

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”
3

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 24-1.*** 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*