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## 53<sup>RD</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY OVERTURES

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Preliminary, Personal Assessments by Dr. David F. Coffin, Jr., **Draft 4**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

For the sake of conscience, a word of explanation about this review: I prepare these materials for myself, as a discipline to help me reflect on the business of the Assembly beforehand, and also, so that in the press of Assembly business on the floor, I can quickly reorient myself to the issues. In no sense is this material prepared for the purpose of encouraging a party spirit, or a pre-committed voting bloc. Although these views reflect my current convictions, I am not even sure that I will vote as specified, because I am committed to listening to the debate, and if compelling arguments are set forth contrary to my current views, to change my position in light of our deliberations.

I hope that all can agree that such a stance is essential to the functioning of the deliberative Assembly that biblical Presbyterianism sets forth, as liable to direction both through reasoned, biblical argument and by the immediate work of the Holy Spirit. The only reason I distribute this material is because it has proven helpful to others to stimulate their prayerful reflections in preparation for the debate. Should you be interested in some thoughts on the consideration of Overtures, see Appendix I.

Finally, I note that I am a member of the Standing Judicial Commission of the General Assembly. According to the requirements of the “Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission” (OMSJC), I am committed to “perform the duties of [my] office with impartiality and shall be diligent to maintain the impartiality of the Commission” (OMSJC 2.10). Thus, I am not permitted to make “any public or private statement that might reasonably be expected to affect the outcome of a pending matter or impending matter in any court of the church” (OMSJC 2.5). That notwithstanding, I am permitted to “make public or private statements in the course of [my] duties as a presbyter . . . with respect to biblical teaching, confessional interpretation, the principles of the form of government and discipline. . . .” (OMSJC 2.6). Nothing I have said in this review is intended to intimate, hint, or suggest which party should prevail in any case that might come before me under our current *BCO*, or under any proposed amendments, should they be adopted.

You are free to distribute my summary as you will, but only with the above disclaimer attached. I should note: the intelligibility of my terse comments depends upon one having carefully read the overture in question! Find the full text of the overtures at: <https://pcaga.org/resources/#overtures/> So too, space limits anything but direct speech, so please forgive a dearth of polite expression in what follows.

## OVERTURE STATISTICS

### I. NUMBER OF OVERTURES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Overture referral from the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly
- 89 Overtures submitted to the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly
- 83 Overtures referred to OC (#s 1-9, 11-43, 45-61, 63-69, 71-82, 84-86, 89)
- 75 Overtures referred to CCB for advice (#s 1-3, 5-9, 11-43, 45-49, 51-60, 63-69, 71-75, 77-79, 81, 82, 84-86)
- 12 Overtures to AC (#s 5, 32, 40, 41, 43, 68, 73, 77, 78, 79, 80, 88)
- 3 Overtures to CC (#s 32, 68, 83)
- 9 Overtures to CMD (#s 32, 40, 41, 43, 68, 73, 77, 78, 79)
- 3 Overtures to CTS (#s 32, 68, 83)
- 2 Overtures to Genva (#s 32, 68)
- 16 Overtures to MNA (#s 2, 10, 11, 32, 40, 41, 43, 44, 62, 68, 70, 73, 77, 78, 79, 87)
- 9 Overtures to MTW (#s 32, 40, 41, 43, 68, 73, 77, 78, 79)
- 2 Overtures to PCAF (#s 32, 68)
- 2 Overtures to RH (#s 32, 68)
- 9 Overtures to RUF (#s 32, 40, 41, 43, 68, 73, 77, 78, 79)
- 2 Overtures to all 10 C&As (#s 32, 68)

### II. GENERAL SUBJECT-MATTER DIVISIONS

- 55 proposing amendment to BCO (#s 1-3, 12-31, 34-39, 42, 46, 48, 49, 51, 52, 54-60, 64, 65, 67-69, 71, 72, 74, 75, 82, 84-86)
- 20 proposing amendment to RAO (#s 5-9, 11, 32, 33, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47, 53, 63, 73, 77-79, 81)
- 5 presbyteries & boundaries (#s 10, 44, 62, 70, 87)
- 4 declarations (#s 61, 66, 76, 89)
- 2 erect various ad interim committees (#s reference from 52<sup>nd</sup> GA, 80)
- 1 directions to AC (#s 88)
- 1 calling for a day of prayer and fasting (# 50)
- 1 calling for prayer of thanksgiving (# 4)
- 1 one giving directions to CC and CTs concerning faculty (# 83)

