9 **Whereas**, *BCO* 22-4 distinguishes the relationship of an associate pastor (determined by the  
10 congregation) from that of an assistant pastor (determined by the Session), with  
11 dissolutions governed by *BCO* 23;  
12

13 **Whereas**, the PCA’s Preliminary Principle 6 affirms that “though the character, qualifications  
14 and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the  
15 proper method of officer investiture, the power to elect persons to the exercise of  
16 authority in any particular society resides in that society,” and the prevailing practice  
17 of indefinite assistant pastorates (ministers exercising ongoing pastoral authority in a  
18 particular church without congregational election) stands in tension with—and  
19 functionally violates—this principle by normalizing pastoral authority not conferred  
20 by congregational vote;  
21

22 **Whereas**, clarifying ordinary expectations for the tenure of assistant pastors can promote  
23 pastoral development, congregational clarity, and orderly processes for advancement  
24 or transition while preserving prudent flexibility and meaningful Presbytery oversight;  
25 and  
26

27 **Whereas**, providing a defined pathway from assistant to associate pastor, with transparent  
28 exception procedures and super-majority Presbytery concurrence, will help Sessions,  
29 congregations, and ministers steward pastoral calls with integrity and care;  
30

31 **Therefore**, be it resolved that *BCO* 22-3 and 23-1 be amended as follows (underlining for  
32 additions):  
33

34 **22-3.** An assistant pastor is called by the Session, by the permission and approval  
35 of Presbytery, under the provisions of *BCO* 20-1 and 13-2, with Presbytery  
36 membership being governed by the same provisions that apply to pastors. He is  
37 not a member of the Session, but may be appointed on special occasions to  
38 moderate the Session under the provisions of *BCO* 12-4. Assistant pastors shall  
39 initially be called for a period of no more than five (5) years from the date of his  
40 installation. At the conclusion of the five (5) years as an assistant, the pastor shall  
41 either be put forward as an associate pastor to the congregation or be automatically  
42 released from his call to the particular church where he has been serving.  
43

44 In extraordinary circumstances, the assistant pastor may continue as an assistant at  
45 the same church. Should the Session of a particular church desire for a man to

1 continue to labor in their midst, but it is not deemed prudent for the man to be put  
2 forward as an associate pastor, the church shall submit the reasons for this  
3 irregularity to the Presbytery; and the Presbytery, being satisfied with the reasons  
4 provided, may, by a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3), approve a renewal of the call  
5 of the assistant pastor for a period of three (3) years.

6  
7 At the conclusion of those three (3) years the pastor may be put forward as an  
8 associate pastor, released from his call, or the church may request another renewal  
9 of the man's call for an additional three (3) years under the same terms.”<sup>1</sup>

10  
11 (Editorial footnote to be included) <sup>1</sup>Sessions who have called men to be assistant  
12 pastors who have been installed prior to the conclusion of the 54<sup>th</sup> General  
13 Assembly shall have a maximum of five (5) years from the conclusion of the  
14 Assembly to put forward the assistant as an associate, release him from his call, or  
15 at the conclusion of those five (5) years provide the Presbytery with sufficient  
16 grounds to extend the assistant pastor's term.

17  
18 **23-1.** When any minister shall tender the resignation of his pastoral charge to  
19 his Presbytery, the Presbytery shall cite the church to appear by its commissioners,  
20 to show cause why the Presbytery should or should not accept the resignation. If  
21 the church fails to appear, or if its reasons for retaining its pastor be deemed  
22 insufficient, his resignation shall be accepted and the pastoral relation dissolved.

23  
24 If any church desires to be relieved of its pastor, a similar procedure shall be  
25 observed. But whether the minister or the church initiates proceedings for a  
26 dissolution of the relation, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation  
27 called and conducted in the same manner as the call of the pastor. In any case, the  
28 minister must not physically leave the field until the Presbytery or its commission  
29 empowered to handle uncontested requests for dissolution has dissolved the  
30 relation. Should an assistant pastor not receive a call as an associate pastor after  
31 five (5) years of his installation, and the presbytery not receive sufficient grounds  
32 for allowing the man to continue to labor in the church as an assistant pastor (BCO  
33 22-3) shall at its next meeting dissolve the assistant pastor's call.

34  
35 The associate or assistant pastors may continue to serve a congregation when the  
36 pastoral relation of the senior pastor is dissolved, but they may not normally  
37 succeed the senior pastor without an intervening term of service in a different field  
38 of labor. However a congregation by a secret ballot with four-fifths (4/5) majority  
39 vote may petition Presbytery for an exception which by a three-fourths (3/4)  
40 majority vote Presbytery may grant. Presbytery needs to determine if the  
41 dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the senior pastor was brought about in  
42 Christian love and good order on the part of the parties concerned.

43  
44 **Rationale**

1 This amendment retains the current calling structure for assistant pastors (Session call with  
2 Presbytery approval) while establishing an ordinary five-year horizon that encourages  
3 deliberate evaluation and appropriate advancement to congregationally elected associate  
4 pastor status or release. It also preserves necessary flexibility through an “extraordinary  
5 circumstances” pathway that requires: (1) written reasons from the church, (2) the minister’s  
6 consent, and (3) a supermajority (2/3) vote of Presbytery for each three-year renewal. In  
7 keeping with Preliminary Principle 6, this reform curbs the normalization of indefinite  
8 assistant pastorates (ongoing pastoral authority without congregational election) by restoring  
9 a default trajectory toward congregational election or release, while allowing flexibility and  
10 accountability for necessary exceptions.

11  
12

13 *Adopted by the Southwest Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 14, 2026*  
14 *Attested by TE Freddy Fritz, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 56** from the Southwest Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 32-19 to Limit Representation in Judicial Process to Officers”  
3

4 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 32-19 be amended to read (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~  
5 for deletions):  
6

7 **32-19.** No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases  
8 of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he desires it, be represented in  
9 proceedings before ~~the a Session or the Presbytery~~ by any member in good standing  
10 of his own church or officer in good standing of a church in the same Presbytery, or  
11 by any Teaching Elder member of that Presbytery in good standing. An accused may  
12 be represented in proceedings before the Presbytery by any officer in good standing of  
13 a church in the same Presbytery or by any Teaching Elder member of that Presbytery  
14 in good standing. An accused may be represented before the Standing Judicial  
15 Commission by any officer; or before the General Assembly by any member in good  
16 standing in the PCA. A member of the court so employed shall not be allowed to sit in  
17 judgment in the case. Courts are encouraged to suggest to the accused/appellant the  
18 names of potential representatives and potential advisors he might contact.  
19

20 So that *BCO* 32-19, as amended would read:  
21

22 **32-19.** No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases  
23 of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he desires it, be represented in  
24 proceedings before a Session by any member in good standing of his own church or  
25 officer in good standing of a church in the same Presbytery, or by any Teaching Elder  
26 member of that Presbytery in good standing. An accused may be represented in  
27 proceedings before the Presbytery by any officer in good standing of a church in the  
28 same Presbytery or by any Teaching Elder member of that Presbytery in good  
29 standing. An accused may be represented before the Standing Judicial Commission by  
30 any officer in good standing in the PCA. A member of the court so employed shall not  
31 be allowed to sit in judgment in the case. Courts are encouraged to suggest to the  
32 accused/appellant the names of potential representatives and potential advisors he  
33 might contact.  
34

### 35 **Rationale**

36  
37 This proposal seeks to refine a recent amendment to *BCO* 32-19 that enlarged the scope of  
38 persons who may act as a representative for an accused in before a court of the Church. That  
39 amendment, adopted at the 2025 General Assembly, permitted an accused to select any  
40 member in good standing in a church in his same Presbytery, whether the representative was  
41 an officer or not, to represent him in his case before his Session or before his Presbytery. The  
42 accused could also select any member in good standing in the whole PCA, whether an officer  
43 or not, to represent him in any proceedings regarding his case before the Standing Judicial  
44 Commission.  
45

1 The instant proposal seeks to limit the persons who may function in the role of a  
2 representative.

3  
4 Representatives of an accused, like prosecutors, effectively function as officers of the court  
5 that conducts the proceedings. Before the 2025 amendment, church members could act as  
6 representatives for an accused fellow member of the congregation before their own Session,  
7 but, not being subject to the jurisdiction of the higher courts, were not permitted to participate  
8 as representatives in proceedings before the higher courts.

9  
10 The 2025 amendment effectively reversed that longstanding rule and allowed non-officers to  
11 function as representatives at every level of the PCA disciplinary process.

12  
13 While it is practical and prudent to allow a non-officer to function as a representative in  
14 proceedings before the Session of a church where both the representative and accused are  
15 members, it is neither necessary nor prudent to permit non-officers to function effectively as  
16 court officers by serving as representatives in judicial proceedings before the higher courts of  
17 the Church.

18  
19 Officers are men vetted both by the people of a congregation and a court of the Church for  
20 spiritual integrity, theological conformity, as well as knowledge of and commitment to our  
21 Standards, including the Rules of Discipline. Non-officers are not. Of course, not being an  
22 officer does not inherently signal a lack of either integrity or competence to function as a  
23 representative in formal disciplinary proceedings, but it doesn't guarantee it either. But the  
24 standards of ordination have developed a credible metric for measuring both of those  
25 components that is not an inherent feature of bare church membership in "good standing."

26  
27 In general, the business of our courts should, to the extent reasonably practicable, be carried  
28 out by officers of our courts. Ordained persons have been uniquely qualified to serve in the  
29 higher courts of the Church, especially in cases of process where theological conformity,  
30 commitment to our polity, and personal integrity are essential to the orderly administration of  
31 Church discipline. These qualities are typified by the vows of ordination, vows neither taken  
32 by nor demanded from non-officers.

33  
34 It is reasonable to make an exception to this general rule in formal proceedings before  
35 Sessions, since local church officers are often unavailable to serve as a representative in such  
36 matters, both because their ranks are easily consumed in serving as either prosecutor or judge  
37 in support of such proceedings, or because an accused may feel that his local officers  
38 conducting his prosecution might be biased against him.

39  
40 By contrast, there is no reason to abandon the general principle that church officers should  
41 serve in the capacity of as representatives for the accused in the higher courts of the Church.

42  
43 The proposal, if adopted, would require representatives for an accused to be selected from  
44 among church officers at every level of the church courts except in proceedings before a  
45 Session.

Overture 56, Southwest Florida Presbytery

1

2

3 *Adopted by the Southwest Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 14, 2026*

4 *Attested by TE Freddy Fritz, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 57** from the South Texas Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 12-7, 13-9, and 25-5 to Explicitly Require Minutes of Congregational  
3 Meetings Be Included in Session Records”  
4

5 **Whereas**, *BCO* 25-11 requires church bylaws to conform to the Constitution of the PCA; and  
6

7 **Whereas**, congregational meetings must be conducted in conformity to our Constitution  
8 (*BCO* 25); and  
9

10 **Whereas**, church congregations make important decisions in congregational meetings,  
11 including elections of officers and pastors (*BCO* 20 and 24); and  
12

13 **Whereas**, the Committee on Constitutional Business received a non-judicial reference  
14 requesting guidance on whether congregational meeting minutes are required to be  
15 submitted to Presbyteries; and  
16

17 **Whereas**, the Committee on Constitutional Business could only answer by saying “it is *clear*  
18 *by implication* that such records must be maintained” [emphasis added] with regards  
19 to congregational meeting minutes; and  
20

21 **Whereas**, the constitutional definition of “records” does not explicitly include congregational  
22 meeting minutes; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, the Standing Judicial Commission in Case No. 2021-12: *Complaint of Christian*  
25 *Michelson and Stuart Michelson v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery* has stated that a  
26 “Presbytery could take note of a Constitutional deficiency in a congregational meeting  
27 in their review of the records of the Session (note *BCO* 25-5, last sentence and *BCO*  
28 13-9(b))” (*M49GA*, 2022, 822–825, 823); and  
29

30 **Whereas**, it would benefit Sessions and Presbyteries to make this practice explicit;  
31

32 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly amend *BCO* 12-7, 13-9.b, and 25-  
33 5 as follows (~~strikethrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions):  
34

35 **12-7.** Every Session shall keep an accurate record of its proceedings and the  
36 proceedings of congregational meetings, which record shall be submitted at least once  
37 in every year to the inspection of the Presbytery.  
38

39 **13-9.b.** To review the records of church Sessions (including minutes of congregational  
40 meetings), redress whatever they may have done contrary to order and take effectual  
41 care that they observe the Constitution of the Church;  
42

43 **25-5.** A clerk shall be elected by the congregation to serve at that meeting or for a  
44 definite period, whose duty shall be to keep correct minutes of the proceedings and of  
45 all business transacted and to preserve these minutes in a permanent form, after they

1 have been attested by the moderator and the clerk of the meeting. He shall also send  
2 a copy of these minutes to the Session of the church to be included in the record of the  
3 church Session.

4  
5 So that the amended passages would read:

6  
7 **12-7.** Every Session shall keep an accurate record of its proceedings and the  
8 proceedings of congregational meetings, which record shall be submitted at least once  
9 in every year to the inspection of the Presbytery.

10  
11 **13-9.b.** To review the records of church Sessions (including minutes of congregational  
12 meetings), redress whatever they may have done contrary to order and take effectual  
13 care that they observe the Constitution of the Church;

14  
15 **25-5.** A clerk shall be elected by the congregation to serve at that meeting or for a  
16 definite period, whose duty shall be to keep correct minutes of the proceedings and of  
17 all business transacted and to preserve these minutes in a permanent form, after they  
18 have been attested by the moderator and the clerk of the meeting. He shall also send  
19 a copy of these minutes to the Session of the church to be included in the record of the  
20 church Session.

21  
22  
23 *Adopted by the South Texas Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 31, 2026*

24 *Attested by RE Barry McBee, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 58** from the Calvary Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 10-4 to Specify that Clerks Must Be Elders”

3  
4 **Whereas**, PCA Church courts are essential to the work of the Church; and,

5  
6 **Whereas**, PCA Church courts utilize Clerks to facilitate the meetings of Session, Presbytery and  
7 General Assembly; and,

8  
9 **Whereas**, only PCA Ruling and Teaching Elders serve on Sessions, and as Commissioners to  
10 Presbyteries and General Assemblies; and,

11  
12 **Whereas**, PCA Clerks need to be accountable to the church courts in which they serve because of their  
13 membership and delegated authority on behalf of the Court they serve; and,

14  
15 **Whereas**, the PCA *Book of Church Order* does not make explicitly clear that Clerks shall be ordained  
16 office bearers;

17  
18 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the PCA amend the *Book of*  
19 *Church Order* 10-4 as follows (underlining for addition):

20  
21 **10-4.** A clerk or clerks shall be elected by the Session, Presbytery, and General Assembly  
22 to serve for a definite period as determined by the court.

23 It is the duty of the clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records  
24 carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required. Such extracts under  
25 the hand of the clerk shall be evidence to any ecclesiastical court, and to every part of the  
26 Church.

27 The clerk shall be a Ruling or Teaching Elder within the Presbyterian Church in  
28 America.

29  
30 So that the amended passage would read:

31  
32 **10-4.** A clerk or clerks shall be elected by the Session, Presbytery, and General Assembly  
33 to serve for a definite period as determined by the court.

34 It is the duty of the clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records  
35 carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required. Such extracts under  
36 the hand of the clerk shall be evidence to any ecclesiastical court, and to every part of the  
37 Church.

38 The clerk shall be a Ruling or Teaching Elder within the Presbyterian Church in  
39 America.

40  
41 **RECOMMENDED GROUNDS** adopted by Calvary Presbytery for the PCA General  
42 Assembly:

- 43 1. **The courts of the church are elder-led bodies** — Sessions consist of the pastor  
44 (teaching elder) and ruling elders (*BCO* 12-1); Presbyteries include teaching elders  
45 and representative ruling elders (*BCO* 13-1). Administrative roles like clerk naturally  
46 fall to members of the court who are already ordained elders, as they participate in  
47 governance, understand ecclesiastical procedure, and can authentically sign records as  
48 evidence in judicial or higher-court matters (*BCO* 35-8).

- 1       2. **Parity of elders and shared governance** — The PCA emphasizes one class of elder  
2       (teaching/ruling) with equal authority in church courts (*BCO* 8-9). Limiting clerks to  
3       elders upholds this parity and ensures the person handling official records, minutes,  
4       citations, and correspondence is accountable under the same ordination vows and  
5       discipline as other court members.
- 6       3. **Practical and historical considerations** — Elders (especially ruling elders) are  
7       ordained to rule and oversee the church (1 Tim. 3, Titus 1 qualifications), including  
8       "aptness to teach" and administrative faithfulness. Clerks often need deep knowledge  
9       of the *BCO*, parliamentary procedure, and church law—skills elders cultivate through  
10      service. Allowing non-ordained persons could dilute accountability in a connectional,  
11      Presbyterian system where records have binding ecclesiastical weight.
- 12     4. **Safeguarding order and fidelity** — Clerks handle sensitive matters (judicial records,  
13      appeals, minutes reviewed by higher courts). Drawing from ordained elders ensures  
14      alignment with the church's doctrinal standards (Westminster Standards) and reduces  
15      risks of mismanagement or procedural errors.
- 16     5. At the **General Assembly level**, the *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)* explicitly  
17      require the Stated Clerk to be either a teaching elder or ruling elder in the PCA (*RAO*  
18      3-5.a).
- 19     6. In practice our PCA clerks are **almost always** drawn from ruling elders or teaching  
20      elders. Handbooks and common practice (e.g., the PCA's Handbook for Clerks of  
21      Session) describe the clerk as an "elder" elected for the role, with expectations of  
22      understanding Session duties, Presbyterian polity, and willingness to serve diligently.
- 23     7. The broader Presbyterian principle that church courts (Sessions, Presbyteries) are  
24      composed of and **governed by elders** (*BCO* 7-2, 8-9), where ruling elders and  
25      teaching elders share parity in authority and eligibility for offices in the courts.

26  
27  
28 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting of February 7, 2026*

29 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 59** from the Calvary Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 38-3.a. to Recognize the Non-Punitive Removal of Individuals from  
3 Membership Roll”  
4

5 **Whereas**, an individual church member may request to dissolve his church membership  
6 immediately; and,  
7

8 **Whereas**, not all such requests for dissolution of membership are directly related to judicial  
9 matters, or indicative of an individual’s intent not to fulfil the terms of his membership  
10 vows in some “branch of the Visible Church” (*BCO* 2-2); and,  
11

12 **Whereas**, an individual may develop or clarify some conscientious objection to the doctrine  
13 or practice of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) as a whole, or one of the  
14 PCA’s constituent courts in particular; and,  
15

16 **Whereas**, the current mechanisms available to Sessions for granting an individual church  
17 member’s request to withdraw from church membership as found in *BCO* 38-3 and  
18 38-4 do not make explicit allowance for such situations; and,  
19

20 **Whereas**, the only mechanism available to Sessions to act on such a request in a non-punitive  
21 fashion (*BCO* 38-3.a.) requires that the church member seeking to withdraw also  
22 indicate “his new membership” in a different church recognized as being a “branch of  
23 the visible Church”; and,  
24

25 **Whereas**, the only mechanisms available to Sessions to act on such a request when the church  
26 member seeking to withdraw does not indicate “his new membership” in a different  
27 church recognized as being a “branch of the visible Church” are strictly punitive and  
28 disciplinary in nature, albeit as cases without process (*BCO* 38-3.b., 38-4);  
29

30 **Therefore, be it resolved** that Calvary Presbytery hereby overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General  
31 Assembly to amend *BCO* 38-3.a. to allow for and recognize the non-punitive removal  
32 of members from membership rolls so that the amended section will read as follows  
33 (underlining for addition):  
34

35 **38-3.**  
36 **a.** When a member or officer in the Presbyterian Church in America shall attempt  
37 to withdraw from the communion of this branch of the visible Church by affiliating  
38 with some other branch (*BCO* 2-2) or by communicating his intent to affiliate with  
39 some other branch, if at the time of the attempt to withdraw he is in good standing, the  
40 irregularity shall be recorded, his new membership or intentions acknowledged, and  
41 his name removed from the roll. But if at the time of the attempt to withdraw there is  
42 a record of an investigation in process (*BCO* 31-2), or there are charges (*BCO* 32-3)  
43 concerning the member or minister, the court of original jurisdiction may retain his  
44 name on the roll and conduct the case, communicating the outcome upon completion  
45 of the proceedings to that member or minister. If the court does not conduct the case,

1 his new membership or intentions shall be acknowledged, his name removed from the  
2 roll, and, at the request of the receiving branch, the matters under investigation or the  
3 charges shall be communicated to them.  
4

5 So that the amended passage would read:  
6

7 **38-3.**

8 **a.** When a member or officer in the Presbyterian Church in America shall attempt  
9 to withdraw from the communion of this branch of the visible Church by affiliating  
10 with some other branch (*BCO 2-2*) or by communicating his intent to affiliate with  
11 some other branch, if at the time of the attempt to withdraw he is in good standing, the  
12 irregularity shall be recorded, his new membership or intentions acknowledged, and  
13 his name removed from the roll. But if at the time of the attempt to withdraw there is  
14 a record of an investigation in process (*BCO 31-2*), or there are charges (*BCO 32-3*)  
15 concerning the member or minister, the court of original jurisdiction may retain his  
16 name on the roll and conduct the case, communicating the outcome upon completion  
17 of the proceedings to that member or minister. If the court does not conduct the case,  
18 his new membership or intentions shall be acknowledged, his name removed from the  
19 roll, and, at the request of the receiving branch, the matters under investigation or the  
20 charges shall be communicated to them.  
21

22 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting of February 7, 2026*

