

1 **OVERTURE 18** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, AC)
2 “Amend *RAO* 3-2 by Adding an Administrative Responsibility for the
3 Stated Clerk’s Office Regarding the Processing of Allegations.”
4

5 Be it resolved that *RAO* 3-2 be amended as follows. Underlined wording is to be added.
6

7 *RAO* 3-2. The Stated Clerk shall have the following responsibilities to the
8 General Assembly ...

- 9 s. He shall be the correspondent with the lower courts of the church.
10 t. He shall forward all allegations, or suggestions of need for disciplinary
11 attention, to the appropriate court, or shall instruct individuals how they
12 may do so. Ordinarily, the person who is the subject of the allegation
13 or suggestion will also be copied. This responsibility is an
14 administrative one, not a judicial one and the Stated Clerk’s Office
15 should ordinarily avoid expressing any opinion on the merits.
16 u. He shall be authorized to make public statements for and on behalf of
17 the denomination only insofar as such statements are warranted on the
18 basis of specific actions of the General Assembly.
19

20 Rationale: While this new responsibility would not be limited to specific areas, much of our
21 concern arises from things related to public speech. So, the rationale below focuses on that
22 subject as an example.
23

- 24 1. The Bible requires we portray the message and manner of Christ in our communication.
25 (Ex. 20:16, Matt. 5:22, 1 Cor 6:9-10, Eph. 4:31-32, Tit. 3:1-2, 1 Pet. 2:1)
26 *Note: All Scriptures cited in this Overture are printed later below.*
27 2. The Bible forbids publishing false reports or spreading rumors and suspicions without
28 foundation or confirming the facts with the individuals cited. (Ex. 23:1, Matt. 12:36-37;
29 Matt. 18:15-17, 1 Tim. 5:19)
30 3. The Bible forbids giving attention to gossip, slander, or malicious speech. (Prov. 17:4,
31 20:19, 26:20)
32 4. Our Confessional Standards call us to high standards of truth and charity in reporting the
33 actions and words of others, and in protecting their reputations against falsehood,
34 unwarranted damage, and suspicion, saying:
35

36 The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and
37 the good name of our neighbors, ... concealing the truth...; speaking the truth
38 unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong
39 meaning, ... speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting,
40 talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, ... misconstruing intentions,
41 words, and actions ...; aggravating smaller faults; ... unnecessary discovering
42 of infirmities; raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports;
43 ... evil suspicion; ... rejoicing in [others’] disgrace and infamy; scornful
44 contempt... ; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practicing, or not

1 avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as
2 procure an ill name. (WLC #145)

- 3
4 5. The speech and publication practices of secular culture can make believers unaware of, or
5 callous to, these biblical standards.
6 6. There is a temptation for church leaders to disregard these biblical standards in social
7 media, internet discussions, and news sites that deal with church matters.

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9 *Approved by Presbytery's BCO 15-1 Overtures Commission on April 4, 2022*
10 *Overtures Commission appointed by Pacific NW Presbytery on February 4, 2022*
11 *Attested by /s/ TE Nathan Chambers, stated clerk*

12
13 **Scriptures Cited Above (ESV)**

14
15 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Ex. 20:16)

16
17 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment;
18 whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be
19 liable to the hell of fire. (Matt. 5:22)

20
21 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be
22 deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice
23 homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will
24 inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9, 10)

25
26 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along
27 with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ
28 forgave you. (Eph (Eph. 4:31-32)

29
30 Remind ... to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect
31 courtesy toward all people. (Tit. 3:1-2)

32
33 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. (1Pet. 2:1)

34
35 You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a
36 malicious witness. (Ex. 23:1)

37
38 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they
39 speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.
40 (Matt. 12:36-37)

41
42 If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he
43 listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others
44 along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three
45 witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. (Matt. 18:15-17)

- 1 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.
- 2 (1 Tim. 5:19)
- 3
- 4 An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue. (Prov. 17:4)
- 5
- 6 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple
- 7 babbler (Prov. 20:19)
- 8
- 9 For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. (Prov.
- 10 26:20)