### III. OVERTURE SOURCES

34 Presbyteries, 1 Session and 1 individual submitted Overtures

Ascension(1), Calvary (7), Canada West (2), Catawba Valley (2), Central Florida (2), Chesapeake (1), Covenant (2), Eastern Carolina (1), Fellowship (1), Great Lakes (2), Hills and Plains (2), Illiana (1), Korean Northwest(1), Metro Atlanta (1), Mississippi Valley (3), New York State (2), Northern California (2), Northwest Georgia (5), Ohio (2), Pacific (1), Pacific Northwest (7), Philadelphia (1), Pittsburgh (1), Potomac (3), Rocky Mountain (1), Savannah River (3), Session of Grace Covenant Church (1), Siouxlands (1), South Texas (2), Southeast Alabama (2), Southwest Florida (6), Suncoast Florida (1), TE Cody Hooper (1), Tennessee Valley(1), Westminster (17), Wisconsin (1)

OVERTURES SUBMITTED TO THE 53<sup>RD</sup> GA

| # | SUBJECT  | POSITION  | PRESB                    | COC  |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|--|
|   | <p>52<sup>nd</sup> GA 2025-49</p> <p>Erect an Ad Interim Committee on AI</p> | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>In general, to paraphrase a US President, study committees are not the solution, they are the problem. The concerns that occasion their appointment seem to be lagging slightly behind the latest hot topics in the news cycle and tend to reduce the Assembly to a mere interest group clamoring among a crowd of competing voices, rather than uphold its stately position as “the bond of union, peace and correspondence among all its congregations and courts,” a grand agent of the Great Commission.</p> <p>Folks tend to use study committee reports to the neglect of (or to undermine) the Constitution of the PCA. Historically study committees have been proposed as a stealth way to give minority views a greater hearing than they deserve. So too, they are sometimes a means to avoid the difficult labor required to pursue debate and resolution with people, we suppose to be opponents, face to face.</p> <p>Such committees are quite expensive, their work-product is widely varied in value, and if committee members cannot agree, the effect of the conflict between a committee report and a minority report can be divisive. It has not been uncommon in Presbyterian history that the fruit of such labors is either a sentimentalizing collection of platitudes that compromise Scripture teaching, or a hammer-and-tongs majority vs. minority report that divides the Assembly.</p> <p>There are a few legitimate, and Constitutionally safe, grounds for appointing study committees, e.g., when the Assembly has determined that a change in the Constitution is desirable and seeks an able and broadly representative committee to study the best means to that end, to prepare a recommendation, and to prepare a rationale for the church. Such was the case, for example, with the Ad Interim Committee on Judicial Procedures. Rarely such committees may be needed to bring Scripture light to some novel and complex matter that is a threat to the whole body, for example, the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality.</p> <p>In the main, however, the best resources for our folk are not Assembly study committees, but the intellectual and spiritual wealth we have in our ministers, teachers, and scholars through academic institutions, conferences, publications, broadcasts, recordings, journals and magazines.</p> <p>AC recommends AFFIRMATIVE but urges that a funding mechanism is needed, <i>CH</i>, 506.<br/>           CC recommends NEGATIVE, <i>CH</i>, 1708.<br/>           CDM recommends AFFIRMATIVE, <i>CH</i>, 705.<br/>           CTS recommends AFFIRMATIVE, <i>CH</i>, 1829.<br/>           Foundation recommends NEGATIVE, <i>CH</i>, 2003.<br/>           Geneva recommends AFFIRMATIVE, <i>CH</i>, 1906.<br/>           MNA, no advice, <i>CH</i>, 812.<br/>           MTW recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE, <i>CH</i>, 916.<br/>           RH, no advice, <i>CH</i>, 2102.<br/>           RUF recommends AFFIRMATIVE, <i>CH</i>, 1006.</p> | <p>Pacific Northwest</p> | <p>OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS, Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF</p> |