23 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 60** from the Calvary Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 58-5 to Specify that Only Men Lawfully Ordained Shall Distribute the  
3 Elements”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (WCF 29.3) and the *Westminster Larger*  
6 *Catechism* (WLC 169, 173, 176) as adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America  
7 (PCA), together with various denominational declarations of the PCA (and its faithful  
8 historical antecedents), consistently and univocally affirm that the Lord’s Supper is to  
9 be administered by ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and that the keys of the  
10 Kingdom of Heaven, together with the sacraments, are entrusted by Christ to the elders  
11 He has appointed in His church (Matt. 16:19); and,  
12

13 **Whereas**, the role of the local Session in church discipline pertains directly to the serving of  
14 the Supper (*BCO* 30-3; see also, WCF 30.1-4); and,  
15

16 **Whereas**, it is the responsibility of the Session to admit persons to the sealing ordinance of  
17 the Lord’s Supper (*BCO* 12-5.a; 57), not only upon their initial admission but  
18 throughout their walk, ensuring that members partake in a worthy manner, so as not to  
19 eat and drink judgment to themselves (1 Cor. 11:27-32); and,  
20

21 **Whereas**, the standards and practice of historic Presbyterianism have never delegated to non-  
22 ordained persons the administration of the Lord’s Supper or the distribution of the  
23 elements (e.g., Scots Confession of 1560, Ch. 22); and,  
24

25 **Whereas**, Presbyterians have historically passed the elements while seated, recognizing that  
26 the minister administers the sacrament from a visible place before the congregation,  
27 and the elders of the congregation serve the congregation by distributing the elements  
28 in a decent and orderly fashion; and,  
29

30 **Whereas**, the appointment or designation of non-ordained persons to stand with or alongside  
31 the minister to serve the Supper confuses the general office of believer (e.g., Exod.  
32 19:6; 2 Peter 2:4-10) with the ordained office of elder (e.g., Exod. 18:21; 19:7; 1 Tim.  
33 3:1; 4:14; 2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 1:5-9); and,  
34

35 **Whereas**, there is no positive scriptural warrant for non-ordained persons to distribute and  
36 serve the elements of the Lord’s Supper such that the historic Presbyterian practice  
37 must be corrected; and,  
38

39 **Whereas**, the Directory for the Worship of God specifies that “the elders in a convenient place  
40 together” be positioned when the minister consecrates the elements of the Lord’s  
41 Supper (*BCO* 58-5), indicating that it is the elders’ responsibility to oversee and  
42 conduct the distribution of the Lord’s Supper;  
43

44 **Therefore, be it resolved** that Calvary Presbytery hereby overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General  
45 Assembly to amend *BCO* 58-5 to specify that only lawfully ordained officers are to

1 distribute the elements of the Lord’s Supper to the congregation so that the amended  
2 section will read as follows (underlining for addition):  
3

4 **58-5.** The table, on which the elements are placed, being decently covered, and  
5 furnished with bread and wine, and the communicants orderly and gravely sitting  
6 around it (or in their seats before it), the elders in a convenient place together, the  
7 minister should then set the elements apart by prayer and thanksgiving. Only men  
8 lawfully ordained as elders or deacons (when there is not a sufficient number of elders  
9 present) shall assist the officiating minister in the distribution (or serving, as distinct  
10 from merely passing) of the elements, for Christ our Lord has given to His specially  
11 called and ordained elders the keys of His kingdom (Matthew 16:19; BCO 3-2; 12-  
12 5.a).  
13

14 So that the amended passage would read:

15  
16 **58-5.** The table, on which the elements are placed, being decently covered, and  
17 furnished with bread and wine, and the communicants orderly and gravely sitting  
18 around it (or in their seats before it), the elders in a convenient place together, the  
19 minister should then set the elements apart by prayer and thanksgiving. Only men  
20 lawfully ordained as elders or deacons (when there is not a sufficient number of elders  
21 present) shall assist the officiating minister in the distribution (or serving, as distinct  
22 from merely passing) of the elements, for Christ our Lord has given to His specially  
23 called and ordained elders the keys of His kingdom (Matthew 16:19; BCO 3-2; 12-  
24 5.a).  
25  
26

27 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting of February 7, 2026*

28 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 61** from the Calvary Presbytery (to OC)  
2 "Declare the 'Danvers Statement' as a Biblically Faithful Declaration"

3  
4 **Whereas**, the Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood's "Danvers Statement" declares:

5  
6 1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and  
7 distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18).

8  
9 2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the  
10 created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor  
11 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14).

12  
13 3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a  
14 result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9).

15  
16 4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen  
17 3:1-7, 12, 16). In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be  
18 replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to  
19 be replaced by usurpation or servility. In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly  
20 love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist  
21 limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

22  
23 5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value  
24 and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27,  
25 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male  
26 headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col  
27 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15).

28  
29 6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse. In  
30 the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and  
31 care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and  
32 grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col  
33 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7). In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and  
34 women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and  
35 teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim  
36 2:11-15).

37  
38 7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that  
39 no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a  
40 human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).

41  
42 8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to  
43 set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9).  
44 Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective  
45 discernment of God's will.

1  
2 9. With half the world’s population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with  
3 countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the  
4 stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance,  
5 aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who  
6 feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live  
7 without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1  
8 Cor 12:7-21).

9  
10 10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to  
11 increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at  
12 large; and,

13  
14 **Whereas**, the PCA General Assembly did at its 2019 General Assembly declared “the  
15 Nashville Statement” as biblically faithful; and,

16  
17 **Whereas**, Calvary Presbytery declared the Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood’s  
18 "Danvers Statement" on biblical sexuality as a biblically faithful declaration;

19  
20 **Therefore, be it further resolved** that the Calvary Presbytery asks the 53<sup>rd</sup> General  
21 Assembly to declare the Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood’s "Danvers  
22 Statement" as a biblically faithful declaration and refer the “Danvers Statement” to  
23 the Committee on Discipleship Ministries for inclusion and promotion among its  
24 denominational teaching materials.

25  
26 **RECOMMENDED GROUNDS** (adapted from the Danvers Statement itself) adopted by  
27 Calvary Presbytery for the PCA General Assembly:

28  
29 We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments  
30 which we observe with deep concern:

- 31  
32 1. The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the  
33 complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;  
34  
35 2. the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by  
36 God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;  
37  
38 3. the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying  
39 distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving,  
40 humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that  
41 leadership by redeemed wives;  
42  
43 4. the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational  
44 homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;  
45

- 1 5. the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and
- 2 historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic
- 3 portrayal of human sexuality;
- 4
- 5 6. the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;
- 6
- 7 7. the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform
- 8 to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;
- 9
- 10 8. the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to
- 11 reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;
- 12
- 13 9. the consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized
- 14 and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted
- 15 realm of technical ingenuity;
- 16
- 17 10. and behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the
- 18 spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the
- 19 power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.
- 20

21 **Further Rationale adopted by Calvary Presbytery for the PCA General Assembly:**

- 22 1. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) **already agrees** with the theological
- 23 commitments expressed in the Danvers Statement (formally titled "The Danvers
- 24 Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood"). The PCA has not formally
- 25 adopted or "approved" the Danvers Statement as an official denominational document
- 26 (e.g., an overture to adopt it was declined by the General Assembly in 2009), but this
- 27 overture calls for a Declaration (as done in 2019 with the Nashville Statement) not a
- 28 technical or constitutional "adoption."
- 29
- 30 2. **It clearly articulates biblical complementarianism**—the view that men and
- 31 women are equal in personhood and value (both created in God's image, Gen. 1:26-
- 32 27) but distinct in roles, with male headship/leadership ordained by God in the home
- 33 and church as part of the created order (Gen. 2; 1 Cor. 11; 1 Tim. 2-3; Eph. 5). The
- 34 statement affirms that these distinctions are not cultural inventions but rooted in
- 35 creation before the Fall, and they echo the gospel (e.g., Christ's headship over the
- 36 church). This directly counters egalitarian interpretations that treat role distinctions as
- 37 merely cultural or post-Fall accommodations.
- 38
- 39 3. **It responds to contemporary threats to biblical teaching**—The Danvers
- 40 Statement was drafted in response to rising evangelical egalitarianism (e.g., arguments
- 41 for women in pastoral office and interchangeable roles in marriage) and secular
- 42 feminism influencing the church. Proponents argue that formally approving it would
- 43 help the PCA draw a clear line against creeping revisionism on gender roles, similar
- 44 to how the denomination commended the Nashville Statement (2019) as "biblically

1 faithful" in response to debates around sexuality and identity (e.g., Revoice  
2 controversy).

3  
4 **4. It reinforces the PCA's confessional commitments**—The PCA holds to the  
5 *Westminster Standards*, which imply male headship in ordination (e.g., Larger  
6 Catechism on family government and church office) and emphasize Scripture's  
7 authority. The Danvers Statement is seen as a faithful, modern application/explanation  
8 of those standards in areas the Westminster divines did not directly address (women's  
9 ordination was not a live debate in the 1640s). Leaders like Ligon Duncan have  
10 described such statements as "pastoral" and "confessional complementarianism,"  
11 protecting the gospel witness by preserving the created pattern of complementarity.

12  
13 **5. It promotes healthy, gospel-shaped relationships**—The statement explicitly  
14 condemns distortions like male domination/abuse or female resistance to godly  
15 leadership, calling husbands to sacrificial love and wives to willing submission (Eph.  
16 5; Col. 3; 1 Pet. 3). Approving it would signal that complementarianism, rightly  
17 understood, opposes authoritarianism and promotes mutual flourishing under Christ's  
18 lordship.

19  
20 **6. It provides unity and clarity in a divided evangelical landscape**—With ongoing  
21 tensions in the PCA (and broader evangelicalism) over gender, sexuality, and cultural  
22 accommodation, formal approval would strengthen the denomination's conservative,  
23 Bible-centered identity, align it more explicitly with like-minded groups (e.g., many  
24 Southern Baptists via CBMW), and serve as a teaching tool for officers, members, and  
25 churches.

26  
27 **7. This Overture is aimed at establishing a “first principle”** of our church by making  
28 use of an approved action of a PCA General Assembly, namely that the PCA is  
29 unambiguously and enthusiastically a complementarian denomination. It will do so by  
30 declaring the Council on Biblical Manhood’s “Danvers Statement” which is the  
31 preeminent theological statement on complementarianism used within the evangelical  
32 and reformed world. In the same way the PCA affirmed the Nashville Statement  
33 declaration Calvary Presbytery is recommending to the PCA that the PCA would be  
34 strengthened and unified by approving this useful, theologically faithful “Danvers  
35 Statement.”

36  
37  
38 *Unanimously adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting of February 7, 2026*  
39 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 62** from the Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to MNA)  
2 “Divide Tennessee Valley Presbytery into Two Presbyteries”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the Presbytery of the Tennessee Valley has, by God’s grace and through His great  
5 provision, grown to 36 particular churches and 5 mission churches covering 32  
6 counties with up to a 3-hour drive separating our churches; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, the Presbytery of the Tennessee Valley has grown to 113 ministers on roll, 23 men  
9 under care, and 5 licentiates; and  
10

11 **Whereas**, the Presbytery of the Tennessee Valley meets the Guidelines for Dividing  
12 Presbyteries, as adopted by the 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in  
13 America of each Presbytery having “a minimum of 10 churches and mission  
14 churches,” “a total communicant membership of at least 1,000”, “and at least 3  
15 churches having a membership of at least 125 communicant members”; and  
16

17 **Whereas**, the continuing Tennessee Valley Presbytery would include 24 churches and 1  
18 mission church, and the new Smoky Mountain Presbytery would include 12 churches  
19 and 4 mission churches; and  
20

21 **Whereas**, a Presbytery confined to a smaller geographic region can lead to more efficient  
22 cooperation and connection between particular churches in the Presbytery; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, a Presbytery that encompasses a smaller geographic region should permit shorter  
25 meetings and shorter driving distances for presbyters to such meetings; and  
26

27 **Whereas**, shorter distances should lead to greater participation in Presbytery by ruling elders,  
28 thus allowing ruling elders to better fulfill their established calling to “govern the  
29 church well”; and  
30

31 **Whereas**, the formation of two smaller Presbyteries would create greater geographic  
32 proximity between churches which would, in turn, create a more strategic kingdom  
33 alliance to plant new churches within the boundaries of both Presbyteries;  
34

35 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the Presbytery of the Tennessee Valley overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup>  
36 General Assembly to form 2 new Presbyteries, effective January 1, 2027, by:  
37

- 38 1. Establishing the boundary of a continuing Tennessee Valley Presbytery to include the  
39 following eight (8) counties of Tennessee: Bledsoe, Rhea, Meigs, Sequatchie, Marion,  
40 Hamilton, Bradley, and Polk Counties, and the following five (5) counties of Georgia:  
41 Dade, Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, and Murray Counties.  
42
- 43 2. Establishing the boundary of a new Smoky Mountain Presbytery to include the  
44 following nineteen (19) counties of Tennessee: Pickett, Fentress, Scott, Campbell,  
45 Claiborne, Union, Grainger, Hamblen, Anderson, Morgan, Cumberland, Roane,

1 Loudon, Knox, Jefferson, Sevier, Blount, Monroe, and McMinn Counties (see Exhibit  
2 A attached hereto for new Tennessee Valley Presbytery and Smoky Mountain  
3 Presbytery boundaries).  
4

5 3. Requiring Teaching Elders with calls to RUF to remain in the Presbytery in which the  
6 University they serve is located.  
7

8 4. Requiring Teaching Elders with calls from Covenant College, MTW, or MNA to  
9 choose the Presbytery in which they desire membership.  
10

11 5. Requiring those Teaching Elders carried on the roll as Honorably Retired, Laboring  
12 Out-of-Bounds, or Without Call to remain in the Presbytery in which they live or labor.  
13

14 6. Requiring candidates, interns, and licentiates to remain in the Presbytery of their home  
15 church.  
16

17 **Exhibit A – Maps of Proposed Presbytery Division**

18  
19 New Smoky Mountain Presbytery to include the following nineteen (19) counties of  
20 Tennessee: Pickett, Fentress, Scott, Campbell, Claiborne, Union, Grainger, Hamblen,  
21 Anderson, Morgan, Cumberland, Roane, Loudon, Knox, Jefferson, Sevier, Blount,  
22 Monroe, and McMinn Counties  
23

24 Continuing Tennessee Valley Presbytery to include the following eight (8) counties of  
25 Tennessee: Bledsoe, Rhea, Meigs, Sequatchie, Marion, Hamilton, Bradley, and Polk  
26 Counties.  
27



1 Continuing Tennessee Valley Presbytery to include the following five (5) counties of  
2 Georgia: Dade, Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, and Murray.

3  
4 **State of Georgia**  
5



30 *Adopted by the Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 21, 2026*  
31 *Attested by TE Roger Collins, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 63** from the South Texas Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend RAO 19-4 to Establish Preference in Recognition for an Objector to an In  
3 Gross Motion”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)* establish procedures for commissioners  
6 to speak to recommendations, including overtures, that are brought before the General  
7 Assembly, even those that are pulled out of omnibus votes (*RAO* 14-9.d, 15-8.b); and  
8

9 **Whereas**, under current *RAO* provisions, the Moderator may propose that the Assembly vote  
10 on all recommendations passed by a committee in gross (*RAO* 14-9.d, 15-8.b), but any  
11 commissioner may object “to the inclusion of specific recommendation(s),” resulting  
12 in those recommendation(s) being “voted upon separately” (*RAO* 14-9.d, 15-8.b); and  
13

14 **Whereas**, once a recommendation or overture is considered separately, it is to be debated  
15 under the standard rules governing debate as detailed in *RAO* 19, which include equal  
16 opportunity to speak, time limits, and fairness in debate, but do not explicitly guarantee  
17 that the commissioner who objected to its inclusion in the in gross vote is recognized  
18 first for debate; and  
19

20 **Whereas**, the adopted parliamentary authority, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*  
21 (*RONR*), generally provides that the maker of a motion or the reporting member of a  
22 committee is entitled to be recognized first in debate (*RONR* [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 42:9.1); and  
23

24 **Whereas**, under the current *RAO* and *RONR*, a commissioner who pulls an overture out of  
25 the in gross has an opportunity to speak under standard debate rules but not the  
26 “privilege of preference” (see *RONR* [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 42); and  
27

28 **Whereas**, to guarantee that the commissioner who objects to an in gross vote and pulls out a  
29 recommendation (including an overture) is recognized first for debate on that item, a  
30 specific amendment to *RAO* 19-4 is necessary to establish this “preference in  
31 recognition;” and  
32

33 **Whereas**, such an amendment would promote fairness by ensuring the voice of the objecting  
34 commissioner is heard promptly, aligning with the principles of free and open debate  
35 in *RAO* 19-4;  
36

37 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly amend *RAO* 19-4 by adding a new  
38 subsection f.:

- 39  
40 f. Notwithstanding any other rule of recognition, when a commissioner objects to the  
41 inclusion of an in gross recommendation, including an overture (as provided in  
42 *RAO* 14-9.d or *RAO* 15-8.b), the objecting commissioner shall have preference in  
43 recognition (see *RONR* [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 42:7) when debating the separated  
44 recommendation.  
45

Overture 63, South Texas Presbytery

- 1
- 2 *Adopted by the South Texas Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 31, 2026*
- 3 *A commission of the South Texas Presbytery was authorized to refine and perfect the language*
- 4 *of the overture.*
- 5 *Attested by RE Barry McBee, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 64** from the Canada West Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 23-2 to Establish Associate Membership for Honorably Retired TEs”  
3

4 **Whereas** retired ministers are to be held in high regard for their faithful gospel service and  
5 valued for their continued wisdom, experience, and usefulness at all levels of church  
6 government; and,  
7

8 **Whereas** *BCO* 23-2 permits honourably retired TEs to retain their membership in the regional  
9 Presbytery and, by implication, to continue participating in the General Assembly;  
10 and,  
11

12 **Whereas** retaining membership at the Presbytery level currently precludes holding formal  
13 membership at the congregational level; and,  
14

15 **Whereas** retired ministers tend not to receive the same active oversight and accountability  
16 from their regional Presbytery (and local Session) that they once received; and,  
17

18 **Whereas** many retired ministers no longer attend the PCA congregation(s) they once served,  
19 and are nowhere required in our *BCO* to have a regular, local church home; and,  
20

21 **Whereas** retired ministers (and their spouses) are in as much need of pastoral care and  
22 accountability as other members of Christ’s church; and,  
23

24 **Whereas** *BCO* 46-4 already provides a paradigm and precedent for associate membership;  
25

26 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly amend *BCO* 23-2 as follows  
27 (~~strikethrough~~ for deletions; underlining for additions):  
28

29 **23-2.** The Presbytery may designate a minister as honorably retired when the  
30 minister by reason of age wishes to be retired, or as medically disabled when by reason  
31 of infirmity is no longer able to serve the church in the active ministry of the Gospel.  
32 A minister ~~medically disabled or honorably retired~~ so designated shall may continue  
33 to hold membership in his Presbytery, ~~He may serve on committees or commissions if~~  
34 ~~so elected or appointed.~~ with all the rights and privileges thereof, provided that he  
35 also maintain an active associate membership (or its equivalent) in a faithful local  
36 church, subject to the same limitations as *BCO* 46-4.  
37

38 So that the amended passage would read:  
39

40 **23-2.** The Presbytery may designate a minister as honorably retired when the  
41 minister by reason of age wishes to be retired, or as medically disabled when by reason  
42 of infirmity is no longer able to serve the church in the active ministry of the Gospel.  
43 A minister so designated may continue to hold membership in his Presbytery, with all  
44 the rights and privileges thereof, provided that he also maintain an active associate

1 membership (or its equivalent) in a faithful local church, subject to the same  
2 limitations as *BCO* 46-4.

3

4

5 *Adopted by the Canada West Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 6, 2026*

6 *Attested by RE Eric Nederlof, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 65** from the Canada West Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 38-1 re Confessions and Cases without Process”  
3

4 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 38-1 be amended as follows (~~striketrough~~ for deletions;  
5 underlining for additions):  
6

7 **38-1.** When any person shall come forward as the first witness in order to and  
8 make his offense known to the court of his own volition, a full statement of the  
9 facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a  
10 confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit  
11 the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the  
12 presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process  
13 except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a written  
14 Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person’s specific  
15 confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved  
16 by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and  
17 the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or executive  
18 session). No other information may be presented without written consent from  
19 the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals,  
20 prosecutors, committees, and commissions. A censured person has the right to  
21 appeal (*BCO* 42). The person has the right to be assisted by counsel at any  
22 point, in accord with the stipulations of *BCO* 32-19.  
23

24 In any instances involving a personal offense (*BCO* 29-3), the court shall  
25 attempt to inform the offended person(s) of that part of the Confession the court  
26 deems pertinent to the offense against him or her. The court shall invite the  
27 offended person to provide the court comment on the Confession prior to final  
28 approval of the Confession by the confessor and the court. The court shall  
29 encourage the offended person to enlist the help of an advisor in preparing any  
30 such comments. In all instances, the court shall report the way such offended  
31 persons were informed of the parts of the Confession pertinent to them.  
32

33 In such cases where anyone other than the offender reveals his offense to the  
34 court, the court shall investigate into the veracity of the accusations and draw  
35 up a document detailing the alleged offenses to serve as a written confession  
36 which the accused may sign if he willfully confesses his guilt in regard to the  
37 alleged offenses. If the accused refuses to sign the document, the court may  
38 proceed with process.  
39

40 So that the amended passage would read:  
41

42 **38-1.** When any person shall come forward as the first witness in order to  
43 make his offense known to the court of his own volition, a full statement of the  
44 facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a  
45 confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit

1 the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the  
2 presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process  
3 except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a written  
4 Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person's specific  
5 confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved  
6 by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and  
7 the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or executive  
8 session). No other information may be presented without written consent from  
9 the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals,  
10 prosecutors, committees, and commissions. A censured person has the right to  
11 appeal (*BCO* 42). The person has the right to be assisted by counsel at any  
12 point, in accord with the stipulations of *BCO* 32-19.

