

1 **OVERTURE 2** from Northern California Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
2 “Amend BCO 13-6 for Clarity in Transfers of Ordination”
3

4 **Be it resolved:** That BCO 13-6 be amended by the current language as follows (underlining
5 for additions, ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):
6

7 **13-6. Ministers Transferring into the Presbytery**

8 a. A Ministers seeking admission to a Presbytery from another Presbyteries
9 Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America shall be examined on Christian
10 experience, and also touching as to his their views in theology, the Sacraments, and
11 church government. If the examining Presbytery does not accept the Minister
12 seeking admission, it shall record this fact along with its rationale in the minutes,
13 and shall communicate its rationale to his current Presbytery.
14

15 b. If an applicants comes from another denominations, the Presbytery shall examine
16 him them thoroughly in knowledge and views as required by the trials listed in
17 BCO 21-4, and require them to answer in the affirmative the questions put to
18 candidates at their ordination. Ordained ministers from other denominations being
19 considered by Presbyteries for reception may come under the extraordinary
20 provisions set forth in BCO 21-4.
21

22 c. In every case, Presbyteries shall also require each ordained ministers coming from
23 other denominations entering the Presbytery to state the specific instances in which
24 they he may differ with the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* in any of their
25 statements and/or propositions, which differences the court shall judge in
26 accordance with BCO 21-4 (see BCO 21-4.f-g (see also RAO 16-3.e.5.a-d). Each
27 ordained minister accepted into the Presbytery shall also be required to answer in
28 the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination.
29

30 So that the amended section will read as follows:
31

32 **13-6. Ministers Transferring into the Presbytery**

33 a. A Minister seeking admission to a Presbytery from another Presbytery in the
34 Presbyterian Church in America shall be examined on Christian experience, and
35 also as to his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government. If the
36 examining Presbytery does not accept the Minister seeking admission, it shall
37 record this fact along with its rationale in the minutes, and shall communicate its
38 rationale to his current Presbytery.
39

40 b. If an applicant comes from another denomination, the Presbytery shall examine
41 him thoroughly as required by the trials listed in BCO 21-4. Ordained ministers
42 from other denominations being considered by Presbyteries for reception may
43 come under the extraordinary provisions set forth in BCO 21-4.
44

1 c. In every case, Presbyteries shall require each ordained minister entering the
2 Presbytery to state the specific instances in which he may differ with the
3 Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions,
4 which differences the court shall judge in accordance with BCO 21-4.f-g (see also
5 RAO 16-3.e.5.a-d). Each ordained minister accepted into the Presbytery shall also
6 be required to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their
7 ordination.
8

9 **Rationale:**

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11 As presently written BCO 13-6 presents ambiguity concerning the thoroughness of exams
12 for ministers transferring into a presbytery either from within the PCA or from another
13 denomination.
14

15 In the case of PCA transfers, there has been significant debate about whether “touching on”
16 indicates a less stringent exam, or indicates the specific subject areas to be covered. As that
17 language dates to the 1869 draft of the PCUS BCO, in which such usage was understood to
18 specify matters to be covered, clarifying the original intent by updating the language seems
19 needful.
20

21 In the case of transfers from outside the PCA, it is unclear whether BCO 13-6 as currently
22 written intends “in knowledge and views” to be more akin to the “views” examination of
23 those transferring from within the PCA, or to the full breadth of the trials of BCO 21-4.c.
24 However, BCO 21-4.g (“the candidate’s knowledge and views in the areas specified above”)
25 indicates that the whole list of trials is in view.
26

27 Since there can be great diversity between a minister transferring into the PCA (e.g., from a
28 NAPARC denomination vs. non-NAPARC denomination), this amendment provides clarity
29 to the items which a presbytery must either examine or must apply the “extraordinary cases”
30 clause to ministers of “proven extraordinary gifts” (21-4.h).
31

32 As there has been confusion among presbyteries and the responses from Review of
33 Presbytery Records, this amendment seeks to remove ambiguity and provide clarity to
34 presbyteries on which exams to perform, what must be noted in the minutes, and what
35 reports must be made.
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37 *Adopted by the Northern California Presbytery at its Stated Meeting, 6 October 2023.*

38 *Attested by /s/ TE Alex Ford, Stated Clerk.*