| # | SUBJECT  | POSITION  | PRESB             | COC          |
|---|--|---|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 23-1 on Associate/Assistant Pastors Succeeding Senior Pastor  | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>The Rationale provided by Presbytery offers a sound argument for the amendment.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 467, item A.</p>   | Potomac           | CCB, OC      |
| 2 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 5-4 for Consent of Mission Church Members in Calling a Pastor | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The provision is seeking unnecessary refinement in circumstances that in the nature of the case are unrefined. I suppose that one member so-received would not be required to give his consent, as the amendment specifies “members”. But if not, why not? The plural implies at least two such members, but if only one consents, what would be the outcome, as there can be no majority.</p> <p>Experience teaches that even the most mature and cordial congregations can struggle with temptations when calling a pastor. Why put that burden on a few, that are hardly a “congregation” in any material sense of the word and make the work of a mission church effort more complicated and liable to failure?</p> <p>If any new members are received the Sunday following the proposed congregational meeting where consent must be granted, “each member so received shall be understood to assent to the call of that minister and to affirm the promises made to the pastor in <i>BCO</i> 21-10” (<i>BCO</i> 5-5.a.). There is no reason flowing from our polity principles why this should not be true for all members until the mission becomes a particular church. So it has been for 53 years.</p> <p>MNA no advice. <i>CH</i>, 812, line 6.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution, in particular, <i>BCO</i> 25. <i>CH</i>, 467, item B.</p> | Wisconsin         | CCB, OC, MNA |
| 3 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 32-20 and 32-21 Regarding Dismissing Charges                  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The proposed amendment identifies some deficiencies in <i>BCO</i> 32-20, but it needs further refinement. Where in process are such decisions to be made? When the indictment is delivered, when the plea is made, at any time during the proceedings? Further, the proposed procedure for dismissal on the ground of memory begs the question.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 468, item C.</p>  | New York State    | CCB, OC      |
| 4 | Docket a Prayer of Thanksgiving for Adult Professions of Faith                 | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>A lovely proposal, likely help keep us all heavenly minded, and thus to not lose heart, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.</p>   | Pacific Northwest | OC           |

| # | SUBJECT   | POSITION   | PRESB             | COC         |
|---|---|--|-------------------|-------------|
| 5 | Amend RAO 5-1.a that AC Members Elected by GA Must Be from Different Presbyteries REVISED February 2026         | <p><b>AFFIRMATIVE</b></p> <p>A wise proposal, supported by good reasons, that has already stood the test of time as a provision governing the Standing Judicial Commission.</p> <p>AC makes no recommendation. <i>CH</i>, 507, line 19.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 468, item D.</p>  | Pacific Northwest | CCB, OC, AC |
| 6 | Amend RAO 14-9, 15-8, and add 16- 7.h to Require 150 Commissioners to Remove from an Omnibus REVISED April 2026 | <p><b>NEGATIVE</b></p> <p>A premise of the Assembly’s existence is that it is a deliberative body. Taking recommendations in gross should be employed only when it is obvious to all that there is nothing in a recommendation that requires deliberation. Wisely, the Assembly has recognized that even one delegate has the right to call for that deliberation. It adds insult to injury, not only to require 150 commissioners to agree, but <i>that without deliberation!</i></p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 468, item E.</p>                 | Pacific Northwest | CCB, OC     |
| 7 | Amend RAO 16 Regarding RPR’s Reporting on Presbytery Records REVISED April 2026                                 | <p><b>AFFIRMATIVE</b></p> <p>This is an outstanding proposal that is desperately needed. RPR does critically important work to enable the GA to uphold our Constitutional Standards. However, that work has been increasingly burdened by the number of presbyteries and the number of Commissioners. If adopted this proposal will go a long way toward supporting and sustaining RPR’s efforts, while reducing tensions, and removing burdensome procedures that have outgrown their usefulness.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 468, item F.</p> | Pacific Northwest | CCB, OC     |
| 8 | Amend RAO 8-4.i to Set the Deadline for Floor Nominations 24 Hours Earlier REVISED April 2026                   | <p><b>AFFIRMATIVE</b></p> <p>A simple but effective change in the reporting procedures of the Nominating Committee, grounded in technological advances.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 468, item G.</p>  | Pacific Northwest | CCB, OC     |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION  | PRESB            | COC          |
|----|--|---|------------------|--------------|
| 9  | Amend RAO 8-4.i to Highlight Proportionate Representation of Presbyteries by Floor Nominations | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The aspiration of proportional representation of Presbyteries on Assembly Committees is a worthy cause but, of the proposal's two means proposed to that end, one is already being done (identifying the nominee's presbytery) and the other is vague and unfairly burdens the floor nomination with something not required of other nominees (offering "an explanation of how this nomination contributes to the General Assembly's goal of proportionate representation of all Presbyteries as set forth in <i>BCO</i> 14-1.9").</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 468, item H.</p> | Hills and Plains | CCB, OC      |
| 10 | Change the Boundaries of Pittsburgh Presbytery and The Ohio Presbytery                         | <p>AFFIRMATIVE, if approved by Committee of Commissioners.</p> <p>MNA recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 813, item 6.</p>   | Ohio             | MNA          |
| 11 | Amend RAO 4-21.d to Require Assessment Data from MNA   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>MNA recommends negative <i>CH</i>, 812, line 14.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 469, item I.</p>   | Ohio             | CCB, OC, MNA |
| 12 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 21-4.a to Allow Alternatives to a Bachelor's Degree for Ordination            | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p><i>BCO</i> 21-4.a. already provides for exceptions to the stated requirements, allowing the Presbytery to judge the conditions on a case-by-case basis. The proposal would add specific alternatives allowed by rule, but the <i>BCO</i> does not need to be amended every time there is a new educational effort. Further, the various specifications of additional years of work experience appears arbitrary. Wiser to leave the whole matter to the discretion of those nearest at hand.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 469, item J.</p>                                       | Chesapeake       | CCB, OC      |