13  
14 In any instances involving a personal offense (*BCO* 29-3), the court shall  
15 attempt to inform the offended person(s) of that part of the Confession the court  
16 deems pertinent to the offense against him or her. The court shall invite the  
17 offended person to provide the court comment on the Confession prior to final  
18 approval of the Confession by the confessor and the court. The court shall  
19 encourage the offended person to enlist the help of an advisor in preparing any  
20 such comments. In all instances, the court shall report the way such offended  
21 persons were informed of the parts of the Confession pertinent to them.

22  
23 In such cases where anyone other than the offender reveals his offense to the  
24 court, the court shall investigate into the veracity of the accusations and draw  
25 up a document detailing the alleged offenses to serve as a written confession  
26 which the accused may sign if he willfully confesses his guilt in regard to the  
27 alleged offenses. If the accused refuses to sign the document, the court may  
28 proceed with process.

29  
30 **Rationale**

31  
32 1. Whereas in the course of this fallen world, even in the Lord's Church, confessions  
33 of sin may at times be given for unrighteous reasons such as the circumventing of the  
34 judicial process, desire to protect one's false reputation, or to avoid the just  
35 consequences of sin, therefore the courts of the Church must be discerning and wise  
36 when dealing with confessions of sin so that the truth may be revealed and the glory  
37 of Christ manifested in the proceedings of His Church courts.

38  
39 2. The response of the court should be appropriate to the circumstances of how an  
40 allegation is revealed. If the accused serves as the first witness to an offense in such a  
41 way that he brings forward his offense from his own Spirit-wrought desire to seek  
42 confession and repentance, he should be given the benefit of the doubt in keeping with  
43 the judgement of charity such that an investigation into the truthfulness of his  
44 confession is unwarranted without sufficient cause to doubt his sincerity.

1 3. If the court is made aware of the alleged offense(s) by means of any other source  
2 than the alleged offender, the accused's repentance may be reasonably doubted thus  
3 necessitating an investigation by the court into the nature of the alleged offense(s).

4  
5 4. If the court finds the allegations credible through their investigation, the writing of  
6 a confession document by the court may serve as a means of testing the repentance of  
7 the accused, who although not coming uncoerced and freely from the beginning, may  
8 now rightly see the error of his ways and desire to confess and repent for the offense(s).

9  
10 5. If the accused protests his innocence through a refusal to sign the written confession,  
11 the court may rightly proceed to a judicial process to formally determine the guilt or  
12 innocence of the accused. This judicial process shall either uncover his guilt and  
13 unrepentance or his innocence and thereby bless the Church and glorify God in  
14 revealing the truth.

15

16

17 *Adopted by the Canada West Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 6, 2026*

18 *Attested by RE Eric Nederlof, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 66** from the Philadelphia Presbytery (to OC)

2 “Issue a Declaration of Thanksgiving on the Occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
3 Nation’s Founding”

4  
5 **Whereas**, God’s Word calls His church, “O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good, for  
6 his mercy endureth for ever” (Psalm 136:1) in whatsoever comes to pass according to  
7 Jesus Christ’s sovereign rule and reign over all men and nations; and,

8  
9 **Whereas**, we confess that “the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so,  
10 after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things to the  
11 good thereof” (*WCF* 5.7); and,

12  
13 **Whereas**, a pastoral letter published and circulated to Presbyterian congregations by the  
14 Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1775 counseled colonial American  
15 Presbyterians in solemn terms, “In particular, as the Continental Congress, now sitting  
16 at Philadelphia, consists of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiassed manner,  
17 by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect, and encouraged  
18 in their difficult service; not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction  
19 in their proceedings, but adhere firmly to their resolutions; and let it be seen that they  
20 are able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into  
21 execution,” which prayers the Lord abundantly and affirmatively answered; and,

22  
23 **Whereas**, the Synod’s pastoral letter of 1775 further urged American Presbyterians, “We  
24 would also advise for the same purpose, that a spirit of candour, charity, and mutual  
25 esteem, be preserved and promoted towards those of different religious denominations.  
26 Persons of probity and principle of every profession, should be untied together as  
27 servants of the same Master; and the experience of our happy concord hitherto in a  
28 state of liberty, should engage all to unite in support of the common interest; for there  
29 is no example in history in which civil liberty was destroyed, and the rights of  
30 conscience preserved entire,” which state of liberty the Lord was gracious, merciful,  
31 and kind to preserve; and,

32  
33 **Whereas**, colonial American Presbyterian preachers and pastors defended the sacred cause of  
34 liberty from pulpits across our land, including Dr. John Witherspoon, the only minister  
35 of the Gospel to sign the Declaration of Independence, who delivered on May 17, 1776  
36 a sermon entitled “The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men” on Psalm  
37 76:10, in which he preached, “The knowledge of God and his truths have from the  
38 beginning of the world been chiefly, if not entirely, confined to those parts of the earth,  
39 where some degree of liberty and political justice were to be seen” and who later  
40 served as the first Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in  
41 the United States of America, serving Christ faithfully in both his civil and his  
42 ecclesiastical calling; and,

43  
44 **Whereas**, the Directory for the Public Worship of God (received by our American  
45 Presbyterian forefathers) teaches that “it is lawful and necessary, upon special

1 emergent occasions, to separate a day or days for public fasting or thanksgiving, as the  
2 several eminent and extraordinary dispensations of God’s providence shall administer  
3 cause and opportunity to his people”; and,  
4

5 **Whereas**, God’s Word reads, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers,  
6 intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are  
7 in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”  
8 (1 Timothy 2:1-2); and,  
9

10 **Whereas**, we confess that “God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained  
11 civil magistrates, to be, under him, over the people, for his own glory, and the public  
12 good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence  
13 and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers” (*WCF*  
14 23.1); and,  
15

16 **Whereas**, the success of America’s War of Independence has resulted in the enshrinement of  
17 certain civil liberties and individual rights in the Constitution of the United States of  
18 America, including that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of  
19 religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,  
20 or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assembly, and to petition the  
21 Government for a redress of grievances” (First Amendment to the Constitution of the  
22 United States), all which ensure the freedom of Christians to worship God as He has  
23 ordained in His Word, for “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free  
24 from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything contrary to his  
25 Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship” (*WCF* 20.2); and,  
26

27 **Whereas**, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) since its founding on December 4, 1973  
28 has ever and always endeavored to be a national Presbyterian Church ministering in  
29 (and beyond) the territory of the United States of America as a Church faithful to the  
30 Scriptures, true to the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of the  
31 Lord Jesus Christ; and,  
32

33 **Whereas**, the Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, working in  
34 collaboration with a Committee of Five, in a rented room in Philadelphia merchant  
35 Jacob Graff Jr.’s home (now known as the Declaration House) on the corner of Seventh  
36 and Market Streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was adopted by the Continental  
37 Congress on July 4, 1776; and,  
38

39 **Whereas**, it was in this very city of Philadelphia in the year 1706 that the Rev. Francis  
40 Makemie, known as the father of American Presbyterianism, together with six other  
41 ministers organized the first presbytery on American soil, thereby planting the pure  
42 Reformed witness of the gospel on these shores more than three centuries ago; and,  
43

44 **Whereas**, God in His kind providence has preserved a faithful Presbyterian witness in  
45 Philadelphia through every trial and blessing from that day until now, so that

1 Philadelphia Presbytery today rejoices to labor in the same place where our spiritual  
2 forefathers first established ordered Presbyterianism in America; and,  
3

4 **Whereas**, acknowledging that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (James  
5 1:17), including the gracious providential gift of a free nation where we may worship  
6 the true and only living Triune God without hindrance, we confess with the apostle,  
7 “what do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7), and dare not boast  
8 or presume upon these mercies; knowing also that “from everyone who has been given  
9 much, much will be required” (Luke 12:48), and being mindful that our brothers and  
10 sisters in Christ around the world face persecution and hardship for the faith while we  
11 enjoy these liberties, we humbly pray that the Lord would renew Philadelphia  
12 Presbytery and the whole Presbyterian Church in America in living faithfulness, that  
13 we might faithfully steward this gift by boldly proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom,  
14 so that people from every tribe and tongue might come to saving faith in Jesus Christ;  
15 and,  
16

17 **Whereas**, the General Assembly shall have the power: “In general, to recommend measures  
18 for the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under its care”  
19 (*BCO* 14-6.k);  
20

21 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly issue a formal “Declaration of  
22 Thanksgiving for the United States of America (USA) on the Occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup>  
23 Anniversary of the Nation’s Founding” on July 4, 2026 by publishing the foregoing  
24 statements together with this resolution, to be spread upon the minutes and published  
25 electronically by the Administrative Committee through byFaith; and that the churches  
26 of this Presbytery and the whole denomination would be stirred up to fervent prayer—  
27 in accordance with our *Larger Catechism*’s exposition of the second petition of the  
28 Lord’s Prayer (*WLC* 191), that the gospel may be propagated throughout the world,  
29 that the Church may be furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from  
30 corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate—that the same God  
31 who has preserved a faithful Presbyterian witness in Philadelphia for more than three  
32 centuries and granted our nation 250 years of ordered liberty would continue to pour  
33 out His Spirit upon us, that we may walk worthy of our calling with living faith,  
34 humility, and zeal for the gospel.  
35

36 *Adopted by Philadelphia Presbytery at its stated meeting of March 21, 2026.*

37 *Attested by /s/ Greg Hobaugh, Stated Clerk*  
38

1 **OVERTURE 67** from the Potomac Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 40-5 to Clarify a Court Shall Make Two Determinations before Citing  
3 a Lower Court”  
4

5 **Be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly approve an amendment to *BCO* 40-5 as shown  
6 below (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
7

8 **40-5.** When any court having appellate jurisdiction shall receive a ~~credible~~  
9 report with respect to the court next below of any important delinquency or  
10 grossly unconstitutional proceedings of such court, the first step shall be to  
11 make two determinations:

- 12 1. Would the matter reported, if true, be judged to be an important  
13 delinquency or a grossly unconstitutional proceeding?
- 14 2. Is there sufficient evidence provided to support the allegation and is it  
15 reported by a credible source (e.g. *BCO* 31-8)?  
16

17 If the higher court determines the answer to both questions is Yes, then the  
18 higher court shall cite the court alleged to have offended to appear before the  
19 higher court having appellate jurisdiction, or its commission, by representative  
20 or in writing, at a specified time and place, and to show what the lower court  
21 has done or failed to do in the case in question. The citation to appear must  
22 specify the instance(s) of important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional  
23 proceeding and show what portion of the Constitution has been violated.  
24

25 The court thus issuing the citation may reverse or redress the proceedings of  
26 the court below in other than judicial cases; or it may censure the delinquent  
27 court; or it may remit the whole matter to the delinquent court with an  
28 injunction to take it up and dispose of it in a constitutional manner; or it may  
29 stay all further proceedings in the case; as circumstances may require.  
30

31 So that the amended version would be as shown below:  
32

33 **40-5.** When any court having appellate jurisdiction shall receive a report with  
34 respect to the court next below of any important delinquency or grossly  
35 unconstitutional proceedings of such court, the first step shall be to make two  
36 determinations:

- 37 1. Would the matter reported, if true, be judged to be an important  
38 delinquency or a grossly unconstitutional proceeding?
- 39 2. Is there sufficient evidence provided to support the allegation and is it  
40 reported by a credible source (e.g. *BCO* 31-8)?  
41

42 If the higher court determines the answer to both questions is Yes, then the  
43 higher court shall cite the court alleged to have offended to appear before the  
44 higher court, or its commission, by representative or in writing, at a specified  
45 time and place, and to show what the lower court has done or failed to do in

1 the case in question. The citation to appear must specify the instance(s) of  
2 important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceeding and show what  
3 portion of the Constitution has been violated.

4  
5 The court thus issuing the citation may reverse or redress the proceedings of  
6 the court below in other than judicial cases; or it may censure the delinquent  
7 court; or it may remit the whole matter to the delinquent court with an  
8 injunction to take it up and dispose of it in a constitutional manner; or it may  
9 stay all further proceedings in the case; as circumstances may require.

10  
11 **Rationale**

12  
13 1. A preliminary determination of some sort should always be made before "citing" a court  
14 to appear and answer. Leapfrogging over that step is not prudent, fair, or productive in seeking  
15 to resolve the matter. It should be analogous to *BCO* 31-2, wherein a court must make some  
16 preliminary determination before taking the next step with an individual.

17  
18 2. The proposed change would better conform to parts of *BCO* Preliminary Principle 5 and  
19 7.

20  
21 PP 5 reminds us "... there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good character  
22 and principles may differ. In all these it is the *duty* both of private Christians and societies  
23 to exercise *mutual forbearance* toward each other." (emphasis added)

24  
25 PP 7 reminds us "... All church courts may err through human frailty ..." (But even an  
26 errant court deserves respect and patient dealing, at least initially.)

27  
28 3. As presently written, *BCO* 40-5 can become stern and stark and depreciate the collegial  
29 relationship between the "higher" (broader) church court and the "lower" (local) church court  
30 and disrupt the "harmony" advocated in *BCO* 11-3.

31  
32 ***BCO* 11-3.** All Church courts are one in nature, constituted of the same elements,  
33 possessed inherently of the same kinds of rights and powers, and differing only as the  
34 Constitution may provide. When, however, according to Scriptural example, and  
35 needful to the purity and harmony of the whole Church, disputed matters of doctrine  
36 and order arising in the lower courts are referred to the higher courts for decision, such  
37 referral shall not be so exercised as to impinge upon the authority of the lower court.

38  
39 ***BCO* 11-4.** ... These courts are not separate and independent tribunals, but they have a  
40 mutual relation, and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole Church performed  
41 by it through the appropriate organ.

42  
43 4. Here's an example of how the revision would pertain to the General Assembly's Committee  
44 on Review of Presbytery Records (and correspondingly in Presbyteries). If the PCA Stated  
45 Clerk's office received a *BCO* 40-5 letter alleging a Presbytery was guilty of a gross

1 delinquency or a grossly unconstitutional proceeding, it would be referred to the RPR officers  
2 who would review the material, presumably interacting with the Presbytery Clerk and anyone  
3 else that could shine a light on the matter, and present a recommendation to the full RPR at  
4 its May annual stated meeting. This would follow the provisions in *Rules of Assembly*  
5 *Operation* 16-5, which RPR uses when preparing its report on a Presbytery.

6  
7 **RAO 16-5.** The stated clerk of each Presbytery, or his representative, should be  
8 prepared to meet with the committee to answer questions and to clarify any possible  
9 discrepancy. The committee should make every reasonable effort to consult with  
10 the clerk of the Presbytery (or his designee) on any questions before finalizing the  
11 report to the General Assembly.

12  
13 The RPR Officers' recommendation on a *BCO* 40-5 letter might be to cite the Presbytery to  
14 formally respond or it might be to determine that no formal response is needed and that the  
15 matter does not warrant further attention. This would be similar to how RPR handles  
16 exceptions found in Minutes (which presently come to RPR as recommendations from three-  
17 man Read Teams).

18  
19 However, in rare cases where RPR determines a matter is of such importance and urgency and  
20 evidence of gross delinquency or grossly unconstitutional action requires immediate  
21 Assembly attention, it could forego seeking a formal response from Presbytery and  
22 recommend the Assembly proceed directly to final step in *RAO* 16-10.c and "appoint a  
23 representative to present its case and refer the matter to the Standing Judicial Commission to  
24 cite the Presbytery to appear for proceedings according to *BCO* 40-5." (*OMSJC* 15)

25  
26  
27 *Adopted by the Potomac Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 21, 2026*  
28 *Attested by TE Joel St. Clair, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 68** from the Catawba Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS,  
2 Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF)

3 “Amend *BCO* 14-1 to Make AC Members Appointed by Committees and Agencies  
4 Nonvoting Members”  
5

6 **Whereas** the Administrative Committee (AC) serves the General Assembly as its  
7 coordinating body and acts on its behalf between Assemblies; and  
8

9 **Whereas** it is fitting that the Administrative Committee, as the Assembly's servant body,  
10 derives its authority solely from and remains directly accountable to the General  
11 Assembly; and  
12

13 **Whereas** the present structure of the Administrative Committee includes members not elected  
14 for the purpose of serving on the Administrative Committee, and  
15

16 **Whereas** while the reporting and advisory presence of representatives from the permanent  
17 committees and agencies remains valuable for the coordination and communication of  
18 the Assembly's work, their voting participation within the Administrative Committee  
19 creates potential confusion regarding lines of accountability and governance; and  
20

21 **Whereas** the clarity of representative authority and parity between Teaching and Ruling  
22 Elders may be best preserved by ensuring that all voting members of the  
23 Administrative Committee are those directly elected by the General Assembly;  
24 therefore  
25

26 **Resolved**, that *Book of Church Order* 14-1.12 be amended as follows (underlining for  
27 additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
28

- 29 12. The Assembly permanent committees are the Administrative Committee of  
30 General Assembly, Committee on Discipleship Ministries, Committee on  
31 Mission to North America, Committee on Mission to the World, and  
32 Committee on Reformed University Fellowship.

33 The Administrative Committee of General Assembly (AC) shall  
34 consist of twenty (20) members:

- 35 a. Eleven voting members in classes elected through the standard  
36 nomination and election procedure,  
37 b. One nonvoting member each from the following program  
38 committees or agencies: They shall be entitled to the privilege of  
39 the floor but shall not have a vote and may not be excluded when  
40 an executive session is called.  
41 1. Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM);  
42 2. Covenant College (CC);  
43 3. Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS);  
44 4. Mission to North America (MNA);  
45 5. Mission to the World (MTW);

- 1 6. PCA Foundation (PCAF);
- 2 7. Geneva Benefits Group, Inc. (Geneva);
- 3 8. Reformed University Fellowship (RUF);
- 4 9. Ridge Haven Conference Center (RH).

5 The eleven members at large shall serve a term of four years. The  
6 chairman of the Administrative Committee shall be one of its members at  
7 large.

8  
9 **Be it further resolved** that on the final adoption of the above amendment to *BCO* 14-1.12 by  
10 the 54<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, *RAO* 5-1 be amended to agree as follows (underlining for  
11 additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):

12  
13 **5-1.** The Administrative Committee of General Assembly (AC) shall consist of  
14 twenty (20) members:

- 15 a. Eleven voting members in classes elected through the standard  
16 nomination and election procedure,
- 17 b. One nonvoting member each from the following program  
18 committees or agencies: They shall be entitled to the privilege of  
19 the floor but shall not have a vote and may not be excluded when  
20 an executive session is called.
  - 21 1) Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM);
  - 22 2) Covenant College (CC);
  - 23 3) Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS);
  - 24 4) Mission to North America (MNA);
  - 25 5) Mission to the World (MTW);
  - 26 6) PCA Foundation (PCAF);
  - 27 7) Geneva Benefits Group, Inc. (Geneva);
  - 28 8) Reformed University Fellowship (RUF);
  - 29 9) Ridge Haven Conference Center (RH).

30  
31  
32 *Adopted by the Catawba Valley Presbytery at its called meeting, April 11, 2026*

33 *Attested by TE Scott Deneen, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 69** from the Southwest Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 32-18 and 42-5 to Clarify the Contents of the Record of the Case in  
3 Judicial Cases”  
4

5 **Summary:** This proposal would reconcile various parts of the Rules of Discipline and bring  
6 greater clarity regarding how the Record of the Case in a case of process is to be created by a  
7 court of original jurisdiction and transmitted to the higher courts.  
8

9 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 32-18 and *BCO* 42-5 be amended as follows (underlining for  
10 additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
11

12 **32-18.**

13 a. Minutes of the trial shall be kept by the clerk, which shall exhibit the charges,  
14 the answer, record of the ~~testimony~~ proceedings, as defined by *BCO* 35-9, the  
15 citations and returns thereto, the documents or other materials submitted to or  
16 admitted to the court in the trial proceedings (all of which should be properly  
17 marked and identified), and all such acts, orders, and decisions of the court relating  
18 to the case, as either party may desire, and also the judgment.  
19

20 b. The clerk shall without delay assemble the Record of the Case ~~which shall~~  
21 ~~consist of the charges, the answer, the citations and returns thereto, and the minutes~~  
22 ~~herein required to be kept~~ as defined by *BCO* 42-5.  
23

24 c. The parties shall be allowed copies of the Record of the Case at their own  
25 expense if they demand them.  
26

27 d. When a case is removed by appeal or complaint, the lower court shall transmit  
28 “the Record” thus prepared to the higher court with the addition of the notice of  
29 appeal or complaint, and the reasons therefor, if any shall have been filed.  
30

31 e. Nothing which is not contained in this “Record” shall be taken into  
32 consideration by the higher court.  
33

34 f. On the final decision of a case in a higher court, the judgment shall be sent  
35 down to the court in which the case originated.  
36

37 **42-5.**

38 a. It shall be the duty of the clerk of the lower court to file with the clerk of the  
39 higher court, not more than thirty (30) days after receipt of notice of appeal, a copy  
40 of all ~~proceedings in connection with the case~~ minutes of the trial proceedings as  
41 prescribed by *BCO* 32-18 (including a transcription of the trial proceedings),  
42 including minutes of any meeting of the court pursuant to *BCO* 32-3 and 32-5, the  
43 notice of appeal, and reasons therefor, the response of the lower court, the  
44 evidence, and any papers bearing on the case submitted to or admitted by the court

1 before the conclusion of the trial, and minutes pertaining to any censure imposed,  
2 which together shall be known as “the Record of the Case.” ~~and~~

3  
4 b. ~~¶~~The higher court shall not admit or consider anything not found in this  
5 “Record” without the consent of the parties in the case.

