

1 **OVERTURE 24** from the Evangel Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 24-1 to Clarify a Session’s Role in Examining Officer Nominees”  
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4 **Be it resolved** that *BCO* 24-1 be amended by the deletion of one word (“him” in the paragraph  
5 beginning with “Notwithstanding the above...”) and the addition of one phrase (in the  
6 same paragraph), as follows (underlining for additions; ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
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8 ***BCO* 41-3.** Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon  
9 in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant  
10 members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that  
11 each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the  
12 qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Nominees for the office of ruling  
13 elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the  
14 office. Each nominee shall be examined in:

- 15 a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family  
16 management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus  
17 1:6-9),
- 18 b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- 19 c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained  
20 in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III,  
21 The Constitution Defined),
- 22 d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- 23 e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO*  
24 24-6).

25 In the examination of the nominee’s personal character, the Session shall give  
26 specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to  
27 his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The  
28 nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the  
29 benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress  
30 over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23).  
31 While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly,  
32 the nominee must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in  
33 the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but  
34 rather should testify to the work of the Holy in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-  
35 11).

36 Notwithstanding the above, the Session may render a decision on Christian  
37 experience at any point in the process, and based on that decision, may judge him the  
38 nominee, whether previously ordained or not, ineligible for that election.

39 If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Session shall report to the  
40 congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the time and  
41 place of a congregational meeting for elections.

42 If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the  
43 Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers,  
44 it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure. The

1           number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the congregation after hearing  
2           the Session’s recommendation.

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4   Rationale:

5           Striking the word, “him,” followed by the addition of “the nominee, whether  
6           previously ordained or not” in the paragraph above allows for a clearer understanding of  
7           “nominee” that appears numerous times throughout *BCO* 24-1. The *BCO* is unclear whether  
8           a Session has the authority to render a decision regarding Christian experience of a previously  
9           ordained officer.

10           The practice of many PCA churches is to employ some sort of rotational system where  
11           men are installed to the office for a defined term and must be reelected by the congregation to  
12           serve again. While *BCO* 24-1 gives the Session the responsibility and authority to examine an  
13           unordained man, does that authority extend to one already ordained and who has previously  
14           served on a Session? One interpretation is that the term “nominee” refers only to those who  
15           are unordained. Others believe that the term “nominee” refers to any potential officer,  
16           regardless of whether previously ordained or not, sitting for a particular election. This overture  
17           seeks to bring clarity to the *BCO* while respecting the differing practices of particular churches  
18           within the PCA.

19           If ruling and teaching elders are different orders of the same office, shouldn’t we apply  
20           the same requirements for both orders (*BCO* 7-2)? Observe how the PCA functions when a  
21           teaching elder seeks to transfer into another presbytery. “Ministers seeking admission to a  
22           Presbytery from other Presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church in America shall be examined  
23           on Christian experience, and also touching their views in theology, the Sacraments, and church  
24           government.” (*BCO* 13-6) If the PCA re-examines teaching elders when joining a new  
25           Presbytery, shouldn’t we be able to apply the same requirement for our ruling elders? This  
26           overture gives the Session the authority and responsibility to examine all potential officers,  
27           both ordained and unordained, and to determine if they are qualified and eligible to sit for  
28           election.

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31   *Adopted by the Evangel Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 11, 2025*

32   *Attested by TE Ken Stuart, stated clerk*