| #  | SUBJECT   | POSITION  | PRESB             | COC     |
|----|---|---|-------------------|---------|
| 13 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 15-2 Regarding Session Commissions   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>In general, prudence suggests that Sessions should not appoint Commissions. In my 14 years as a Ruling Elder and 36 years as a Teaching Elder I have never served on, nor seen, a commission of a Session.</p> <p>However that may be, the proposed amendment is defective in its wording. If you allow a commission to be made up of 2 members, the quorum proposed would allow one member act as the commission. The Session is a deliberative governing body. A commission is a smaller body acting for the whole for a particular purpose. One person is not a smaller portion of the body nor can he be a deliberative body. The <i>BCO</i> clearly implies this conclusion when it asserts, “ if there is only one ruling elder, he does not constitute a Session, but he should take spiritual oversight of the church . . . and should report to the Presbytery any matter needing the action of a Church court.” (12-1)</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 469, item K.</p> | Great Lakes       | CCB, OC |
| 14 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 7-3, 7-4, 9-2, and 9-7 to Regarding Titles and Offices for Unordained People<br><br>See also Overtures 36, | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>PCA polity is clear on the matters in question. The proposed extensive elaboration of things that cannot be done, does not exhaust the possibilities of wrongdoing, which possibilities will likely be searched out, and thus, following this path, another amendment listing errors will be needed. The proper path in this matter is not to encumber the <i>BCO</i> with lists of forbidden words and actions, but rather to employ personal brotherly engagement and persuasion, and, failing that, to take up judicial proceedings with respect to alleged miscreant(s).</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b>. <i>CH</i>, 469, item L.</p>  | Southwest Florida | CCB, OC |
| 15 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 42-4 and 43-3 to Clarify the Deadline for Filings  | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>A reasonable proposal. It embodies the virtues of <i>claritas</i> and <i>brevitas</i>, clarifying an import point in judicial process, while eliminating extraneous words!</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 469, item M.</p>  | Southwest Florida | CCB, OC |
| 16 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 43 to Clarify Circularizing the Court  | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>A needed adjustment, as demonstrated by the rationale and as confirmed in SJC proceedings.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 469, item N.</p>  | Southwest Florida | CCB, OC |
| 17 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 5-2 Regarding the Dissolution of Mission Churches  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The addition is unnecessary.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b>. <i>CH</i>, 469-470, item O.</p>  | Westminster       | CCB, OC |