6  
7 c. Should new evidence come to light the case shall be remanded to the lower  
8 court from which the appeal was made, unless both parties consent to admit the  
9 new evidence and proceed with the case.

10  
11 So that the new provisions would read as follows:

12  
13 **32-18.**

14 a. Minutes of the trial shall be kept by the clerk, which shall exhibit the charges,  
15 the answer, record of the proceedings, as defined by *BCO* 35-9, the citations and  
16 returns thereto, the documents or other materials submitted to or admitted to the  
17 court in the trial proceedings (all of which should be properly marked and  
18 identified), and all such acts, orders, and decisions of the court relating to the case,  
19 as either party may desire, and also the judgment.

20  
21 b. The clerk shall without delay assemble the Record of the Case as defined by  
22 *BCO* 42-5.

23  
24 c. The parties shall be allowed copies of the Record of the Case at their own  
25 expense if they demand them.

26  
27 d. When a case is removed by appeal or complaint, the lower court shall transmit  
28 “the Record” thus prepared to the higher court with the addition of the notice of  
29 appeal or complaint, and the reasons therefor, if any shall have been filed.

30  
31 e. Nothing which is not contained in this “Record” shall be taken into  
32 consideration by the higher court.

33  
34 f. On the final decision of a case in a higher court, the judgment shall be sent  
35 down to the court in which the case originated.

36  
37 **42-5.**

38 a. It shall be the duty of the clerk of the lower court to file with the clerk of the  
39 higher court, not more than thirty (30) days after receipt of notice of appeal, a copy  
40 of all minutes of the trial proceedings as prescribed by *BCO* 32-18 (including a  
41 transcription of the trial proceedings), minutes of any meeting of the court pursuant  
42 to *BCO* 32-3 and 32-5, the notice of appeal, any papers submitted to or admitted  
43 by the court before the conclusion of the trial, and minutes pertaining to any  
44 censure imposed, which together shall be known as “the Record of the Case.”

1           b. The higher court shall not admit or consider anything not found in this  
2           “Record” without the consent of the parties in the case.

3  
4           c. Should new evidence come to light the case shall be remanded to the lower  
5           court from which the appeal was made, unless both parties consent to admit the  
6           new evidence and proceed with the case.

7  
8       **RATIONALE**

9  
10       The Rules of Discipline, as presently configured, make it difficult for Clerks to determine what  
11       records and materials he must collect and transmit to the higher courts in case of appeal. The  
12       instant proposal seeks to clarify what is included in the “Record of the Case” by refining the  
13       definition of that phrase in *BCO* 42-5 and reconciling that definition with other related parts of  
14       the Rules of Discipline. The present design of the Rules of Discipline divides the description of  
15       the Clerk’s responsibilities between different provisions in a way that can be confusing.

16  
17       The proposal is consistent with current *BCO* 35-9 as well as the 2025 General Assembly’s  
18       adoption of last year’s helpful proposed change to that provision, which proposed that “all parts  
19       of a trial” are to be recorded and thus help standardize those parts of Rules of Discipline touching  
20       on the creation and transmission of the Record of the Case.

21  
22       The proposal identifies the types of materials that the Record of the Case should include, both  
23       making it easier for Clerks to prepare a case for appeal and better enabling the higher courts to  
24       make a full and satisfactory review of the court of original jurisdiction’s full proceedings in a case  
25       of process.

26  
27       The proposal also includes some stylistic subsections on *BCO* 32-18 and *BCO* 42-5 to grant  
28       greater clarity and precision in citation.

29  
30       The proposal would improve the current situation, which imposes a burden on Clerks (as well as  
31       the higher courts) to both examine and reconcile the differing language used in various provisions  
32       of the Rules of Discipline to discern what should be assembled for and delivered to the reviewing  
33       court in an appeal.

34  
35  
36       *Adopted by the Southwest Florida Presbytery at its called meeting, April 16, 2026*

37       *Attested by TE Freddy Fritz, Stated Clerk*

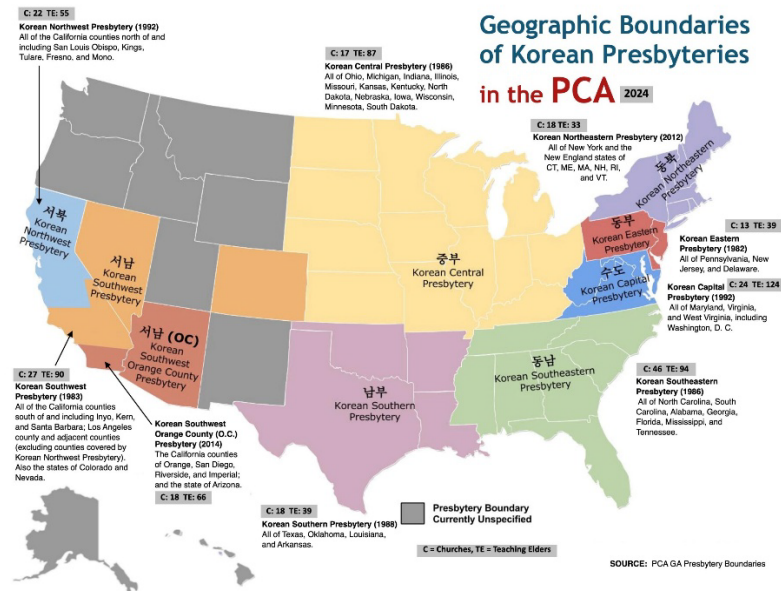
1 **OVERTURE 70** from the Korean Northwest Presbytery (to MNA)  
2 “Expand Korean Northwest Boundaries to Include Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon, and  
3 Washington”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the General Assembly has continued to allow the existence of Korean Language  
6 Presbyteries since the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 1982 (*M10GA*, p. 92-93); and  
7

8 **Whereas**, the Korean Language Presbyteries have grown to include 9 Korean Language  
9 Presbyteries, representing over 200 churches and over 600 Teaching Elders; and  
10

11 **Whereas**, although the Korean Language Presbyteries are “non-geographical” (*BCO* 13-2  
12 EDITORIAL COMMENT) in relationship to the wider PCA, they are geographical in  
13 relationship to the other Korean Language Presbyteries, as clearly stated by the very  
14 names of the Korean Language Presbyteries: Korean Eastern (1982), Korean  
15 Southwest (1983), Korean Central (1986), Korean Southeastern (1986), Korean  
16 Southern (1988), Korean Capital (1992), Korean Northwest (1992), Korean  
17 Northeastern (2012) and Korean Southwest OC (2015); and  
18

19 **Whereas**, while the 9 Korean Language Presbyteries’ current boundaries cover 41 States,  
20 there remain 9 states whose boundaries are unspecified in regard to Korean Language  
21 Presbyteries (see map below); and  
22



23  
24  
25 **Now therefore be it resolved**, that Korean Northwest Presbytery overture the 53rd General  
26 Assembly to include the states of Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington within the  
27 boundaries of the Korean Northwest Presbytery, effective immediately,  
28  
29

30 *Adopted by the Korean Northwest Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 14, 2026*

1 *Attested by TE Seongeun Jang, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 71** from the Northern California Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 5-9.e, 9-2, and 9-7 to Allow Session to Directly Administer Diaconal  
3 Ministry”  
4

5 **Whereas** deacons are not required for the particularization of a church, and elders can oversee  
6 the work (*BCO* 5-9, Titus 1:5); and  
7

8 **Whereas** deacons are sometimes mentioned in the Scriptures as serving alongside the elders  
9 (e.g., Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3) but other times are not mentioned (e.g., Acts 20:17,  
10 Titus 1); and  
11

12 **Whereas** elders “must either themselves distribute the offerings, or have it done under their  
13 supervision,” (Ramsay 1898, as quoted by TE Morton Smith 6th ed. 2007 p.62), which  
14 indicates that it is as appropriate for elders to be the officers who administer this  
15 function as it is for deacons to administer it under their supervision; and  
16

17 **Whereas** diaconal needs should not be allowed to interfere with the elders’ ability to focus on  
18 the ministry of the word and prayer (Acts 6); and  
19

20 **Whereas** deacons were first ordained when the ministry in Jerusalem grew to such size and  
21 complexity that officers to focus on administration of the diaconal work (Acts 6) were  
22 required; and  
23

24 **Whereas** the office of deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the  
25 Church (*BCO* 9-1), and this would remain true under the current proposal, keeping the  
26 PCA a “two-office church” (as elder and deacon are the two offices to which men may  
27 be ordained);  
28

29 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 5-9.e, 9-2, and 9-7 be amended as shown below (additions  
30 indicated by underlining; deletions indicated by ~~striketrough~~):  
31

32 **5-9.e.** If deacons are not elected, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the  
33 Session, ~~until deacons can be secured.~~  
34

35 **9-2.** ... In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and  
36 authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure  
37 deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders. Similarly, a  
38 Session may choose, with ratification by a three-quarters vote of the congregation, to  
39 directly administer diaconal ministry and, if prudent, may appoint lay volunteers to  
40 assist in ministering to those who are in need under the authority and oversight of the  
41 Session. No lay volunteer so appointed shall be referred to as a deacon or as a  
42 deaconess. They shall not be elected by the congregation, nor shall they be ordained  
43 or installed as if they were officers.  
44

1           **9-7.** It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint  
2           godly men and women of the congregation to ~~the work of assist the deacons in~~ caring  
3           for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any  
4           distress or need. These may be called assistants to the deacons, or the diaconal mercy  
5           team, or some similar name. They are not officers of the church (*BCO 7-2*) and, as  
6           such, are not subject for ordination (*BCO 17*).  
7

8           So that the amended paragraphs read:  
9

10           **5-9.e.** If deacons are not elected, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the  
11           Session.  
12

13           **9-2.** ... In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and  
14           authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure  
15           deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders. Similarly, a  
16           Session may choose, with ratification by a three-quarters vote of the congregation, to  
17           directly administer diaconal ministry and, if prudent, may appoint lay volunteers to  
18           assist in ministering to those who are in need under the authority and oversight of the  
19           Session. No lay volunteer so appointed shall be referred to as a deacon or as a  
20           deaconess. They shall not be elected by the congregation, nor shall they be ordained  
21           or installed as if they were officers.  
22

23           **9-7.** It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint  
24           godly men and women of the congregation to the work of caring for the sick, the  
25           widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need.  
26           These may be called assistants to the deacons, or the diaconal mercy team, or some  
27           similar name. They are not officers of the church (*BCO 7-2*) and, as such, are not  
28           subject for ordination (*BCO 17*).  
29

30           *Adopted by the Northern California Presbytery at its called meeting, April 16, 2026*  
31           *A Northern California Overture Commission was authorized to perfect and re-file if it deems*  
32           *necessary.*

33           *Attested by TE John Kong, Stated Clerk*



1 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 12 be amended by adding the following (underlining for  
2 additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
3

4 **12-8.** Every Session shall annually record in its minutes a list of all persons who  
5 comprise the Session and the Diaconate. If the local church has no Diaconate, then the  
6 Session's minutes shall indicate why, and whether the duties have devolved upon the  
7 Session according to *BCO* 9-2.  
8

9 **12-8~~9~~**. Every Session shall keep an accurate record of baptisms, of communing  
10 members, of non-communing members, and of the deaths and dismissions of church  
11 members.  
12

13 **12-9~~10~~**. Meetings of the Sessions shall be opened and closed with prayer.  
14

15 **Rationale:**  
16

17 At the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in Chattanooga, a similar overture was defeated; however, the  
18 overture was defeated because it failed to reach the 2/3 threshold required to amend the *RAO*  
19 as the previous overture sought to do. Nevertheless, last year's overture did receive a majority  
20 of those voting at the General Assembly (929-730). Thus, there was clearly support for the  
21 concept in the overture, and it is hoped that this present version will redress concerns which  
22 caused the previous overture to fail.  
23

24 Some of those against the previous overture argued that changing the *RAO* was out of order  
25 because an amendment to the *BCO* should be ratified first. While this argument falls flat since  
26 sufficient *BCO* procedure already exists, particularly in 9-2 which is referenced in the  
27 proposed amendment above, the present overture answers this argument by seeking to amend  
28 the *BCO* rather than the *RAO*.  
29

30 Furthermore, this overture attempts to address concerns about collecting this information by  
31 mirroring the language of *BCO* 12-7. Certainly, if Sessions are already mandated to submit  
32 their entire year's minutes for presbytery review, then including a brief document providing  
33 the required information relating to the Session and Diaconate should not be too difficult.  
34

35 Finally, as alluded to in the "whereas" clauses above, this overture stands upon the premise  
36 that the office of Deacon, and not only the office of Elder, is necessary for the edification of  
37 the Church by Christ's own appointment. Therefore, this overture, by seeking to add this  
38 procedure for review and control, as well as care and assistance, thus ultimately seeks to secure  
39 the peace and purity of the Church and the honor of Christ as its head who has established the  
40 perpetual offices of Elder and Deacon.  
41

42  
43 *Adopted by the Ascension Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 31, 2026*

44 *Attested by RE Frederick R. Neikirk, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 73** from TE Cody Hooper (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 4-9 to Require 2/3 Majority to Elect Stated Clerk and Coordinators after  
3 3 Consecutive Years of Service”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the General Assembly has erected several program Committees to accomplish its  
6 aims and goals, and  
7

8 **Whereas**, these Committees have grown significantly in recent decades and exert significant  
9 influence over the direction of the Presbyterian Church in America as it seeks to fulfill  
10 its stated mission, and  
11

12 **Whereas**, the men who fill these roles receive substantial salaries, with some receiving a total  
13 compensation package exceeding \$300,000 (cf. the President of the United States who  
14 receives an annual salary of \$400,000 to run the entire Executive Branch of the US  
15 government), and  
16

17 **Whereas**, we are called to steward well the monetary gifts of Christ’s precious sheep with the  
18 utmost integrity, and  
19

20 **Whereas**, while exercising oversight, concerns and controversy may arise which call into  
21 question the suitability of the person leading the administrative or program  
22 Committees, and  
23

24 **Whereas**, *BCO* 14-1 clearly shows that the Committees work for the General Assembly and  
25 are under the oversight of the General Assembly, and  
26

27 **Whereas**, this sacred trust calls presbyters to give serious and solemn reflection upon the  
28 success of these committees and of the men who lead them, and  
29

30 **Whereas**, *RAO* 4-9 requires the General Assembly to elect the Stated Clerk and the  
31 Coordinators of the program Committees annually, and  
32

33 **Whereas**, such an election does not presuppose a *de facto* lifetime appointment until the Clerk  
34 or Coordinator goes to be with the Lord, resigns, or retires, and  
35

36 **Whereas**, *BCO* 20-5, which encourages the majority to consider the prudence of prosecuting  
37 a call if a strong minority exists in the case of congregational elections, provides a  
38 helpful analogy and paradigm for the election of the Clerk and Coordinators, and  
39

40 **Whereas**, in times of controversy, it will serve the interest of the Church’s peace for the Stated  
41 Clerk and permanent Committee Coordinators to receive a clear sense of the  
42 Assembly’s approbation in their election,  
43  
44

1 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *RAO* 4-9 is amended as follows (underlining for additions;  
2 ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
3

4 The four program Committees shall nominate annually a coordinator for election by  
5 the General Assembly. The Administrative Committee shall nominate annually a  
6 Stated Clerk for election by the General Assembly. If a nominee to the position of  
7 Stated Clerk or coordinator of a program Committee has served three consecutive  
8 years in the position for which he was nominated, then his nomination shall require a  
9 two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting in the General Assembly to secure  
10 election for each successive year. If the nominee has not been examined by the  
11 Theological Examining Committee, such an examination must take place prior to the  
12 election when it is a first time employment. A new coordinator shall assume office at  
13 the end of the Assembly meeting, or at such time thereafter as designated by the  
14 General Assembly.  
15

16 **Rationale:**  
17

18 Several strains of the rationale for this overture are embedded in the “whereas” clauses above.  
19 However, this section will give a brief explanation.  
20

21 First, it would be imprudent to raise the vote threshold for every election without exception.  
22 While this new threshold is unlikely to create frequent turnover in the permanent Committees,  
23 it does make it more likely. However, switching Coordinators or Stated Clerks every year  
24 would be a train wreck waiting to happen for many reasons which won’t be enumerated here.  
25 This says nothing of the fact that it may take some time for a new Coordinator or Stated Clerk  
26 to get his “sea legs” under him. Thus, a delayed increase of the vote threshold taking effect  
27 after serving for three consecutive years seems most prudent.  
28

29 While some may claim this to be an arbitrary number, this timing is derived, at least in part,  
30 by way of analogy to the circumstances governing the Chief Executive of the United States—  
31 the President. Every four years, at least when an incumbent runs, the American electorate  
32 decides whether to continue with the status quo or to install a new executive officer. Certainly,  
33 if swapping such a position in the fourth year does not undo our civil government and its  
34 ability to function, then neither will our permanent Committees be derailed if such a change  
35 occurred under the proposed amendment above.  
36

37 Secondly, though more could be said, we must recognize that if the man who fills any of the  
38 positions affected by this amendment is a man of eminent qualification who has demonstrated  
39 the requisite leadership and competency, then a two-thirds (2/3) vote will be relatively easy  
40 to secure.  
41

42 However, in the case that serious questions arise about the suitability of the Stated Clerk or a  
43 program Committee Coordinator, this overture would be beneficial in two ways. If a nominee  
44 “under fire” as it were nevertheless succeeded in achieving the two-thirds threshold, this

1 higher threshold would mitigate unrest and provide a vote of confidence of sorts by,  
2 necessarily, reducing the “strength” of the minority.

3

4 However, if the nominee for serious concerns fails to achieve the new threshold, then it would  
5 provide a means to transition to another nominee that is better suited to receive the approbation  
6 of the General Assembly. In either case, it is hoped that such a change will serve to promote  
7 the peace and purity of Christ’s Church as we engage our shared mission together.

8

9

10 *Rejected by the Presbytery of the Ascension at its stated meeting, January 31, 2026*

11 *Attested by RE Frederick R. Neikirk, Stated Clerk*

12 *Sent to General Assembly by TE Cody Hooper under RAO 11-10.*

1 **OVERTURE 74** from the Eastern Carolina Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Add a New Chapter *BCO* 17A ‘Of Commissioning for Non-Ordained Ministry’”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the Presbyterian Church in America affirms that ordination is the church’s  
5 authoritative act of setting apart qualified men to the offices of elder and deacon  
6 according to Scripture (*BCO* 7-2, 17-1); and  
7

8 **Whereas**, the Scriptures also present a pattern in which the church publicly sets apart,  
9 authorizes, and sends certain individuals for specific ministries without conferring  
10 ordained office—for example:  
11

- 12 • Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the church at Antioch through  
13 prayer and the laying on of hands for missionary service (*Acts* 13:1–3), prior  
14 to their later appointment of elders in the churches (*Acts* 14:23);
- 15 • The Jerusalem church, in *Acts* 15, sent Judas, Barsabbas, and Silas as  
16 authorized representatives to deliver the council’s decision and strengthen the  
17 churches (*Acts* 15:22, 27, 32), though these roles did not constitute ordination  
18 to office;
- 19 • As well as many other instances: 1 *Corinthians* 16:3-4; *Colossians* 4:7-9; 3  
20 *John* 1:5- 9; *Philippians* 2:25-30; *Romans* 16:1-2.  
21

22 **Whereas**, this biblical distinction between ordination to an office and commissioning to a  
23 ministry role provides theological grounding for the church to recognize, authorize,  
24 and support individuals—both men and women—who serve in significant ways that  
25 do not involve the authority or responsibilities of ordained office; and  
26

27 **Whereas**, commissioning includes sending, appointing, approving, entrusting for particular  
28 tasks while commending, recognizing gifts, and support of ordained authority without  
29 the marks of ordination (an office, set Biblical qualifications, authority over the  
30 church, sacramental leadership or ruling authority); and  
31

32 **Whereas**, many PCA congregations, presbyteries, and ministries (including Reformed  
33 University Fellowship) already depend on gifted and spiritually mature women and  
34 men who labor in teaching, discipleship, shepherding, mercy, counseling, and  
35 leadership capacities that do not require ordination; and  
36

37 **Whereas**, the PCA's current polity does not provide clear or unified constitutional categories  
38 or terms for publicly setting apart such individuals for these non-ordained ministry  
39 roles, creating inconsistency between churches and ministries, confusion regarding  
40 proper responsibilities, and at times unnecessary tension within the denomination; and  
41

42 **Whereas**, establishing a clear constitutional category for commissioning would strengthen  
43 the peace, purity, unity, and mission of the church by:  
44

- 45 • Clarifying what is and is not an ordained office;

- 1 • Allowing congregations to formally recognize non-ordained servants without
- 2 creating de facto offices;
- 3 • Protecting the integrity of the offices of elder and deacon; and
- 4 • Giving pastors, sessions, and presbyteries an orderly and biblically grounded
- 5 means for authorizing ministry roles that do not involve the exercise of
- 6 ordained authority;
- 7

8 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the Presbyterian Church in America amend the *Book of*  
9 *Church Order* by adding a new chapter 17A immediately following *BCO* 17 (“The  
10 Doctrine of Ordination”) to read as follows:

11  
12 **CHAPTER 17A**

13 *Of Commissioning for Non-Ordained Ministry*

14  
15 **17A-1. Definition.** Commissioning is an act of the church, through a Session or  
16 Presbytery, publicly recognizing and setting apart a qualified member of the church  
17 for a particular ministry role that does not involve the exercise of the authority vested  
18 in the ordained offices of elder or deacon.

19  
20 **17A-2. Biblical Basis.** Commissioning reflects the pattern in Scripture whereby the  
21 church—while reserving ordination for specific offices—also sends, authorizes, or  
22 sets apart individuals for ministry through prayer and public recognition (e.g., Acts  
23 13:1-3; Acts 15:22, 27, 32).

