

1 **OVERTURE 52** from the Mississippi Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
2 “Add *BCO 7-4* Prohibiting the Creation of Ecclesiastical Offices”
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4 **Whereas**, “some circumstances concerning the worship and government of the church are to
5 be ordered according to the light of nature and the general principles of the Word of
6 God” (WCF 1.6), thus permitting the church to employ qualified men and women in
7 various forms of un-ordained Christian service according to the dictates of Christian
8 prudence; and
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10 **Whereas**, “Christ, as King, has given to His Church officers, oracles and ordinances; and
11 especially has He ordained therein His system of doctrine, government, discipline and
12 worship, all of which are either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and
13 necessary inference may be deduced therefrom; and to which things He commands
14 that nothing be added, and that from them naught be taken away” (*BCO*, Preface 1.),
15 thus the church is not free to invent offices; and
16

17 **Whereas**, “Ecclesiastical power, which is wholly spiritual, is twofold. The officers exercise
18 it sometimes severally, as in preaching the Gospel, administering the Sacraments,
19 reproofing the erring, visiting the sick, and comforting the afflicted, which is the power
20 of order; and they exercise it sometimes jointly in Church courts, after the form of
21 judgment, which is the power of jurisdiction” (*BCO 3-2*), thus making it clear that,
22 apart from the power to choose its officers, which power resides in the people (*BCO*
23 3-1), the exercise of ecclesiastical power is placed in the hands of the officers alone;
24 and
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26 **Whereas**, “All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or by representation,
27 is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith
28 and practice. No church judicatory may make laws to bind the conscience.” (*BCO*
29 Preliminary Principle 7), thus no officers may be imposed upon the church, and only
30 those offices ordained by God in Holy Scripture may serve in the government of the
31 church; and
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33 **Whereas**, “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and
34 commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in
35 matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such
36 commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring
37 of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of
38 conscience, and reason also” (WCF 20.2), thus to impose invented officers upon the
39 church, without the warrant of the Word of God, is to violate the consciences of the
40 people; therefore
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42 **Be it resolved** that the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley overture the 53rd General
43 Assembly to amend *BCO 7*, by inserting an additional paragraph, to read as follows
44 (underlining for additions):
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1 7-4. Courts of the church are warranted by the general principles of the Word of
2 God and the dictates of Christian prudence to make use of qualified men and women
3 in a variety of un-ordained ministry positions. However, since Christ, as King and
4 Head of the church, has given officers to His Church, and has appointed His system of
5 church government in Holy Scripture, church courts are not free to create ecclesiastical
6 offices. Neither may a court of the church vest any part of the church power granted
7 to officers by the rite of ordination in any un-ordained person, or intrude such persons
8 upon the church or the consciences of its members, whether by means of popular
9 election, or the use of vows not mandated by the Word of God and the constitution of
10 the Presbyterian Church in America.

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13 *Adopted by the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley at its stated meeting, February 3, 2026*
14 *Attested by TE Chris Wright, Stated Clerk*