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|----|--|---|-------------|---------|
| 18 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 5-4 to Allow a Mother Church to Call a Church Planter         | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The proposal is unnecessary and would make an already complicated matter more so.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b>. <i>CH</i>, 470, item P.</p>   | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 19 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 5-8 to Include Ecclesiastical Government                      | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>It is not the case that a mission church enjoys the same status as particular churches in relation to ecclesiastical government.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 470, item Q.</p>   | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 20 | Add to <i>BCO</i> 5 a Section ‘C. Churches Without a Governing Body’           | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>Overall, the provision proposed is unnecessary. If it were, it does not belong in Chapter 5. And if it were, it encumbers an already complicated circumstance with needless procedures.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 470, item R.</p>  | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 21 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 13-6 to Clarify Exams for Ministers from Another Denomination | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The amendment is unnecessary. <i>BCO</i> 13-6.b. specifically refers to examination as required by the trials of <i>BCO</i> 21-4. The only matter that fits <i>examination trials</i> in that provision is <i>BCO</i> 21-4 c. (1).</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 471, item S.</p>   | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 22 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 13-8 to Apply Only to Churches from Outside the PCA           | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>When presbytery boundaries are changed by the General Assembly, churches that may find themselves in a new presbytery are not being “received” by the new presbytery, they have been placed in that presbytery by the authority of the Assembly.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 471, item T.</p>   | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 23 | Restructure and Renumber <i>BCO</i> 14 for Clarity and Ease of Reference       | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>I do not find the chapter as it is unclear or difficult cite; I do not find the proposed changes more clear or easier to cite. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, I suppose. But it is surely not worth the time, the resources, and the loss of continuity with respect to citations, both in historical documents and in contemporary references, to make this cosmetic change.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 471, item U.</p> | Westminster | CCB, OC |

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|----|--|---|-------------|---------|
| 24 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 15-2 to Clarify that Presbytery Itself Must Conduct Ordination Exams              | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The sentence in question is perfectly adequate to convey that “Presbyter itself shall conduct the previous examination.”</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 471, item V.</p>   | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 25 | Restructure and Amend <i>BCO</i> 21-1 through 21-4 for Clarity, Consistency, and Ease of Reference | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>See comments on Overture 23.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 471, item W.</p>   | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 26 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 26-2 to Only Count Presbyteries Who Submit Votes                                  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p><i>BCO</i> 26-2 is sufficient and has served the PCA well.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 471, item X.</p>   | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 27 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 34-1 Regarding GA Assuming Original Jurisdiction                                  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The current provision for assuming original jurisdiction is of dubious standing so far as due process is concerned. The proposed amendment would only make matters worse.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b>. <i>CH</i>, 472, item Y.</p>   | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 28 | Add <i>BCO</i> 41-7 to Provide a Right to Complain when a Presbytery Acts on a Reference           | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>It is in the nature of the case that a Reference changes rights and responsibilities with respect to that case. Attempts to try to overcome that reality will serve to complicate the complaint process considerably. Further, the proposed provision would contradict the standing requirements of <i>BCO</i> 43-1: Church members are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Presbytery.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 472, item Z.</p>                     | Westminster | CCB, OC |
| 29 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 42 to Clarify Between Verbal and Written Notice of Appeal                         | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The language of <i>BCO</i> 42-4 is adequate. “Notice of appeal” allow for any means of communication: Why restrict it to verbal? Further, in <i>BCO</i> 42-6, to qualify the notice as suspending the judgement for 30 days is superfluous. If the written appeal is not timely filed, there is no appeal to be adjudicated, and thus the judgment of the court stands.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution, although it is said to be incoherent. <i>CH</i>, 472, item AA.</p> | Westminster | CCB, OC |