24  
25 **17A-3. Nature of Commissioning.**

- 26
- 27 a. Commissioning does not confer ecclesiastical office and does not authorize the
- 28 exercise of the governing authority belonging to elders.
- 29 b. Commissioned individuals may serve in roles of teaching, discipleship, mercy,
- 30 leadership, administration, counseling, or other ministries under the oversight
- 31 of the Session or Presbytery.
- 32 c. Commissioning may be conferred upon men or women.
- 33

34 **17A-4. Authorization.** The Session of a local congregation may commission  
35 individuals for congregational ministries under its oversight. Presbyteries may  
36 commission individuals for presbytery-wide or denominational ministries.

37  
38 **17A-5. Process.**

- 39
- 40 a. Candidates for commissioning will ordinarily be members in good standing
- 41 and examined in those matters relevant to their ministry assignment (e.g.,
- 42 Christian character, doctrinal understanding, spiritual gifts, and particular
- 43 skills).
- 44 b. The commissioning act shall clearly distinguish it from ordination to office.

1           c. A written description of the ministry role, responsibilities, and limits of  
2           authority shall be adopted by the Session or Presbytery and communicated to  
3           the church's or Presbytery's members.  
4

5           **17A-6. Accountability.** Commissioned individuals serve under the direct oversight of  
6           the Session or Presbytery that authorized them and shall report on their ministry as  
7           required. Commissioning may be concluded or revoked at the discretion of that court.  
8

9           **17A-7. Safeguards.** Commissioning shall not be used to create new ecclesiastical  
10          offices, to introduce ruling or teaching authority apart from ordained office, or to blur  
11          the distinctions set forth in *BCO* 7 and 8 concerning church government.  
12

13  
14          *Adopted by the Eastern Carolina Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 18, 2026*

15          *Attested by TE Wes Martin, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 75** from the Central Florida Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 42 to Clarify the Process for Filing an Appeal”  
3

4 **Whereas** it is clear from reviewing the history of *BCO* 42 that from the beginning (1858,  
5 1867, 1869, 1879, 1925) there were only three steps to filing an appeal and in particular  
6 providing “notice of intention to appeal” (which later became “notice of appeal”) was  
7 never a separate step from the filing of the actual written appeal “with the reasons  
8 supporting it.”

9 **Whereas** in current and past practice there are three steps in the appeals process: 1) The court  
10 announces its verdict. 2) Written appeal with supporting reasons is sent to the lower  
11 and upper court within 30 days (originally 10 days) of the “notification of the last  
12 court’s decision” or the announcement of the verdict by the lower court. 3) The Clerk  
13 of the lower court submits the ROC within 30 days of receiving the written appeal  
14 with reasons (*BCO* 42-5) and the process of finalizing the ROC proceeds.

15 **Whereas** these three steps and the associated timeline are especially apparent when one  
16 studies the history of the *BCO* and the changes to *BCO* 42 made through time,  
17 which have served to be somewhat confusing. Until around 1984, an appeal always  
18 had to be "in writing with reasons" and there was never a separate step of giving  
19 “notice of appeal.”

20 **Whereas** in our current and past practice there is *no difference* between what our current *BCO*  
21 calls “notice of appeal” and the actual written appeal itself. After the court announces  
22 the verdict, the appellant has 30 days to file an appeal. The term “notice of appeal” is  
23 a vestige of the past and this phrase should not insert another step in the process of  
24 filing an appeal.

25 **Whereas** *BCO* 42 as currently written is confusing in practice. The appellant can certainly  
26 give "notice of appeal" at any time after a guilty verdict is announced, but this notice,  
27 whenever it may occur, or whether it is conveyed verbally or in writing, is not an  
28 additional step in the appeals process and it does not change the fact that a "written  
29 appeal with reasons" must be submitted within 30 days.  
30

31 **Whereas** the proposed changes to *BCO* 42 serve to make clear the steps in the process of  
32 filing an appeal using the history of *BCO* 42 as a key point of reference.  
33

34 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 42-4 is amended as follows (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~  
35 for deletions):  
36

37 **42-4** ~~Notice of appeal may be given the court before its adjournment. Written~~  
38 ~~notice of appeal, with supporting reasons, shall~~ Written appeal with supporting  
39 reasons must be filed by the appellant with both the clerk of the lower court and  
40 the clerk of the higher court, within thirty (30) days of notification of the last  
41 court’s decision.

1  
2 So that the amended paragraph reads as follows:

3  
4 **42-4** Written appeal with supporting reasons must be filed by the appellant  
5 with both the clerk of the lower court and the clerk of the higher court within  
6 thirty (30) days of notification of the last court’s decision.  
7

8  
9 **Be it further resolved** that *BCO* 42-5 is amended as follows (underlining for additions;  
10 ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
11

12 **42-5** It shall be the duty of the clerk of the lower court to file with the clerk of  
13 the higher court, not more than thirty (30) days after receipt of ~~notice of the~~  
14 written appeal with supporting reasons, a copy of all proceedings in connection  
15 with the case, including the ~~notice of~~ appeal and reasons therefor, the response of  
16 the lower court, the evidence, and any papers bearing on the case, which together  
17 shall be known as “the Record of the Case,” and the higher court shall not admit  
18 or consider anything not found in this “Record” without the consent of the parties  
19 in the case. Should new evidence come to light the case shall be remanded to the  
20 lower court from which the appeal was made, unless both parties consent to admit  
21 the new evidence and proceed with the case.  
22

23 So that the amended paragraph reads as follows:

24  
25 **42-5.** It shall be the duty of the clerk of the lower court to file with the clerk  
26 of the higher court, not more than thirty (30) days after receipt of the written  
27 appeal with supporting reasons, a copy of all proceedings in connection with the  
28 case, including the appeal and reasons therefor, the response of the lower court,  
29 the evidence, and any papers bearing on the case, which together shall be known  
30 as “the Record of the Case,” and the higher court shall not admit or consider  
31 anything not found in this “Record” without the consent of the parties in the case.  
32 Should new evidence come to light the case shall be remanded to the lower court  
33 from which the appeal was made, unless both parties consent to admit the new  
34 evidence and proceed with the case.  
35

36 **Be it further resolved** that *BCO* 42-6 is amended as follows (underlining for additions;  
37 ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
38

39 **42-6.** ~~Notice of~~ The filing of the written appeal shall have the effect of  
40 suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided  
41 in the higher court. However, the court of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient  
42 reasons duly recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord’s Table,  
43 and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions,  
44 until the case is finally decided (cf. *BCO* 31-10; 33-4). This shall never be done  
45 in the way of censure, and only when in the judgment of a two-thirds (2/3)

1 majority of the court of original jurisdiction there is a risk of the appellant doing  
2 harm to the name of Christ and His church before the case is finally decided. ~~shall~~  
3 ~~require a two-thirds (2/3) majority.~~  
4

5 So that the amended paragraph reads as follows:  
6

7 **42-6.** The filing of the written appeal shall have the effect of suspending the  
8 judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher  
9 court. However, the court of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly  
10 recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table, and if an  
11 officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the  
12 case is finally decided (cf. BCO 31-10; 33-4). This shall never be done in the way  
13 of censure, and only when in the judgment of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the  
14 court of original jurisdiction there is a risk of the appellant doing harm to the name  
15 of Christ and His church before the case is finally decided.  
16

17  
18 *Adopted by the Central Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 21, 2026*

19 *Attested by TE Donald L. Mountan, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 76** from the Calvary Presbytery (to OC)  
2 “Issue a Declaration of Thanksgiving for the United States of America (USA) on the  
3 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nation’s Founding”  
4

5 **Whereas**, God’s Word calls His church, “O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good, for his  
6 mercy endureth for ever” (Psalm 136:1) in whatsoever comes to pass according to  
7 Jesus Christ’s sovereign rule and reign over all men and nations; and,  
8

9 **Whereas**, we confess that “the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so,  
10 after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things to the  
11 good thereof” (*WCF* 5.7); and,  
12

13 **Whereas**, a pastoral letter published and circulated to Presbyterian congregations by the  
14 Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1775 counseled colonial American  
15 Presbyterians in solemn terms, “In particular, as the Continental Congress, now sitting  
16 at Philadelphia, consists of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiassed manner,  
17 by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect, and encouraged  
18 in their difficult service; not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction  
19 in their proceedings, but adhere firmly to their resolutions; and let it be seen that they  
20 are able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into  
21 execution,” which prayers the Lord abundantly and affirmatively answered; and,  
22

23 **Whereas**, the Synod’s pastoral letter of 1775 further urged American Presbyterians, “We  
24 would also advise for the same purpose, that a spirit of candour, charity, and mutual  
25 esteem, be preserved and promoted towards those of different religious denominations.  
26 Persons of probity and principle of every profession, should be untied together as  
27 servants of the same Master; and the experience of our happy concord hitherto in a  
28 state of liberty, should engage all to unite in support of the common interest; for there  
29 is no example in history in which civil liberty was destroyed, and the rights of  
30 conscience preserved entire,” which state of liberty the Lord was gracious, merciful,  
31 and kind to preserve; and,  
32

33 **Whereas**, colonial American Presbyterian preachers and pastors defended the sacred cause of  
34 liberty from pulpits across our land, including Dr. John Witherspoon, the only minister  
35 of the Gospel to serve as a delegate to the Continental Congress meeting in  
36 Philadelphia; and,  
37

38 **Whereas**, God’s Word reads, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers,  
39 intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are  
40 in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”  
41 (1 Timothy 2:1-2); and,  
42

43 **Whereas**, the success of America’s War of Independence has resulted in the enshrinement of  
44 certain civil liberties and individual rights in the Constitution of the United States of  
45 America, including that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of

1 religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,  
2 or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assembly, and to petition the  
3 Government for a redress of grievances” (*First Amendment to the Constitution of the*  
4 *United States*), all which ensure the freedom of Christians to worship God as He has  
5 ordained in His Word, for “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free  
6 from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything contrary to his  
7 Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship” (*WCF 20.2*); and,  
8

9 **Whereas**, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) since its founding on December 4, 1973  
10 has ever and always endeavored to be a national Presbyterian Church ministering in  
11 (and beyond) the territory of the United States of America as a Church faithful to the  
12 Scriptures, true to the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of the  
13 Lord Jesus Christ; and,  
14

15 **Whereas**, the Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, working in  
16 collaboration with a Committee of Five, in a rented room in Philadelphia merchant  
17 Jacob Graff Jr.’s home (now known as the Declaration House) on the corner of Seventh  
18 and Market Streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was adopted by the Continental  
19 Congress on July 4, 1776; and,  
20

21 **Whereas**, God granted success to the Patriot cause in large part through the efforts of South  
22 Carolina Reformed and Presbyterian worthies such as French Huguenot Francis  
23 “Swamp Fox” Marion (c. 1732-1795) and Scots-Irish Presbyterians, including  
24 “Fighting Elder” Andrew Pickens (1739-1817) and the daring militiamen who served  
25 under General Daniel Morgan (1736-1802), who himself later joined the Presbyterian  
26 Church; and,  
27

28 **Whereas**, the General Assembly shall have the power: “In general, to recommend measures  
29 for the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under its care”  
30 (*BCO 14-6.k.*);  
31

32 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly issue a formal “Declaration of  
33 Thanksgiving for the United States of America (USA) on the Occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup>  
34 Anniversary of the Nation’s Founding” on July 4, 2026 by publishing the foregoing  
35 statements together with this resolution, to be spread upon the minutes and published  
36 electronically by the Administrative Committee through byFaith.  
37  
38

39 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting of April 23, 2026.*

40 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Sr., Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 77** from the Southeast Alabama Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM,  
2 MNA, MTW, RUF)

3 “Amend *RAO* 4-9 so that Coordinators and the Stated Clerk are Elected to 4-year  
4 Terms”

5  
6 **Be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA amend *RAO* 4-9 as shown below (underlining for additions;  
7 ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):

8  
9 **4-9.** The four program Committees shall nominate ~~annually~~ a coordinator for election by the  
10 General Assembly for a four-year term. The Administrative Committee shall also nominate  
11 ~~annually~~ a Stated Clerk for election by the General Assembly for a four-year term. If the  
12 nominee has not been examined by the Theological Examining Committee, such an  
13 examination must take place prior to the election when it is a first-time employment. ~~A~~ After  
14 election, a new coordinator or Stated Clerk shall assume office at the end of ~~the~~ that Assembly  
15 meeting, or at such time thereafter as designated by the General Assembly.

16  
17 So that the amended paragraph reads:

18  
19 **4-9.** The four program Committees shall nominate a coordinator for election by the General  
20 Assembly for a four-year term. The Administrative Committee shall also nominate a Stated  
21 Clerk for election by the General Assembly for a four-year term. If the nominee has not been  
22 examined by the Theological Examining Committee, such an examination must take place  
23 prior to the election when it is a first-time employment. After election, a new coordinator or  
24 Stated Clerk shall assume office at the end of that Assembly meeting, or at such time thereafter  
25 as designated by the General Assembly.

26  
27  
28 **Rationale**

- 29  
30 1. It's more reasonable to elect men to these positions for 4-year terms rather than one year.  
31 (The members of those five Permanent Committees are elected to 5-year terms.)  
32  
33 2. Some of these men need to live near the PCA office—or visit it frequently—in order to do  
34 their job, and it's not reasonable to relocate their family for a one-year term.  
35  
36 3. The *RAO* does not require the presidents or executive directors of our five Agencies to be  
37 reelected every year, and they have no set term of office (Covenant College, CTS, Geneva  
38 Benefits, PCA Foundation, and Ridge Haven).  
39  
40 4. In the rare instance where a man needs to be replaced during his term for cause, the  
41 Permanent Committee can still recommend such to the General Assembly.  
42  
43 5. This change would be effective at the 54<sup>th</sup> GA in Milwaukee for the four Program  
44 Committees (CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF). In other words, those four Permanent Committees  
45 would nominate a Coordinator next year for a four-year term. However, it would be  
46 effective this year for the AC's nomination of a Stated Clerk.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8

6. Initially, the terms would expire for all four Program Committee Coordinators at the same GA. However, over time these would like stagger as men leave those roles of their own volition prior to the expiration of their terms.

*Adopted by the Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 21, 2026*  
*Attested by TE Kevin Corley, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 78** from the Southeast Alabama Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM,  
2 MNA, MTW, RUF)

3 “Amend *RAO* 4-21 to Authorize Electronic Meetings for GA Committees and  
4 Commissions”

5  
6 **Be it resolved** that *RAO* 4 be amended by adding the language below as a new paragraph  
7 numbered *RAO* 4-21, the existing paragraph 4-21 be renumbered as 4-22, and a cross-  
8 reference in *RAO* 14-11.a be amended to reflect the renumbering (underlining for  
9 additions; ~~strike through~~ for deletions):

10  
11 **4-21.** Committees and commissions of the General Assembly established by the *Book*  
12 *of Church Order* and these *Rules*, except the Overtures Committee and Committees of  
13 Commissioners, may meet electronically (see RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 9:30-36) if that  
14 committee or commission so determines according to its own rules. Ad hoc and ad  
15 interim committees and commissions are authorized to meet electronically at the call  
16 of the Chairman or Convenor.

17  
18 **4-21~~2~~.** **Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees and Agencies**  
19 **of the General Assembly**

20  
21 **14-11.a**

22 2) The Assembly’s Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees  
23 of the General Assembly, as to form, structure, and minimum content (4-21~~22~~);  
24 and

25  
26 So the amended sections will then read as follows

27  
28 **4-21.** Committees and commissions of the General Assembly established by the *Book*  
29 *of Church Order* and these *Rules*, except the Overtures Committee and Committees of  
30 Commissioners, may meet electronically (see RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 9:30-36) if that  
31 committee or commission so determines according to its own rules. Ad hoc and ad  
32 interim committees and commissions are authorized to meet electronically at the call  
33 of the Chairman or Convenor.

34  
35 **4-22. Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees and Agencies of**  
36 **the General Assembly**

37  
38 **14-11.a**

39 2) The Assembly’s Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees  
40 of the General Assembly, as to form, structure, and minimum content (4-22);  
41 and

42  
43 **Rationale:**

44  
45 Recent editions of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* (beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> ed. [2000])

1 and more fully in 12<sup>th</sup> ed. [2020], 9:30–36) include explicit provisions governing electronic  
2 meetings, including videoconference and teleconference participation. Under RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
3 9:35, committees may meet electronically only when such meetings are authorized by the  
4 appointing assembly.  
5

6 At present, the permanent committees, agencies, and special committees of the General  
7 Assembly have not been expressly authorized by the Assembly to meet electronically.  
8 Nevertheless, many have met electronically by custom. While custom may describe current  
9 practice (cf. RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 2:25), it does not satisfy the requirement that electronic meetings  
10 be authorized by the appointing body.  
11

12 The *Book of Church Order* has recently been amended to authorize electronic meetings for  
13 Sessions (*BCO* 12-6) and Presbyteries (*BCO* 13-4) if those bodies make provision for it in  
14 their own rules. Additionally, the Standing Judicial Commission of the General Assembly is  
15 expressly permitted to meet by telephone conference call (*OMSJC* 4.1). Thus, the  
16 constitutional and judicial framework of the Church has already recognized the legitimacy of  
17 electronic meetings in appropriate contexts.  
18

19 Because the *Rules of Assembly Operations* functions as bylaws for the General Assembly (see  
20 RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 2:8), an amendment to the *RAO* is appropriate and necessary to regularize  
21 current practice. This amendment explicitly grants General Assembly committees and  
22 commissions the ability to meet electronically when a committee or commission so desires  
23 and establishes in its own rules.  
24

25 Furthermore, a distinction is made for ad hoc and ad interim committees. Because these  
26 committees are temporary and composed of geographically-dispersed members, requiring  
27 them to hold an initial in-person meeting solely to adopt rules for future electronic meetings  
28 creates an unnecessary financial and logistical burden. Therefore, this amendment provides  
29 direct authorization for these temporary committees to meet electronically at the call of the  
30 Chairman or Convener, ensuring they can commence their work immediately and efficiently.  
31  
32

33 *Adopted by the Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 21, 2026*

34 *Attested by TE Kevin Corley, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 79** from the Calvary Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM,  
2 MNA, MTW, RUF)

3 “Amend *RAO* 4-21 to Authorize Electronic Meetings for GA Committees and  
4 Commissions”

5  
6 **Be it resolved** that *RAO* 4 be amended by adding the language below as a new paragraph  
7 numbered *RAO* 4-21, the existing paragraph 4-21 be renumbered as 4-22, and a cross-  
8 reference in *RAO* 14-11.a be amended to reflect the renumbering (underlining for  
9 additions; ~~strike through~~ for deletions):

10  
11 **4-21.** Committees and commissions of the General Assembly established by the *Book*  
12 *of Church Order* and these *Rules*, except the Overtures Committee, Nominating  
13 Committee, and Committees of Commissioners, may meet electronically (see RONR  
14 [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 9:30-36) for called meetings if that committee or commission so determines  
15 according to its own rules. Ad hoc and ad interim committees and commissions are  
16 authorized to meet electronically at the call of the Chairman or Convenor.

17  
18 **4-21.2. Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees and Agencies**  
19 **of the General Assembly**

20  
21 **14-11.a**  
22 2) The Assembly’s Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees  
23 of the General Assembly, as to form, structure, and minimum content (4-2122);  
24 and

25  
26 The amended sections will then read as follows:

27  
28 **4-21.** Committees and commissions of the General Assembly established by the *Book*  
29 *of Church Order* and these *Rules*, except the Overtures Committee, Nominating  
30 Committee, and Committees of Commissioners, may meet electronically (see RONR  
31 [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 9:30-36) for called meetings if that committee or commission so determines  
32 according to its own rules. Ad hoc and ad interim committees and commissions are  
33 authorized to meet electronically at the call of the Chairman or Convenor.

