

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 53rd 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; ~~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 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.

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