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| 30 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 46-6 to Require the Recording of the Reception of One Dismissed to Another Presbytery    | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The second “Whereas” is dubious, and thus the proposal unnecessary.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 472, item AB.</p>   | Westminster    | CCB, OC  |
| 31 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 58-5 to Specify that Ruling Elders Shall Distribute the Elements<br>See also Overture 60 | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>As the Ad Interim Study Committee for the Directory of Worship is reporting to this Assembly, it would be unwise to propose amendments at this time.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b>. <i>CH</i>, 472, item AC.</p>   | Westminster    | CCB, OC  |
| 32 | Amend RAO 14-3 for the Review of Committee and Agency Standing Rules and Manuals                          | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>An excellent proposal of itself, the parallel drawn with CRPR is compelling.</p> <p>AC recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 507, line 30.</p> <p>CC recommends NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 1708, line 40.</p> <p>CDM recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 705.</p> <p>CTS recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 1829.</p> <p>Foundation recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 2004.</p> <p>Geneva recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 1906.</p> <p>MNA recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 812.</p> <p>MTW recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 915.</p> <p>RH recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 2102.</p> <p>RUF recommends referring back to Presbytery. <i>CH</i>, 1006.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b>. <i>CH</i>, 472-473, item AD.</p> | Westminster    | CCB, OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS, Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF |
| 33 | Amend RAO 16-7.h Regarding Minority Reports from RPR  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The proposed language, “who voted in the minority on the Presbytery as a whole,” is either confusing or mistaken. CRPR reports include multiple recommendations with respect to a presbytery’s records. One might properly have voted in a minority on one recommendation and yet have voted to approve the records of the Presbytery as a whole. This surely would not be disqualifying.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b>. <i>CH</i>, 473, item AE.</p>  | Westminster    | CCB, OC  |
| 34 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 9-2 Regarding the Expectation of the Establishment of a Diaconate                        | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The principles of biblical polity set forth in the <i>BCO</i> clearly require that a congregation have deacons (see Appendix II). The language proposed will not advance that cause, and in its terse phrasing may cause confusion.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 473, item AF.</p>   | Savannah River | CCB, OC  |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION  | PRESB          | COC     |
|----|--|---|----------------|---------|
| 35 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 31-2 to Establish a Deadline for the Issuing of an Indictment   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>This is a solution looking for a problem. I know of but one case of abuse with respect to issuing an indictment and one instance does not warrant changing the <i>BCO</i>. Further, remedy fatally open ended: What happens if the next prosecutor fails to file in a timely fashion, and so ad infinitum?</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 473, item AG.</p>  | Illiana        | CCB, OC |
| 36 | Add <i>BCO</i> 8-11 and 9-8 Regarding the Exercise of the Duties and Authority of Elder and Deacon<br><br>See also Overtures 14, | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>PCA polity is clear on the matters in question. The proposed elaboration of things that cannot be done, does not exhaust the possibilities of wrongdoing, which possibilities will likely be searched out, and thus, following this path, another amendment listing errors will be needed. Further, the ambiguity some of the terms used for forbidden behavior will do more harm than good.</p> <p>The proper path in this matter is not to encumber the <i>BCO</i> with lists of forbidden actions, but rather to employ personal brotherly engagement and persuasion, and, failing that, to take up judicial proceedings with respect to alleged miscreant(s).</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 473-474, item AH.</p> | Catawba Valley | CCB, OC |
| 37 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 9-3 to Allow Women to Serve as Ordained Deacons   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The burden of proof is on the proposer. The “Whereas” portion of the Overture does not even attempt to make a serious attempt at a <i>Scriptural</i> case for the proposed change (the mere assertion that there is “strong evidence” in Romans 16:1, without any explanation of what that evidence is, is nothing to the point).</p> <p>All that is offered in the proposal’s favor are lists of various denominations, scholars, and theologians who hold the view, which could easily be rebutted by lists of denotations, scholars and theologians who think to the contrary.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with Scripture. <i>CH</i>, 474, item AI.</p>   | Pacific        | CCB, OC |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION   | PRESB           | COC                             |