34  
35 **4-22. Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees and Agencies of**  
36 **the General Assembly**

37  
38 **14-11.a**  
39 2) The Assembly’s Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees  
40 of the General Assembly, as to form, structure, and minimum content (4-22);  
41 and

42  
43  
44 **Rationale:**

45

1 Recent editions of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> ed. [2000]  
2 and more fully in 12<sup>th</sup> ed. [2020], 9:30–36) include explicit provisions governing electronic  
3 meetings, including videoconference and teleconference participation. Under RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
4 9:35, committees may meet electronically only when such meetings are authorized by the  
5 appointing assembly.  
6

7 At present, the permanent committees, agencies, and special committees of the General  
8 Assembly have not been expressly authorized by the Assembly to meet electronically.  
9 Nevertheless, many have conducted called meetings over electronic videoconference by  
10 custom. While custom may describe current practice (cf. RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 2:25), it does not  
11 satisfy the requirement that electronic meetings be authorized by the appointing body.  
12

13 The *Book of Church Order* has recently been amended to authorize electronic meetings for  
14 Sessions (*BCO* 12-6) and Presbyteries (*BCO* 13-4) if those bodies make provision for it in  
15 their own rules. Additionally, the Standing Judicial Commission of the General Assembly is  
16 expressly permitted to meet by telephone conference call (*OMSJC* 4.1). Thus, the  
17 constitutional and judicial framework of the Church has already recognized the legitimacy of  
18 electronic meetings in appropriate contexts.  
19

20 Because the *Rules of Assembly Operations* functions as bylaws for the General Assembly (see  
21 RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 2:8), an amendment to the *RAO* is appropriate and necessary to regularize  
22 current practice. This amendment explicitly grants General Assembly committees and  
23 commissions the ability to meet electronically for called meetings when a committee or  
24 commission so desires and establishes in its own rules. Restricting this provision to called  
25 meetings protects the integrity and effectiveness of the regular stated meetings of the General  
26 Assembly's committees and commissions. Certain special committees of the General  
27 Assembly (i.e., Overtures and Nominating) are excluded from the provision due to the  
28 occasional nature of the business referred to them, and the desirability of reserving said  
29 business to in-person deliberation.  
30

31 Furthermore, a distinction is made for ad hoc and ad interim committees. Because these  
32 committees are temporary and composed of geographically dispersed members, requiring  
33 them to hold an initial in-person meeting solely to adopt rules for future electronic meetings  
34 creates an unnecessary financial and logistical burden. Therefore, this amendment provides  
35 direct authorization for these temporary committees to meet electronically at the call of the  
36 Chairman or Convener, ensuring they can commence their work immediately and efficiently.  
37  
38

39 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 23, 2026*

40 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Sr., Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 80** from the Calvary Presbytery (to OC, AC)  
2 “Erect Ad Interim Committee on Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the Apostle Paul tells the Colossians, “See to it that no one takes you captive by  
5 philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental  
6 spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him the whole fullness of deity  
7 dwells bodily, and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and  
8 authority.” (Colossians 2:8-10); and  
9

10 **Whereas**, the Apostle Paul also tells the Corinthians, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the  
11 world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we  
12 preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,  
13 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to  
14 those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom  
15 of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is  
16 stronger than men” (1 Corinthians 1:21-25); and  
17

18 **Whereas**, the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly appointed a committee to study Christian Nationalism,  
19 a contemporary ideological approach that is apparently a) suffused with *right-wing*,  
20 authoritarian, identity-driven views, b) opposed to the racial unity of the people of God  
21 (Galatians 3:28) under the headship of Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the  
22 Church (Preface to the *BCO*), and c) promoted within the interconnected spheres of  
23 culture, education, politics, and religion; and  
24

25 **Whereas**, Critical Theory (CT) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) are contemporary ideological  
26 approaches that are apparently a) suffused with *left-wing*, authoritarian, identity-driven  
27 views, b) opposed to the racial unity of the people of God (Galatians 3:28) under the  
28 headship of Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church (Preface to the *BCO*),  
29 and c) promoted within the interconnected spheres of culture, education, politics, and  
30 religion;<sup>1</sup> and  
31

32 **Whereas**, a study committee requires the investment of time and money, obligating the church  
33 to dedicate resources to topics that are especially:  
34 **a. Timely**, thus a study would address current issues known to affect congregations  
35 today and expected to persist in the near-term,  
36 **b. Pervasive**, thus a study would equip across a spectrum of regions and ministries  
37 that are affected directly and indirectly by the topic,  
38 **c. Controversial**, thus a study would increase awareness, identify insights, and  
39 expose opportunities to seek greater unity regarding differing perspectives within  
40 the church,  
41 **d. Treacherous**, thus a study would expose potential misunderstandings, risk  
42 mitigations, and biblical nuances,

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<sup>1</sup> Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: The Founders, the Golden Age, the Breakdown*, trans. Paul  
Stephen Falla (W. W. Norton, 2008), 1060–123; Stephen Eric Bronner, *Critical Theory: A Very Short  
Introduction*, 2nd edition., Very Short Introductions (Oxford University Press, 2017).

- 1 e. **Perilous**, thus a study would highlight the undesirable impacts and augment  
2 spiritual growth through the application of wisdom and discernment;
- 3 f. **Complex**, thus a study would relieve officers and laypeople of having to conduct  
4 their own primary research and compile their own thorough assessments,
- 5 g. **Tangible**, thus a study would enable the church to identify specific actions, engage  
6 practical resources, and implement effective approaches,
- 7 h. **Relevant**, thus, in summary, a study would inform those whose ministry is affected  
8 by disruptive cultural issues and emerging theological questions, and  
9

10 **Whereas**, CT and CRT can be traced broadly to the philosophical influences of 20<sup>th</sup>-century  
11 Neo-Marxism, and more narrowly to the Frankfurt School, a family of movements that  
12 appear to stand in antithesis to the Biblical worldview regarding reality, knowledge,  
13 and ethics<sup>2</sup>, which have now been enculturated into 21<sup>st</sup>-century American education,  
14 creating a *timely* opportunity for the church to speak to the biblical aspects of reality,  
15 knowledge, and ethics; and  
16

17 **Whereas**, CRT grew out of Critical Legal Studies, a movement in the 1970's offering a social-  
18 critical analysis of legal theory, a movement with widespread influence on the current  
19 practice of law<sup>3</sup> as revealed in significant judicial and legislative actions aimed at  
20 incorporating CRT into society, thereby creating a *timely* opportunity for the church  
21 to address active and passive oppression against Christianity that has persisted for  
22 decades and seems likely to continue; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, the forthcoming report on Christian Nationalism creates a *timely* opportunity to  
25 compare and contrast right-wing and left-wing identity-driven views that affect the  
26 church; and  
27

28 **Whereas**, the current 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of America's declaration of independence  
29 in 1776 generates popular interest in the history of the country's economic, social, and  
30 religious pursuits, rendering *timely* engagement on discussions of CRT's views on  
31 ethnicity, slavery, and the imperial and racial excesses of the American colonies,  
32 which are then traced back to 1619 as the establishment of an alleged racist influence  
33 in this country that persists today; and

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<sup>2</sup> "Frankfurt School critical theory is best characterized by a set of methodological aspirations that set it apart from many other forms of social and political theorizing (both in philosophy and the social sciences): It aspires to be (1) *self-reflexive*, accounting for its own embeddedness in specific social and historical conditions, (2) *interdisciplinary*, integrating philosophical analysis with social theory and empirical social research, (3) *materialist*, grounding critical theorizing in social reality, and (4) *emancipatory*, orienting itself toward the goal of social emancipation. These commitments situate the Frankfurt School firmly in the Marxist tradition, and that tradition's aim of overcoming the division between theory and practice without uncritically subsuming one under the other." See Celikates, Robin and Jeffrey Flynn, "Critical Theory (Frankfurt School)", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2023/entries/critical-theory/>>.

<sup>3</sup> See Cassandra Sharp and Maret Leiboff, *Cultural Legal Studies: Law's Popular Cultures and the Metamorphosis of Law* (Routledge, 2016); Matthew Stone et al., eds., *New Critical Legal Thinking: Law and the Political* (Birkbeck Law Press, 2012).

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**Whereas**, CRT has been broadly influential in American culture over the last decade,<sup>4</sup> bringing a *pervasive* influence across business, education, media, and society, affecting regulatory frameworks, school curriculum, “fact-checking”, and social norms, granting the church the opportunity to contrast atheistic deception with biblical truth; and

**Whereas**, CRT offers a reconstruction of law, power, race, and ethics, in ways that are contrary to the principles of law and justice found in the Scripture<sup>5</sup> and manifest a *pervasive* distrust of historical Christianity that deeply affects congregations, church members, and families; and

**Whereas**, CRT has been a hotly debated topic with American Evangelicalism,<sup>6</sup> generating varied responses within the church to this *controversial* topic<sup>7</sup>; and

**Whereas**, the language and terminology that appears to be drawn from CRT (or influenced by CRT) appear in some Reformed and even PCA circles, to wit, “intersectionality,” “micro-aggressions,” “white supremacy,” “white and male-dominant culture,” “minority voices are centered,” “white normativity,” “privilege” & “white privilege,” “systemic racism,” and “whiteness,” exposing an opportunity to recommend theologically-sound definitions and effective usages for what have already proven to be *controversial* and divisive terms within society and the church; and

**Whereas**, the moderator of the 45<sup>th</sup> General Assembly is a scholar who has reportedly expressed commitment to the application of CRT in higher education<sup>8</sup>, creating an opportunity to delineate which aspects of this movement might provide helpful historical perspectives that are consistent with the PCA’s confessional standards, and which aspects might distort facts through atheistic, Neo-Marxist presuppositions making them *treacherous* to adopt; and

**Whereas**, in recent years, the nation has seen what appears to be an increase in social activism, such that, as faithful citizens and residents of American society, church members encounter opportunities to participate in social and political expressions, such as posting content on social media or attending a public demonstration, and these

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<sup>4</sup> See Jonathan Butcher and Mike Gonzalez, “Critical Race Theory, the New Intolerance, and Its Grip on America,” *Backgrounder* (Washington, DC), no. 3567 (December 2020).  
<sup>5</sup> Richard Delgado, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Third Edition (New York University Press, 2017), 1–42.  
<sup>6</sup> See Neil Shenvi and Pat Sawyer, *Critical Dilemma: The Rise of Critical Theories and Social Justice Ideology - Implications for the Church and Society* (Harvest House Publishers, 2023); Edward Thomas Uszynski, *Untangling Critical Race Theory: What Christians Need to Know and Why It Matters* (IVP, 2024).  
<sup>7</sup> Cf. a March 21, 2026 email circulated by *Jude 3 & the PCA* that quoted a CrossPolitic video on You Tube: “It won’t shock you that the people who wanted this whole nightmare were the people pushing critical race theory, were the people pushing what they called soft complimentarianism, which is just women in the pulpit.”  
<sup>8</sup> <https://vanguardpresbyterianchurch.com/2020/07/06/cultural-marxism-in-the-pca/>

1 interactions and events often feature elements of CRT and associated ideologies,  
2 making it *treacherous* for even well-informed church members to discern how and  
3 when to engage, especially given the possibility that expressing Christian compassion  
4 might inadvertently promote unbiblical perspectives; and  
5

6 **Whereas**, in response to CRT, there has been significant social and political backlash  
7 including critique of programs centered around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)  
8 and “reverse discrimination”, meanwhile, the church calls its officers, crafts its  
9 outreach programs, and makes other ecclesiastical decisions that can involve  
10 discussions of bridging historical gaps in demographics, creating a *treacherous*  
11 environment for dialogue when there is inconsistency in definitions and assessments<sup>9</sup>;  
12 and  
13

14 **Whereas**, recent attention to the historic issues of slavery has brought criticism of early  
15 American Christians with some evidence of *ad hominem* rejection of those theologians  
16 who might have owned slaves, such as Jonathan Edwards<sup>10</sup>, perhaps resulting in the  
17 *treacherous* rejection of sound biblical Reformed teaching because of the sources of  
18 that teaching; and  
19

20 **Whereas**, within discussions of race, religion, and related issues, some commentators have  
21 argued that pastors who are part of the majority and/or a “privileged” class do not have  
22 the right to speak out<sup>11</sup>, paving a *treacherous* path for dialogue and consensus; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, “twenty (20) states have enacted legislation opposing or prohibiting CRT-related  
25 curriculum or curriculum topics frequently associated with the concepts of CRT, as of  
26 July 2025, and 20 states have vetoed, overturned, or stalled such legislation,”<sup>12</sup>  
27 reflecting both *perilous* division across the country, as well as active judicial and  
28 legislative efforts that are still in a state of flux, creating an opportunity for biblical  
29 considerations to benefit those who remain uncertain about what to conclude from the  
30 divided social discourse; and  
31

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<sup>9</sup> The 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly considered an overture to request that the Stated Clerk not collect statistical information pertaining to ethnicity. The Overtures Committee recommended that this overture be answered in the affirmative (76-28-3), which it subsequently was by the assembly (1184-361). This three-quarters to one-quarter split suggests that, in the pursuit of greater unity, the church could benefit from further clarification of the issues.

<sup>10</sup> Jason Meyer, “Jonathan Edwards and His Support of Slavery: A Lament”, February 27, 2019, the Gospel Coalition, “Jonathan Edwards enjoyed a lot of study time, in large part, because of his slave or slaves (Venus and/or Leah). Suddenly, all that study time seemed sickening to the degree that it depended on slavery. I had idolized something I should have lamented.”

<sup>11</sup> The New York Times, Lisa Sharon Harper (religion columnist), (November 6, 2018), “Tim Keller has NO AUTHORITY to teach on justice – NONE.” “How INCREDULOUSLY PRIVILEGED for Keller—a RICH WHITE MAN WHOSE MINISTRY TARGETS RICH PEOPLE—to fashion himself as the judge of whether or not injustice rises to the level of OPPRESSION!!! No!!!! The only ones with divine authority to define the bounds of oppression are the oppressed themselves!”

<sup>12</sup> [ballotpedia.org/Critical\\_race\\_theory\\_\(CRT\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Critical_race_theory_(CRT))

1 **Whereas**, CRT traditionally focused on racial constructs, the perilous nature of such teaching  
2 has been extended through its arguments of the relevance of “intersectionality” in  
3 which race and ethnicity are combined with other topics such as gender, sexuality,  
4 immigration, and disabilities<sup>13</sup>, thus expanding the *perilous* threat to the church across  
5 an ever-widening claim of oppression by the church; and  
6

7 **Whereas**, recent law cases stemming from CRT and/or from backlash against it have  
8 demonstrated a *tangible* threat of legal challenges for churches and church-owned  
9 schools, nationwide, that could limit religious freedoms, affect property ownership,  
10 and impose material costs in terms of time and money; and  
11

12 **Whereas**, CRT might underpin current legislative and political efforts to estimate the  
13 economic impacts of slavery and seek to restore through financial remuneration  
14 (“reparations”), delivering a *tangible* impact on the church and its members going  
15 forward, while also providing an opportunity to explore the theological implications  
16 of such efforts at societal reconciliation; and  
17

18 **Whereas**, Jesus Christ Himself engaged with cultural norms, exposing common sins and  
19 bringing *relevant* clarity to unite the church, and He then commissioned the church to  
20 disciple the nations in all that He commanded (Matthew 28:19-20); and  
21

22 **Whereas**, the influences of CT and CRT, in particular, and Neo-Marxism, in general, have  
23 already affected culture and education at multiple levels (primary & secondary,  
24 colleges, universities, and seminaries), which have rendered the topic *timely*,  
25 *pervasive*, *controversial*, *treacherous*, *perilous*, *complex*, *tangible*, and *relevant* for  
26 the church to address; and  
27

28 **Whereas**, no NAPARC denomination to date has produced a study report addressing CRT,  
29 yet the issues persist in affecting the church and its members, making the issue *relevant*  
30 to be studied and reported on by the PCA at this time; and  
31

32 **Therefore, be it resolved that:** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> PCA General Assembly erect and convene a new  
33 Ad Interim Study Committee to study Critical Race Theory (*RAO* 9-1), to analyze  
34 CRT from a Reformed exegetical, Confessional, and theological perspective on  
35 whether the use of CRT is in conformity with the Scripture and the System of doctrine  
36 taught in the *Westminster Standards*. Furthermore, the committee shall provide  
37 pastoral guidance to the Assembly on how to address CRT from a Reformed  
38 theological perspective; and  
39

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<sup>13</sup> David Ryden, *Christianity and Critical Race Theory: A Faithful and Constructive Conversation*, Reformed Journal, September 25, 2024, “That principle [Intersectionality], “embraced by most proponents of CRT, creates something of a scale of marginalization, with axes of oppression that extend beyond race to include gender, disability, sexual orientation, and the like. Importing LGBTQ concerns under the banner of CRT clearly raises significant concerns for Christians with a more traditional sexual ethic, and merits attention if we are to take CRT seriously.”

1 **Be it further resolved**, that the committee shall be appointed by the moderator; and

2

3 **Be it further resolved**, that the budget for the study committee be set at \$10,000/year and  
4 that funds be derived from gifts to the AC designated for that purpose. Presbyteries,  
5 churches, and individuals are highly encouraged to contribute funds to the AC,  
6 designated for this work.

7

8

9 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 23, 2026.*

10 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Sr., Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 81** from the Potomac Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 "Amend *RAO* 1-1 to Require Serving Wine and Grape Juice for the Lord's Supper at  
3 General Assembly"

4  
5 **Whereas**, the Holy Scriptures record that our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of  
6 the Lord's Supper using "the fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:29), which in the historical  
7 and biblical context of the Passover was fermented wine; and

8  
9 **Whereas**, the Westminster Confession of Faith 29.3 states that the minister is to give the  
10 "wine" to the communicants, and the Larger Catechism Q. 168 and 169 specify "wine"  
11 as the outward element signifying the blood of Christ; and

12  
13 **Whereas**, historical Presbyterian practice and biblical scholarship affirm that the scriptural  
14 element is fermented wine, symbolizing joy, gladness, and the full benefits of Christ's  
15 shed blood (Psalm 104:15; Isaiah 25:6); and

16  
17 **Whereas**, the PCA has historically allowed for the use of wine and/or grape juice at the local  
18 church and Presbytery level to accommodate the consciences of the Presbytery,  
19 Session, and the congregation; and

20  
21 **Whereas**, the General Assembly, as the highest court of the Church, should model a high  
22 degree of conformity to the biblical and confessional patterns of worship; and

23  
24 **Whereas**, many commissioners to the General Assembly hold a conviction of conscience that  
25 wine is the proper biblical element for a fuller expression of the Sacrament;

26  
27 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *RAO* 1-1 be amended by adding a new sentence at the end of  
28 the section to read as follows (underlining for additions):

29  
30 **1-1.** The General Assembly shall be called to order at the designated time by the  
31 Moderator, and shall begin with a worship service, including a season of prayer,  
32 a sermon or exhortation by the retiring Moderator, and the celebration of the  
33 Lord's Supper. In the administration of the Lord's Supper at the General  
34 Assembly, both wine and grape juice shall be provided and clearly identified, to  
35 respect the consciences of all commissioners.

36  
37  
38 **Be it further resolved** that if this amendment is approved, the Stated Clerk be directed to  
39 incorporate it into future editions of the *RAO*, to communicate it to the Committee  
40 responsible for General Assembly worship arrangements, and to ensure its  
41 implementation beginning with the next General Assembly.

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43  
44 *Adopted by the Potomac Presbytery at its called meeting, April 20, 2026*  
45 *Attested by RE Doug Leepa, Moderator*

1 **OVERTURE 82** from the Rocky Mountain Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 12, 13, and 25 to Clarify the Right of the Congregation to Give Consent  
3 to those who Exercise Authority Over Them”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the PCA was intentionally formed as a grassroots, non-hierarchical denomination  
6 to counteract the hierarchical abuses of the Presbyterian Church in the United States;  
7 and  
8

9 **Whereas**, our PCA Church fathers intentionally adapted the eight Preliminary Principles from  
10 the first General Assembly of the American church in 1789 to ensure that the PCA  
11 would never be an aristocratic, top-down denomination or follow the hierarchical  
12 movement of the Presbyterian Church in the United States [Taylor, L.R. Church Polity  
13 (PCA). Church Polity.doc]; and  
14

15 **Whereas**, Preliminary Principle 7 states, “All church power, whether exercised by the body  
16 in general, or by representation, is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy  
17 Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice.” Reflecting this principle, *BCO* 3-1  
18 reads, “The power which Christ has committed to His Church vests in the whole body,  
19 the rulers and *those ruled*, constituting it a spiritual commonwealth” (emphasis added).  
20 *BCO* 3-4 adds, “The power of the Church is exclusively spiritual;” *BCO* 11-1 states  
21 that the “authority of church courts is in all respects moral or spiritual;” and 11-2 reads,  
22 “The jurisdiction of Church courts is only ministerial and declarative, and relates to  
23 the doctrines and precepts of Christ, to the order of the Church, and to the exercise of  
24 discipline.”; and  
25

26 **Whereas**, Preliminary Principle 6 states, “Though the character, qualifications and authority  
27 of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method  
28 of officer investiture, *the power to elect persons* to the exercise of authority in any  
29 particular society resides in that society.” This principle is codified in *BCO* 3-1 by  
30 stating that Church power, “as exercised by the people, extends to the choice of those  
31 officers whom He has appointed in His Church.” In addition, *BCO* 16-2 states that it  
32 is a right that cannot be taken away from the local church, “The government of the  
33 Church is by officers gifted to represent Christ, and the right of God’s people to  
34 recognize by election to office those so gifted is *inalienable*.” In his commentary on  
35 the *BCO*, Dr. Morton Smith stated, “The right of the people to elect to office those  
36 whom they recognize as properly gifted to serve, is set forth as a basic principle of  
37 Presbyterian government, which is inalienable. It is a right that may not be taken from  
38 the people. *One of the implications of this principle is that no one can be imposed upon*  
39 *a congregation, without an election by the people, or at least their consent*” (Smith,  
40 M. 2007. *Commentary on the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in*  
41 *America*. Presbyterian Press, Taylors, SC. 6th Ed., pp. 171-172; emphasis added); and  
42

43 **Whereas**, the sentence on Presbytery power in *BCO* 13-9, “In cases in which the Session  
44 cannot exercise its authority, it shall have power to assume original jurisdiction,” can  
45 and has been interpreted at times in a way that supersedes and contradicts and/or

1 violates the *inalienable* right of a church by giving a Presbytery the right to appoint a  
2 temporary Session over a church without the consent of the members (emphasis  
3 added); and  
4

5 **Whereas**, in Judicial Case #5, the 13<sup>th</sup> GA ruled: “*BCO* 11-4 reads in part, “In the opinion of  
6 the Commission, *BCO* 13-9 contains no express provision, which meaning is clear and  
7 undebatable, as would permit a presbytery to require the receiving of a presbytery  
8 committee’s visit without a request by or a specific problem in the session or  
9 congregation in question... the Commission commends the desire of the presbytery  
10 for improved pastoral oversight, and wishes to encourage appropriate action to such  
11 an end on a voluntary basis. However, the Commission also wishes to protect lower  
12 courts from any possible encroachment, implied or otherwise, by higher courts, and  
13 beyond the express powers given to those higher courts in the *BCO*.”  
14 ([https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/13th\\_pcaga\\_1985.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/13th_pcaga_1985.pdf), p.128-129.); and  
15

16 **Whereas**, in SJC Case 90-4, a complaint was brought against a Presbytery which had  
17 determined that a particular Session could not exercise its authority and the Presbytery  
18 subsequently assumed original jurisdiction by appointing a temporary Session over the  
19 church. The SJC ruled in that complaint that the Presbytery erred, concluding that  
20 presbyteries, through commissions or otherwise, do not have the power to assume  
21 jurisdiction over a church and take actions without the consent of the congregation  
22 (*M19GA*, 19th\_pcaga\_1991, pp. 488-508); and  
23

24 **Whereas**, in SJC Case 2001-8, the SJC ruled that a Presbytery erred in suspending a church’s  
25 Session and further by appointing a commission to act for the Session. The SJC stated,  
26 *It is explicit in the BCO* of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* 25-11) that none  
27 of the rights and responsibilities of the congregation shall ever be taken away ‘without  
28 the express consent and affirmative action’ of the congregation” (*M30GA*,  
29 30th\_pcaga\_2002, pp. 133-137); and  
30

31 **Whereas**, in SJC 2001-34, the SJC ruled: “Thus the higher court may not proceed in such a  
32 way that would ultimately require civil action against the local congregation without  
33 a formal vote of the congregation. The General Assembly has, on 2 occasions, by  
34 overwhelming majority votes, approved and adopted the Ad Interim Committee’s  
35 Summary of the Philosophical and Theological basis for PCA structure, which  
36 affirmed these principles, to-wit: (1) A higher court may not “act for” a lower court.  
37 (2) A higher court may “act on” an issue or case. (3) A higher court, as a last resort,  
38 may “act against” “the lower court by dismissing it from the fellowship.” (SJC 2001-  
39 34 [https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/33rd\\_pcaga\\_2005.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/33rd_pcaga_2005.pdf), pp. 72-98); and  
40

41 **Whereas**, *BCO* 12-1 provides that a church with no pastor and only one ruling elder “does  
42 not constitute a Session, but he should take spiritual oversight of the church, should  
43 represent it at Presbytery, should grant letters of dismission, and should report to the  
44 Presbytery any matter needing the action of a Church court. Since the one ruling elder  
45 cannot call a congregation meeting; and since only a Session can call a congregation

1 meeting, (“the Session shall call such meeting and give public notice of at least one  
2 week, *BCO* 25-2); and since *BCO* 16-2 states that, “no man can be placed over a church  
3 in any office without the election, or at least the consent of that church,” there is no  
4 constitutional means by which a congregation can be authorized to meet in order to  
5 request a Presbytery to appoint elders to serve as an interim Session under *BCO* 15-1.  
6

7 **Therefore**, Rocky Mountain Presbytery overtures the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to amend the  
8 *BCO* in the respective *BCO* provisions below in order to provide clarity, cohesion and  
9 uniformity in these provisions, and that the following *BCO* paragraphs be amended as  
10 follows (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions).  
11

12 **12-1.** ...

13 When a church has no pastor and there are five or more ruling elders, three shall  
14 constitute a quorum; if there are less than five ruling elders, two shall constitute a  
15 quorum; if there is only one ruling elder, he does not constitute a Session, but he  
16 should take spiritual oversight of the church, should represent it at Presbytery,  
17 should receive new members, should grant letters of dismissal, convene a  
18 meeting of the congregation when directed to do so by the Presbytery for the  
19 transaction of designated business only (cf., *BCO* 13-9.i), and should report to the  
20 Presbytery any matter needing the action of a Church court.  
21

22 **13-9.** The Presbytery has power to receive and issue\* appeals, complaints, and  
23 references brought before it in an orderly manner. In cases in which the Session  
24 cannot exercise its authority, ~~the Presbytery~~ shall have power to assume original  
25 jurisdiction with the consent of the Session or the congregation. ~~The Presbytery~~  
26 has power:  
27

28 ...

- 29 f. To condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the  
30 Church; to visit ~~churches~~ Sessions with their consent for the purpose of  
31 inquiring into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in ~~them~~ their  
32 churches; to approve at the request of the members thereof to unite or  
33 divide churches, ~~at the request of the members thereof~~; to form and receive  
34 new churches; to ~~take~~ provide special oversight of churches without pastors  
35 with their consent (cf., Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 15-1; *BCO* 16-2); to  
36 dissolve churches with their consent; to dismiss churches with their  
37 consent;  
38 g. To devise measures for the enlargement of the Church within its bounds;  
39 in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the  
40 churches under its care with the Session’s consent;  
41 h. ~~And, finally, to~~ propose to the Assembly such measures as may be of  
42 common advantage to the Church at large.  
43 i. And, finally, in cases where a particular church has no remaining Session  
44 members, to call congregational meetings for the purpose of obtaining  
45 consent for the appointment of a temporary government in accordance with  
*BCO* 15-1 and *BCO* 16-2.

1           **25-2.** Whenever it may seem for the best interests of the church that a  
2 congregational meeting should be held, the Session shall call such meeting and  
3 give public notice of at least one week. No business shall be transacted at such  
4 meeting except what is stated in the notice. When there is only one elder (BCO  
5 12-1), he shall convene the congregation when directed to do so by the  
6 Presbytery, for the transaction of designated business only (cf., BCO 13-9.i).  
7 The Session shall always call a congregational meeting when requested in  
8 writing to do so:...

9  
10 \*The wording of the proposed amendments to *BCO* 12-1, 13-9.i. and 25-2 is comparable with  
11 the authority *BCO* 13-12 gives to General Assembly to direct Presbyteries to call special  
12 meetings to conduct designated business: (“The Presbytery also shall convene when directed  
13 to do so by the General Assembly, for the transaction of designated business only.) Presently,  
14 there is no *BCO* provision by which congregations can be convened to transact business if  
15 there is only one or no Ruling Elders. Thus, these *BCO* amendments will provide a clear  
16 constitutional means by which Presbyteries would be authorized to call congregation meetings  
17 if and when the need arises.

18  
19 Thus, each of the amended *BCO* provisions would read:

20  
21           **12-1.**       ...

22           When a church has no pastor and there are five or more ruling elders, three shall  
23 constitute a quorum; if there are less than five ruling elders, two shall constitute a  
24 quorum; if there is only one ruling elder, he does not constitute a Session, but he  
25 should take spiritual oversight of the church, should represent it at Presbytery,  
26 should receive new members, should grant letters of dismissal, convene a  
27 meeting of the congregation when directed to do so by the Presbytery for the  
28 transaction of designated business only (cf., *BCO* 13-9.i), and should report to the  
29 Presbytery any matter needing the action of a Church court.

30  
31           **13-9.** The Presbytery has power to receive and issue\* appeals, complaints, and  
32 references brought before it in an orderly manner. In cases in which the Session  
33 cannot exercise its authority, the Presbytery shall have power to assume original  
34 jurisdiction with the consent of the Session or the congregation. The Presbytery  
35 has power:

36           ...

- 37           f. To condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the  
38 Church; to visit Sessions with their consent for the purpose of inquiring  
39 into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in their churches; to  
40 approve at the request of the members thereof to unite or divide churches;  
41 to form and receive new churches; to provide special oversight of churches  
42 without pastors with their consent (cf., Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 15-1;  
43 *BCO* 16-2); to dissolve churches with their consent; to dismiss churches  
44 with their consent;

- 1 g. To devise measures for the enlargement of the Church within its bounds;  
2 in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the  
3 churches under its care with the Session's consent;
- 4 h. To propose to the Assembly such measures as may be of common  
5 advantage to the Church at large.
- 6 i. And, finally, in cases where a particular church has no remaining Session  
7 members, to call congregational meetings for the purpose of obtaining  
8 consent for the appointment of a temporary government in accordance with  
9 *BCO* 15-1 and *BCO* 16-2.

10  
11 **25-2.** Whenever it may seem for the best interests of the church that a  
12 congregational meeting should be held, the Session shall call such meeting and  
13 give public notice of at least one week. No business shall be transacted at such  
14 meeting except what is stated in the notice. When there is only one elder (*BCO*  
15 12-1), he shall convene the congregation when directed to do so by the  
16 Presbytery, for the transaction of designated business only (cf., *BCO* 13-9.i).  
17 The Session shall always call a congregational meeting when requested in  
18 writing to do so:...

19  
20 **RATIONALE:**

21  
22 The proposed amendments, as a unit, seek to clarify the nature of the relationship and authority  
23 between Sessions and their Presbyteries as expressed in the PCA's *BCO*. The PCA is a  
24 grassroots denomination, which means that it has a non-hierarchical system of government.  
25 The PCA's form of connectionalism is based on mutual love and confidence (*BCO* 25-11),  
26 where church courts exercise only moral and spiritual powers. These amendments seek to  
27 clarify the context and boundaries of the relationship between church courts.

28  
29 The proposed amendments seek to apply our non-hierarchical connectionalism by stating  
30 more clearly the relative relationship between lower and higher courts. Lower courts and  
31 higher courts minister and work within their respective areas and honor the boundaries set  
32 forth in the *BCO*.

33  
34 The PCA's brand of Presbyterian polity differs from generic Presbyterian polity. The PCA  
35 form has a connectionalism that is spiritual, not civil (*BCO* 3-4); it has a grassroots framework.  
36 Higher courts cannot act for a lower court. They cannot require, mandate, direct, or instruct  
37 lower courts to take actions in their respective courts; that is, Presbytery cannot dictate what  
38 a Session does in the local church with regard to its internal ministry (there are a few  
39 exceptions, like judicial matters, which have their own distinct formats). *BCO* 25-8, 9, and 10  
40 are very clear that higher courts cannot do anything that could be construed as "backdoor"  
41 takings (that is, remove a Session and replace it with a Presbytery Commission so they then  
42 have authority over the local church's assets and property). Thus Presbyteries appointing  
43 Commissions to serve as interim Sessions without congregational approval could be  
44 considered as the higher court taking a form of a backdoor control of a lower court, an action  
45 which would be contrary to *BCO* authority.

1 If the particular church does not have sufficient elders to provide oversight or needs assistance  
2 for a period of time, the congregation may request the Presbytery to appoint elders per *BCO*  
3 16-2) to serve as an interim Session (*BCO* 15-1). However, the Presbytery cannot appoint  
4 elders without the consent of the congregation (*BCO* 16-2). If a congregation makes the  
5 request for additional elders at a duly called congregation meeting, and the Presbytery  
6 appoints a commission to serve as an interim Session, then those elders serve as the Session  
7 of the particular church since they are serving by consent of the congregation (“When a  
8 commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session,  
9 not a Presbytery,” *BCO* 15-1). If there are elders already serving on the Session, they may  
10 continue to serve along with the interim Session appointed by Presbytery.

11  
12 Further comments from *The Historic Polity of the PCA*, by Jack Williamson and Robert  
13 Cannada:

14  
15 The PCA denomination is a spiritual organization and the power of those acting within the  
16 denomination, whether it be the General Assembly, a presbytery, or a local congregation, or  
17 some committee or commission, is purely and exclusively moral and spiritual.

18  
19 *What is unique about the polity of the PCA, in our judgment, consists of the provisions adopted*  
20 *to maintain that polity.* The Book of Church Order, in describing the polity adopted by the  
21 PCA, clearly sets forth and makes it clear that the church courts have only moral and spiritual  
22 powers. Their administrative and declaratory powers are moral and spiritual. In any attempt  
23 by a church court to exercise administrative or declarative powers over any other church court,  
24 it must be remembered and recognized that their statements, their “declarations” and any other  
25 directive can only be given in the exercise of these moral and spiritual powers. Accordingly,  
26 it is essential that this be made clear in every instance. *No church court has the authority or*  
27 *power to call upon any civil authority to enforce upon a lower court any directive of the higher*  
28 *church court and no church court should pretend to use language that would indicate that it*  
29 *has such power.*

30  
31 Another “unique” provision in Chapter 25 is the recognition of the fact that the PCA was  
32 created by congregations that had been organized and existed for years. These congregations  
33 bound themselves together in the PCA in a relationship which is voluntary, based upon mutual  
34 love and confidence, and in no sense to be maintained by the exercise of any force or coercion.

35  
36 In our opinion, if the provisions of the BCO are changed or interpreted so as to limit or destroy  
37 the control of the congregation over its internal affairs then the basic polity of the PCA will  
38 have been changed. We submit that any such change or interpretation must be resisted. The  
39 “power,” as such, must remain in the local congregations and they must be challenged to  
40 assume the responsibilities that go with that “power.”

41  
42 We believe that the following language sets forth the proper interpretation of PCA polity:

- 43  
44 a. The power of a session of a local church, a presbytery and the General Assembly  
45 when acting as a church court is only ministerial and declarative but when acting

1 through its civil entity they have access to the civil powers of the State to the extent  
2 necessary for their protection and security. No presbytery has any coercive or civil  
3 power over any session or local church and it should never act as if or pretend that  
4 it has such power. Likewise, the General Assembly has no coercive or civil power  
5 over any presbytery, and it should never act as if or pretend that it has such power.  
6 See Appendix 13 for a chart demonstrating this principle.  
7 b. Church courts should be mindful of the fact that even though no other church court  
8 has any civil power over it and therefore they cannot be forced into complying  
9 with some provision in the Book of Church Order, Rules of Discipline or the  
10 Directory for Worship, the content of these documents has been adopted by the  
11 denomination for the guidance, instruction and use of its members and should be  
12 observed as near as circumstances will allow and Christian prudence direct.  
13  
14

15 *Adopted by the Rocky Mountain Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 23, 2026*  
16 *Attested by /s/ TE Del Farris, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 83** from the Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CC, CTS)  
2 “Require Courses on Scripture and Doctrine at Covenant College and Covenant  
3 Seminary Be Taught by Ordained Elders”  
4

5 **Whereas**, Holy Scripture clearly teaches that women are not permitted to teach or exercise  
6 authority over men, grounding this prohibition not in culture but in the created order  
7 itself (1 Tim. 2:12–13; 1 Cor. 11:8–9); and  
8

9 **Whereas**, the *Book of Church Order* affirms that the authoritative teaching of God’s Word is  
10 a function of those lawfully called, examined, and ordained to church office, which  
11 offices are restricted to qualified men (*BCO* 7-2; 8-1; 8-5; 21-4); and  
12

13 **Whereas**, creation ordinances are binding beyond the immediate context of gathered worship  
14 and are applicable wherever the moral law of God governs human conduct (Gen. 2:18–  
15 23; 1 Tim. 2:13–14); and  
16

17 **Whereas**, educational institutions affiliated with or serving the Presbyterian Church in  
18 America (i.e., Covenant College and Covenant Seminary), while not themselves  
19 churches, nevertheless operate under the authority of Christ and seek to apply all of  
20 Scripture to all of life; and  
21

22 **Whereas**, the scholarly study and systematic teaching of the Bible and of Christian doctrine  
23 require thorough knowledge of Scripture, its original languages, and the system of  
24 doctrine taught therein, and the PCA requires formal examination and ordination to  
25 safeguard doctrinal fidelity (*BCO* 12-5; 21-5; 24-1);  
26

27 **Therefore, be it resolved**, that the General Assembly affirm that courses on the systematic  
28 study of the Bible or of Bible doctrine taught at Covenant College or Covenant  
29 Seminary should be taught only by men who have been duly examined and ordained  
30 as teaching or ruling elders in NAPARC denominations; and  
31

32 **Be it further resolved**, that this restriction applies specifically to instruction whose primary  
33 purpose is the authoritative exposition of Scripture or Christian doctrine, and not to  
34 courses in which Scripture is applied incidentally or illustratively within broader  
35 academic subject matter; and  
36

37 **Be it further resolved**, that the respective Agencies be directed to amend their bylaws to  
38 reflect and enforce these resolutions.  
39  
40

41 *Adopted by the Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its 60<sup>th</sup> stated meeting, April 14, 2026*  
42 *Attested by TE Robby Baxter, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 84** from the Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 12 and 13 to Require Annual Attestation of Officer’s Views”  
3

4 **Whereas**, officers in the Presbyterian Church in America are to be examined for their  
5 theological views; and  
6

7 **Whereas**, in accordance with our practice of Good Faith Subscription, candidates for the  
8 gospel ministry may state in their own words any differences with the *Confession of*  
9 *Faith* and *Catechisms* (*RAO* 16-3); and  
10

11 **Whereas**, when an ordained minister finds himself out of accord with any of the fundamentals  
12 of this system of doctrine, he bears the ethical burden on his own initiative to make  
13 known to appropriate courts the change in his views (*BCO* 24-6); and  
14

15 **Whereas**, in exercising review and control, courts currently have no mechanism by which  
16 they can initiate their own recertification of officers’ views; and  
17

18 **Whereas**, there is a real danger of doctrinal drift, and it is the duty of the Presbytery to promote  
19 and safeguard the “faith once for all delivered” to the saints as preached in its pulpits  
20 (Jude 3); and  
21

22 **Whereas**, this proposed practice will help each court give a good report as to its care for its  
23 officers and so promote the honor of Christ; and  
24

25 **Whereas**, Scripture commands us, “Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that  
26 all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist  
27 in this, for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:15-  
28 16);  
29

30 **Therefore, be it resolved**, that Northwest Georgia Presbytery overture the 53<sup>rd</sup> General  
31 Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to add subparagraph 12-5.g and  
32 paragraph 12-6 to *BCO* 12 and renumbering *BCO* 12-6 through 12-9 as *BCO* 12-7  
33 through 12-10; and to add subparagraph 13-9.i and paragraph 13-10 to *BCO* 13 and  
34 renumbering *BCO* 13-10 through 13-13 as *BCO* 13-11 through 13-14 (underlining for  
35 additions):  
36

37 **12-5.**

38 **g.** To maintain sound doctrine among its elders and deacons.  
39

40 **12-6.** The vows taken by ruling elders and deacons to uphold our doctrinal standards  
41 are foundational. It is incumbent upon church courts to hold these officers to their  
42 vows. To that end, each Session shall annually record an attestation from every ruling  
43 elder and deacon in its jurisdiction indicating whether his views remain unchanged or,  
44 if they have changed, in what regard he is now dubious or in disagreement with any  
45 aspects of the *Confession of Faith* or *Catechisms*. The court shall make a record in its

1 minutes if the officer has no changes in his view(s), or if the officer has changed his  
2 view(s), any change(s) shall be recorded in his own words, along with the court's  
3 judgment, consistent with the categories provided in RAO 16-3.e.7.  
4

5 **13-9.**

6 **h.** To maintain sound doctrine among its teaching elders.

7  
8 **hi.** And, finally, to propose to the Assembly such measures as may be of  
9 common advantage to the Church at large.

10  
11 **13-10.** The vows taken by ministers to uphold our doctrinal standards are  
12 foundational. It is incumbent upon church courts to hold these men accountable to  
13 their vows. To that end, each Presbytery shall annually record an attestation from every  
14 teaching elder (or man licensed to preach) in its jurisdiction indicating whether his  
15 views remain unchanged or, if they have changed, in what regard he is now dubious  
16 or in disagreement with any aspects of the *Confession of Faith* or *Catechisms*. The  
17 court shall make a record in its minutes if the man has no changes in his view(s), or if  
18 the man has changed his view(s), any change(s) shall be recorded in his own words,  
19 along with the court's judgment, consistent with the categories provided in RAO 16-  
20 3.e.7.  
21

22 So that the amended sections will read as follows:

23  
24 **12-5.**

25 **g.** To maintain sound doctrine among its elders and deacons.

26  
27 **12-6.** The vows taken by ruling elders and deacons to uphold our doctrinal standards  
28 are foundational. It is incumbent upon church courts to hold these officers to their  
29 vows. To that end, each Session shall annually record an attestation from every ruling  
30 elder and deacon in its jurisdiction indicating whether his views remain unchanged or,  
31 if they have changed, in what regard he is now dubious or in disagreement with any  
32 aspects of the *Confession of Faith* or *Catechisms*. The court shall make a record in its  
33 minutes if the officer has no changes in his view(s), or if the officer has changed his  
34 view(s), any change(s) shall be recorded in his own words, along with the court's  
35 judgment, consistent with the categories provided in RAO 16-3.e.7.  
36

37 **13-9.**

38 **h.** To maintain sound doctrine among its teaching elders.

39  
40 **i.** And, finally, to propose to the Assembly such measures as may be of  
41 common advantage to the Church at large.

42  
43 **13-10.** The vows taken by ministers to uphold our doctrinal standards are  
44 foundational. It is incumbent upon church courts to hold these men accountable to  
45 their vows. To that end, each Presbytery shall annually record an attestation from every

1 teaching elder (or man licensed to preach) in its jurisdiction indicating whether his  
2 views remain unchanged or, if they have changed, in what regard he is now dubious  
3 or in disagreement with any aspects of the *Confession of Faith* or *Catechisms*. The  
4 court shall make a record in its minutes if the man has no changes in his view(s), or if  
5 the man has changed his view(s), any change(s) shall be recorded in his own words,  
6 along with the court's judgment, consistent with the categories provided in *RAO 16-*  
7 *3.e.7*.

8  
9

10 *Adopted by the Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its 60<sup>th</sup> stated meeting, April 14, 2026*

11 *Attested by TE Robby Baxter, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 85** from the Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Add *BCO* 44 on Objections”  
3

4 **Be it resolved** the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly approve the following amendment to *Book of*  
5 *Church Order (BCO)* Chapters 44 and 45 (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for  
6 deletions):  
7

8 **CHAPTER 44**

9 ~~*(Vacated)*~~  
10 *Objections*  
11

12 44-1. Any teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder who did not have the right  
13 to vote on an appeal or complaint (see *BCO* 39-2) and is not satisfied with the action  
14 taken by the court, is entitled to have an objection recorded.