|----|--|--|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 38 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 7-3 and add 9-8 to Allow Sessions Flexibility Regarding the Diaconate | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>Though this proposal at least attempts to present a little more of a Scriptural case than Overture 37, it too suffers from dependence upon lists of various denominations, scholars, and theologians who hold the view, which could easily be rebutted by lists of denotations, scholars and theologians who think to the contrary.</p> <p>Much is made of <i>BCO</i> 7-2, “The office of deacon is not one of rule, but rather of service. . . .” However, “rule” in this sentence must be understood as “rule <i>in general</i>” in the church which belongs to the elders. According to Acts 6, the Deacons (note: “pick out from among you seven men”) were appointed to have authority to see to the equitable distribution of the widows. Almost all the duties enumerated in <i>BCO</i> 9-6 require some authoritative judgments in their accomplishment. Thus, in the particular sphere of his ministry the deacon does have authority. It is for this reason the promise in <i>BCO</i> 24-6 requires no modification when the subject is a deacon. “do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and <i>obedience</i> in the Lord <i>to which his office</i>, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, <i>entitles him?</i>” The deacon is entitled to that obedience that belongs to his sphere of ministry. And it is for this reason that 1Tim. 2:12 governs with respect to the office of deacon as well.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 474-475, item AJ.</p> | Metro Atlanta   | CCB, OC                         |
| 39 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 22 to Affirm the Consent of the Governed for Assistant Pastors        | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>Though I have served as an assistant pastor, I have only the faintest support for the existence of such an office. However, as the assistant pastor clearly does not govern in the sense of Preliminary Principle 6 (the mention of Presbytery and General Assembly is nothing to the point), he need not have the consent of the not-governed to that end.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 475, item AK.</p>  | Central Florida | CCB, OC                         |
| 40 | Amend RAO 4-9 to Set Calendar Year Terms for Stated Clerk and Coordinators             | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The “Whereas” portion of the Overture sets forth a clear and eloquent statement of a serious problem, but the solution proposed is inadequate. See Overture 43 for a better remedy.</p> <p>AC recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 507.<br/> CDM recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 706.<br/> MNA recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 812.<br/> MTW recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 915.<br/> RUF recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 1006.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 475, item AL.</p>   | Savannah River  | CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION   | PRESB               | COC                             |
|----|--|--|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 41 | Amend RAO 4-9 to Require 2/3 Majority to Elect Stated Clerk and Coordinators | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The Overture sets forth a number of virtues belonging to the proposal that are attractive, but I fear that a 2/3 requirement will undermine leadership in these positions by making reelection contingent upon being “man-pleasers” (Col. 3:22-24).</p> <p>AC recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. CH, 508.<br/> CDM recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. CH, 706.<br/> MNA no advice. CH, 812.<br/> MTW recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. CH, 915.<br/> RUF recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. CH, 1007.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. CH, 475, item AM.</p> | Savannah River      | CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF |
| 42 | Restore the Reference to the Westminster Standards at the end of BCO 29-1    | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>The carefully framed Rationale is well-argued. Unless someone can contest the evidence that the phrase was inadvertently lost, it should be restored by majority vote of this Assembly.</p> <p>NOTE: In the opinion of the CCB, after consultation with the PCA Historical Center, the change proposed by Overture 42 is <b>an editorial correction</b> restoring the language adopted for BCO 29-1. CH, 475, item AN.</p>   | Northern California | CCB, OC                         |
| 43 | Amend RAO 4-9 so that Coordinators of Committees are Elected to 4-year Terms | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>The Overture addresses a critical problem (see also Ov. 20 for a clear and eloquent statement need) with a remedy that will do much to overcome the weakness of our current state of affairs.</p> <p>AC recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. CH, 508.<br/> CDM recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. CH, 706.<br/> MNA recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. CH, 812.<br/> MTW recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. CH, 916.<br/> RUF recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. CH, 1007.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. CH, 475, item AO.</p>                   | Pacific Northwest   | CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF |
| 44 | Divide Covenant Presbytery into Two Presbyteries                             | <p>AFFIRMATIVE, if approved by Committee of Commissioners.</p> <p>MNA recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. CH, 813, item 7.</p>   | Covenant            | MNA                             |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION   | PRESB              | COC     |
|----|--|--|--------------------|---------|