15 An objection shall be filed with the clerk of the lower court within thirty (30)  
16 days following the meeting of the lower court or with the clerk of the General  
17 Assembly before its adjournment.  
18

19 44-2. An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court, expressing a  
20 different opinion from the decision of the court and may be accompanied with the  
21 reasons on which it is founded.  
22

23 44-3. If an objection be couched in temperate language, and be respectful to the  
24 court, it shall be recorded; and the court may, if deemed necessary, put an answer to  
25 the objection on the records along with it. Here the matter shall end, unless the parties  
26 obtain permission to withdraw their objection absolutely, or for the sake of  
27 amendment.  
28

29 **CHAPTER 45**

30 ~~*Dissents, and Protests, and Objections*~~  
31

32  
33 **45-1.** Any member of a court who had a right to vote on a question, and is not satisfied  
34 with the action taken by that court, is entitled to have a dissent or protest recorded.

35 None can join in a dissent or protest against an action of any court except those  
36 who had a right to vote in the case.

37 ~~Any member who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint (see~~  
38 ~~*BCO* 39-2), and is not satisfied with the action taken by the court, is entitled to have~~  
39 ~~an objection recorded.~~

40 A dissent, ~~or protest or objection~~ shall be filed with the clerk of the lower court  
41 within thirty (30) days following the meeting of the lower court or with the clerk of  
42 the General Assembly before its adjournment.  
43

44 ~~45-4. An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court who did not~~  
45 ~~have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint, expressing a different opinion from~~

1 ~~the decision of the court and may be accompanied with the reasons on which it is~~  
2 ~~founded.~~

3  
4 ~~45-54.~~ If a dissent, or protest, ~~or objection~~ be couched in temperate language, and be  
5 respectful to the court, it shall be recorded; and the court may, if deemed necessary,  
6 put an answer to the dissent, or protest, ~~or objection~~ on the records along with it. Here  
7 the matter shall end, unless the parties obtain permission to withdraw their dissent, or  
8 protest, ~~or objection~~ absolutely, or for the sake of amendment.  
9

## 10 **Rationale**

### 11 12 **1. Theoretical**

- 13 a. Though the current *BCO* places objections with dissents and protests, objections  
14 have a fundamentally different requirement. Placing them in a separate chapter  
15 recognizes this difference.  
16 b. We should always highlight ways in which elders can give public voice to their  
17 consciences, per Preliminary Principles 1 and 5.  
18

### 19 **2. Practical**

- 20 a. Background: A member of a lower court may declare his objection to a higher court  
21 when, in cases of appeal or complaint, he has lost the right to sit, deliberate, and  
22 vote, because the appeal or complaint concerns the court of which he is a member  
23 (*BCO* 39-2), e.g., a ruling elder before a Presbytery considering a  
24 b. complaint against his Session or a member of the Standing Judicial Commission  
25 (SJC) considering an appeal from his Presbytery.  
26 c. Goal: Just as dissents and protests allow for elders to give voice to their  
27 consciences and conclude the matter, so too objections should be encouraged in  
28 the PCA for men to have an opportunity to speak into particular situations without  
29 encumbering the courts of the church with more work that takes away from our  
30 gospel endeavors.  
31 d. Example: If a ruling elder loses his Complaint against his Session at Presbytery,  
32 filing an objection may be the better way to satisfy his conscience than carrying  
33 his Complaint to the SJC, especially if he wisely discerns that the SJC will uphold  
34 Presbytery's decision.  
35

### 36 **3. Organizational**

- 37 a. We have a chapter, *BCO* 44, which is conveniently vacant, and can receive this  
38 action that is different from the other two.  
39 b. Though we want to expand the practice of objections as a way of reducing the  
40 judicial load on our courts, there is a limiting principle: An elder must be a member  
41 of the court but be unable to vote due to *BCO* 39-2. So, in the case of a Presbytery  
42 commission or the Standing Judicial Commission, no one outside the commission  
43 can file an objection—only those on the commission who could not vote have a  
44 right to do so.  
45

Overture 85, Northwest Georgia Presbytery

1

2 *Adopted by the Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its 60<sup>th</sup> stated meeting, April 14, 2026*

3 *Attested by TE Robby Baxter, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 86** from the Session of Grace Covenant Church (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 43 to Rename *Complaints* as *Inquiries*”  
3

4 **Whereas**, per *BCO* 43-1 “a complaint is a written representation made against some act or  
5 decision of a court of the Church”; and  
6

7 **Whereas**, the language of *BCO* 43-1 identifying a “written representation” as a “complaint”  
8 has never been amended; and  
9

10 **Whereas**, the Merriam Webster Dictionary’s definition of “representation” includes “a  
11 statement or account made to influence opinion or action”, “formal statement made  
12 against something or to effect a change”, and “a formal protest”; and  
13

14 **Whereas**, the Merriam Webster Dictionary’s definition of “complaint” includes “expression  
15 of grief, pain, or dissatisfaction”, “something that is the cause or subject of protest or  
16 outcry”, and “a formal allegation against a party”; and  
17

18 **Whereas**, the characterization of a “written representation” as a “complaint” over time has  
19 proven to be needlessly divisive as members of the courts complained against have at  
20 certain times misconstrued a “written representation” (complaint) as prescribed in  
21 *BCO* 43-1 as “a formal allegation against a party” (that is “a charge” or “process” per  
22 *BCO* 31 and 32); and  
23

24 **Whereas**, any “written representation” (complaint) brought before a higher court by a person  
25 with standing that is in temperate language (and with orderliness established) should  
26 be considered a dissenting declaration against an act or decision of the court (i.e., “our  
27 standards say X, and the court has seemingly done Y”) as opposed to an accusation of  
28 sin or moral failing associated with offenses as understood in *BCO* 29; and  
29

30 **Whereas**, the SJC ruled in Case 2019-11: *Crouse vs Northwest Georgia Presbytery* that “The  
31 right to seek redress of improper actions by complaint or appeal is foundational to our  
32 Constitutional system. Both due process and basic charity demand that no member or  
33 officer should be ostracized or penalized for the mere filing of a complaint or appeal.  
34 The filing of a complaint or appeal may never, standing alone, constitute proper  
35 grounds to deny any privilege of membership or office in our church”; and  
36

37 **Whereas**, what the SJC has affirmed as a foundational right within the PCA’s Constitutional  
38 system has from time to time been misunderstood by courts complained against and  
39 labeled as litigious action that disturbs the peace; and  
40

41 **Whereas**, verbiage that casts the act of filing a complaint in less divisive terms will promote  
42 collegial and Christ-honoring interactions among the people of God;  
43

44 **Therefore, be it resolved that** that in order to prevent the misunderstanding of a complaint  
45 as malicious in intent or the initiation of formal process (*BCO* 31) and to remove

1 verbiage perceived as pejorative, that *BCO* 43 be amended to replace the word  
2 “complaint” with “inquiry” and “complainant” with “inquirer” in accordance with the  
3 underlined text below so that *BCO* 43 as amended would read (underlining for  
4 additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
5

6 **CHAPTER 43**

7 *Complaints Inquiries*

8 **43-1.** ~~A complaint~~ An inquiry is a written representation made against some  
9 act or decision of a court of the Church. It is the right of any communing member  
10 of the Church in good standing to make ~~complaint~~ an inquiry against any action of  
11 a court to whose jurisdiction he is subject, except that no ~~complaint~~ inquiry is  
12 allowable in a judicial case after process has commenced. If, at any time after  
13 process has commenced, a *BCO* 43-1 ~~complaint~~ inquiry is timely filed, the court’s  
14 adjudication shall be delayed until after the judicial case has been completed, or,  
15 if an appeal is filed, after it has been fully adjudicated or withdrawn. During  
16 judicial process, the accused may raise *BCO* 32-14 objections on a variety of  
17 matters and the original court shall decide each. Those decisions could be  
18 reviewable on appeal.  
19

20  
21 **43-2.** ~~A complaint~~ An inquiry shall first be made to the court whose act or  
22 decision is alleged to be in error. Written notice of ~~complaint~~ inquiry, with  
23 supporting reasons, shall be filed with the clerk of the court within sixty (60) days  
24 following the meeting of the court. The court shall consider the ~~complaint~~ inquiry  
25 at its next stated meeting, or at a called meeting prior to its next stated meeting,  
26 provided that the ~~complaint~~ inquiry has been filed with the clerk at least ten (10)  
27 days in advance. If the ~~complaint~~ inquiry is filed with less than ten (10) days’  
28 notice, the court may consider the ~~complaint~~ inquiry at a later meeting not more  
29 than 60 days later. No attempt should be made to circularize the court to which  
30 ~~complaint~~ inquiry is being made by either party.  
31

32 **43-3.** If, after considering ~~a complaint~~ an inquiry, the court alleged to be delinquent  
33 or in error is of the opinion that it has not erred, and denies the ~~complaint~~ inquiry,  
34 the ~~complainant~~ inquirer may take that ~~complaint~~ inquiry to the next higher court.  
35 If the lower court fails to consider the ~~complaint~~ inquiry against it by or at its next  
36 stated meeting, provided that the ~~complaint~~ inquiry has been filed with the clerk at  
37 least ten (10) days in advance, the ~~complainant~~ inquirer may take that ~~complaint~~  
38 inquiry to the next higher court. If the ~~complaint~~ inquiry is filed with less than ten  
39 (10) days’ notice, the court may consider the ~~complaint~~ inquiry at a later meeting  
40 not more than 60 days later. Written notice thereof shall be filed with both the clerk  
41 of the lower court and the clerk of the higher court within thirty (30) days of  
42 notification of the last court’s decision.

43 Notification of the last court’s decision shall be deemed to have occurred  
44 on the day of mailing (if certified, registered or express mail of a national postal  
45 service or any private service where verifying receipt is utilized), the day of hand  
46 delivery, or the day of confirmed receipt in the case of e-mail or facsimile.

1 Furthermore, compliance with such requirements shall be deemed to have been  
2 fulfilled if a party cannot be located after diligent inquiry or if a party refuses to  
3 accept delivery.  
4

5 **43-4.** Notice of ~~complaint~~ inquiry shall not have the effect of suspending the  
6 action against which the ~~complaint~~ inquiry is made, unless one-third (1/3) of the  
7 members present when the action was taken shall vote for its suspension, until the  
8 final decision in the higher court.  
9

10 **43-5.** The court against which ~~complaint~~ inquiry is made shall appoint one or  
11 more representatives to defend its action before the higher court, and the parties in  
12 the case shall be known as ~~complainant~~ inquirer and respondent. The ~~complainant~~  
13 inquirer himself may present his ~~complaint~~ inquiry, or he may obtain the assistance  
14 of a communing member of the Presbyterian Church in America, who is in good  
15 standing, in presenting his ~~complaint~~ inquiry.  
16

17 **43-6.** It shall be the duty of the clerk of the lower court to file with the clerk of  
18 the higher court, not more than thirty (30) days after receipt of notice of ~~complaint~~  
19 inquiry, a copy of all its proceedings in connection with the ~~complaint~~ inquiry  
20 including the notice of ~~complaint~~ inquiry and supporting reasons, the response of  
21 the lower court, if any, and any papers bearing on the ~~complaint~~ inquiry. If the  
22 clerk of the lower court shall neglect to send up the proceedings on the ~~complaint~~  
23 inquiry, he shall receive a proper rebuke from the higher court, and the act or  
24 decision ~~complained against~~ inquired about shall be suspended until the  
25 proceedings are produced so that the higher court can fairly consider the ~~complaint~~  
26 inquiry.  
27

28 **43-7.** The ~~complainant~~ inquirer shall be considered to have abandoned his  
29 ~~complaint~~ inquiry if he fails to appear before the higher court, in person or by  
30 counsel, for a hearing thereof, after he has been properly notified; but a  
31 ~~complainant~~ inquirer may waive, in writing, his right to appear with permission of  
32 the court and not be considered to have abandoned his case. In case of such failure  
33 to appear, the judgment of the lower court will stand unless the ~~complainant~~  
34 inquirer gives to the court a prompt and satisfactory explanation.  
35

36 **43-8.** Subject to the provisions below, after the higher court has decided that the  
37 notice filed with its clerk was timely and that the ~~complaint~~ inquiry is otherwise in  
38 order for it to be heard by the higher court, it shall hear the ~~complaint~~ inquiry, or  
39 in accordance with the provision of *BCO* 15-2 and 15-3, appoint a commission to  
40 do so. Ordinarily the court or its commission shall schedule a hearing in a manner that  
41 reasonably accommodates the schedules of the respective parties and affords each  
42 party a prior opportunity to file a written brief upon such terms and in accord with  
43 a briefing schedule established by the court or its commission in the reasonable  
44 exercise of its discretion.  
45

46 **43-9.** At the hearing, after all the papers bearing on the ~~complaint~~ inquiry have  
47 been read, the ~~complainant~~ inquirer and respondent will be given the opportunity  
48 to present argument, the ~~complainant~~ inquirer having the right of opening and

1 closing the argument. After the hearing has been concluded, the court or the  
2 commission should go into closed session, and discuss and consider the merits of  
3 the ~~complaint~~ inquiry. The vote should then or later be taken as to what disposition  
4 should be made of the ~~complaint~~ inquiry, and the ~~complainant~~ inquirer and  
5 respondent notified of the court's decision.  
6

7 **43-10.** The higher court has power, in its discretion, to annul the whole or any  
8 part of the action of a lower court against which ~~complaint~~ inquiry has been made,  
9 or to send the matter back to the lower court with instructions for a new hearing.  
10 If the higher court rules a lower court erred by not indicting someone, and the  
11 lower court refers the matter back to the higher court, it shall accept the reference  
12 if it is a doctrinal case or case of public scandal (see *BCO* 41-3).  
13

14 **Be it further resolved** that the following amendments of the use of the word "complaint" also  
15 **be made:**  
16

17 **32-18.** ...  
18 When a case is removed by appeal or ~~complaint~~ inquiry, the lower court shall  
19 transmit "the Record" thus prepared to the higher court with the addition of the  
20 notice of appeal or ~~complaint~~ inquiry, and the reasons therefor, if any shall have  
21 been filed.  
22

23 **39-1.** The acts and decisions of a lower court are brought under the supervision of  
24 a higher court in one or another of the following modes:  
25 1. Review and Control;  
26 2. Reference;  
27 3. Appeal; and  
28 4. ~~Complaint~~ Inquiry.  
29

30 **39-2.** When the proceedings of a lower court are before a higher court, the  
31 members of the lower court shall not lose the right to sit, deliberate and vote in the  
32 higher court, except in cases of appeal or ~~complaint~~ inquiry.  
33

34 **40-3.** It is ordinarily sufficient for the higher court merely to record in its own  
35 minutes and in the records reviewed whether it approves, disapproves or corrects  
36 the records in any particular; but should any serious irregularity be discovered the  
37 higher court may require its review and correction by the lower. Proceedings in  
38 judicial cases, however, shall not be dealt with under review and control when  
39 notice of appeal or complaint has been given the lower court; and no judgment of  
40 a lower court in a judicial case shall be reversed except by appeal or ~~complaint~~  
41 inquiry.  
42

43 **45-1.** ...  
44 Any member who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or ~~complaint~~ inquiry  
45 (see *BCO* 39-2), and is not satisfied with the action taken by the court, is entitled  
46 to have an objection recorded.

1           **45-4.** An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court who did not  
2           have the right to vote on an appeal or ~~complaint~~ inquiry, expressing a different  
3           opinion from the decision of the court and may be accompanied with the reasons  
4           on which it is founded.

5  
6

7           *Rejected by the Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its 60<sup>th</sup> stated meeting, April 14, 2026*  
8           *Attested by TE Robby Baxter, Stated Clerk*  
9           *Sent to General Assembly by the Session of Grace Covenant Church under RAO 11-10*

1 **OVERTURE 87** from the Pittsburgh Presbytery (to MNA)  
2 “Change the Boundaries of Pittsburgh Presbytery and the Ohio Presbytery”  
3

4 **Whereas** the current official boundary description of the Pittsburgh Presbytery includes, “All  
5 of Ohio east and south of and including the counties of Columbiana, Carroll, and  
6 Monroe...”  
7

8 **Whereas** since that time, the Ohio Presbytery has been formed;  
9

10 **Whereas** in 2024, the only PCA church within the Ohio counties of the Pittsburgh Presbytery  
11 officially closed;  
12

13 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly transfer all Ohio counties currently  
14 within the bounds of Pittsburgh Presbytery to the geographic bounds of Ohio  
15 Presbytery.  
16

17  
18 *Adopted by the Pittsburgh Presbytery at its stated meeting, July 26, 2025*

19 *Attested by TE LeRoy S. Capper, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 88** from the Siouxlands Presbytery (to AC)  
2 “Instruct the AC to Format the *BCO* for Ease of Printing”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the *Book of Church Order* and the *Rules Of Assembly Operations* are regularly  
5 amended at each General Assembly.  
6

7 **Whereas**, the annual change packets take additional time to be produced before distribution  
8 can begin.  
9

10 **Whereas**, the annual change packets currently cost \$10.80 plus shipping.  
11

12 **Whereas**, the production and distribution of change packets is time consuming, expensive,  
13 and inefficient.  
14

15 **Whereas**, local printing is significantly less expensive and more expedient.  
16

17 **Whereas**, the irregular size of the current *Book of Church Order*, *Rules of Assembly*  
18 *Operations*, *OMSJC*, Certificate of Incorporation, and Corporate Bylaws makes local  
19 printing difficult.  
20

21 **Whereas**, the irregular size of the current *Book of Church Order*, *Rules of Assembly*  
22 *Operations*, *OMSJC*, Certificate of Incorporation, and Corporate Bylaws significantly  
23 limits compatible binder options.  
24

25 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly direct the Administrative  
26 Committee to format the *Book of Church Order*, *Rules of Assembly Operations*,  
27 *OMSJC*, Certificate of Incorporation, and Corporate Bylaws to a standard 8.5”x 11”  
28 size and to make them, along with all future change packets, available as a digital  
29 download at no cost.  
30

31  
32 *Adopted by the Siouxlands Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 23, 2026*

33 *Attested by TE Nathan Lee, Stated Clerk*

1 **OVERTURE 2025-49** from the Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS,  
2 “Erect an Ad Interim Committee on AI” Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF)

3  
4 **THE 52<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY REFERRED THIS OVERTURE**  
5 **TO THE 53<sup>rd</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

6  
7 **Be it resolved** that the General Assembly erect a study committee of seven members,  
8 consisting of teaching or ruling elders, with an annual budget of \$15,000 (funded by  
9 gifts to the Administrative Committee), tasked to:

- 10  
11 a. Write a report by the 54th General Assembly (June 2027) on the teaching of  
12 Scripture and the *Westminster Standards*, with a particular reference to our  
13 anthropology (*WCF* 4, 7) and ecclesiology (*WCF* 25), and suggest general  
14 principles for the use or limits of artificial intelligence technology (AI) in the  
15 Church;
- 16  
17 b. Then apply these general principles to the following suggested areas:
- 18 i. *Pastoral Ministry*: AI use in preaching, teaching, and pastoral care
  - 19 ii. *Church Administration*: AI use in local churches, Presbyteries, and the  
20 General Assembly, also addressing security concerns
  - 21 iii. *Church Discipline*: suggest criteria for assessing AI-generated evidence in  
22 church courts, especially in disciplinary cases
  - 23 iv. *Christian Vocation and Diaconal Ministry*: a Reformed approach to work  
24 and service amid AI-driven changes in the workplace and economy, with  
25 diaconal strategies for affected church members
  - 26 v. *Christian Education*: implications for PCA institutions (e.g., Covenant  
27 College, Covenant Seminary), especially on education philosophy and  
28 practice
  - 29 vi. *Medical Ethics*: boundaries for AI use in medical practice with particular  
30 emphasis in recovering natural function vs. enhancing human ability beyond  
31 natural limitations
  - 32 vii. *Evangelism and Apologetics*: strategies to proclaim the gospel and encourage  
33 Christian discipleship in contrast to AI-influenced ideologies (i.e.,  
34 transhumanism, etc.)
  - 35 viii. *Ethical Issues*: copyrighted materials illicitly used to train AIs; the impact of  
36 over-use of energy and water by server farms on poor communities; the use  
37 of AI to create simulated relationship and pornography
  - 38 ix. Any other significant applications the committee finds during this study.
- 39  
40 c. Consult theological, technical, or legal specialists as needed to aid in this study  
41
- 42 d. Propose amendments to the *Book of Church Order (BCO)* or changes to agency  
43 policies, if warranted by their findings.  
44

1 **Be it further resolved** that all General Assembly permanent committees, commissions, and  
2 agencies submit a report to the study committee within six months (December 31,  
3 2025) specifying their current and proposed AI usage to help inform the study  
4 committee, and include that report in their annual reports to the 53th General Assembly  
5 (June 2026).  
6

7 **Rationale**

8 The revolutionary character of artificial intelligence technology (AI) is already having  
9 an inevitable impact on every aspect of society and therefore on the Church and individual  
10 Christian living. AI presents opportunities and challenges requiring a serious engagement  
11 grounded within our confessional heritage. Scripture and our Standards affirm God’s  
12 sovereignty over all creation, the sufficiency of Scripture to guide to our faith and practice,  
13 and our call to exercise dominion with wisdom, which includes taking responsibility for  
14 technological innovations and their intended or unintended effects. AI’s growing influence is  
15 wide-reaching, ranging from sermon or educational preparation tools to major career  
16 realignments to potential “deepfake” evidence, and many other areas. It impacts pastoral and  
17 church ministry, Christian vocation and education, apologetic confrontations with new  
18 ideologies, significant impacts on the quality of human relationships, and other ethical and  
19 theological questions that need attention. There is a serious risk of losing critical thinking,  
20 knowledge, and wisdom as such skills are surrendered to AI. The PCA must shepherd its  
21 members and proclaim the gospel faithfully amidst these rapid changes, and a modest  
22 investment of \$15,000 annually can enable a study to help the Church with a biblical guide  
23 for their Christian witness under these new conditions.  
24  
25

26 *Adopted by the Pacific Northwest Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 9, 2025*

27 *Attested by TE Jerid Krulish, stated clerk*