| 45 | Amend RAO 8-4.i to Require that Floor Nominations for Committees and Agencies Come from Previously Submitted Presbytery Nominees<br><br>See also Overture 47 | NEGATIVE<br>There are a number of defects in this proposal, but the most telling is that it would make impossible the nomination from the floor of one who had previously served in the position, but who was not, for whatever reason, nominated by his presbytery. The Assembly should have the freedom to act as it sees fit.<br><br>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 475, item AP. | Covenant           | CCB, OC |
| 46 | Add <i>BCO</i> 29-5 on Public Allegations without Prior Reporting to the Court of Jurisdiction as Probable Violations of the Ninth Commandment               | NEGATIVE<br>Though having considerable sympathy for the concern raised, <i>BCO</i> 29-1 and LC 144-145 already make such behavior an offence.<br><br>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 476, item AQ.  | New York State     | CCB, OC |
| 47 | Amend RAO 8-4.i to Require that Floor Nominations for Committees and Agencies Come from Previously Submitted Presbytery Nominees                             | NEGATIVE<br>See comments on Overture 45.<br><br>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 476, item AR.   | Suncoast Florida   | CCB, OC |
| 48 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 7-2 and 7-3 Regarding Commissioning and Titling of Unordained Persons   | NEGATIVE<br>The resolution does not appear to follow from the “Whereas” portion of the Overture. Cf. Overture 74.<br><br>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 476, item AS.  | Northwest Georgia  | CCB, OC |
| 49 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 13-1 and 14-2 to Increase Ruling Elder Representation at Presbytery and GA  | NEGATIVE<br>I cannot see how adding one more entitlement will increase RE participation when it seems churches are not using the entitlements they now have.<br><br>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 476, item AT.   | Northwest Georgia  | CCB, OC |
| 50 | Call for a Day of Fasting and Prayer for Revival and Renewal of the Church   | AFFIRMATIVE<br>A thoughtful, Scriptural proposal that should be heartily embraced.   | Mississippi Valley | OC      |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION   | PRESB              | COC     |
|----|--|--|--------------------|---------|
| 51 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 5 to add a Section on 'Assisted Churches'   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The proposed addition is thoughtful and well drafted, but I would have supposed that most presbyteries are already doing these things under the responsibilities that are laid out in the <i>BCO</i> as it stands. In any case, this does not appear to fit in a chapter entitled "The Organization of a Particular Church." There might be a place for something like this around <i>BCO</i> 13-10.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 476-477, item AU.</p>   | Mississippi Valley | CCB, OC |
| 52 | Add <i>BCO</i> 7-4 Prohibiting the Creation of Ecclesiastical Offices                                    | <p>REFER</p> <p>Refer the Overture to the study committee recommended with respect to Overture 74.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 477, item AV.</p>  | Mississippi Valley | CCB, OC |
| 53 | Amend RAO 16 to Prohibit Members of RPR from Participating in GA Debate on the RPR Report                | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>This proposal ought to be adopted for the same reason that the Strategic Planning Committee recommended, and the Assembly approved, it for the new Overtures Committee, to wit, "Proposed change seeks to insure that the non-Overtures commissioners are able to participate fully in debate." Experience has confirmed the usefulness of the rule to widen deliberation on the floor of the Assembly.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 477, item AW.</p> | Great Lakes        | CCB, OC |
| 54 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 42-2 to Clarify that a Person Judged Contumacious has the Right of Complaint Not Appeal | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>A person censured for contumacy does not have the right to file a complaint because such a person is not a member in good standing (<i>BCO</i> 43-1).</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 477, item AX.</p>  | Hills and Plains   | CCB, OC |
| 55 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 22-3 and 23-1 Concerning the Tenure of Assistant Pastors                                | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>See comments on Overture 39.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 477, item AY.</p>   | Southwest Florida  | CCB, OC |

| #  | SUBJECT   | POSITION  | PRESB             | COC     |
|----|---|---|-------------------|---------|
| 56 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 32-19 to Limit Representation in Judicial Process to Officers  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The current provision, to <i>expand</i> representation, has just recently been approved by an overwhelming majority of the Presbyteries. It would be imprudent to make so quickly a change to <i>restrict</i> representation, unless there was some compelling Scriptural reason demanding such a change.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 477, item AZ.</p>   | Southwest Florida | CCB, OC |
| 57 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 12-7, 13-9, and 25-5 to Explicitly Require Minutes of Congregational Meetings Be Included in Session Records | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>Presbytery has no jurisdiction over a congregational meeting and thus has no review responsibilities with respect to the minutes.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 748, item BA.</p>   | South Texas       | CCB, OC |
| 58 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 10-4 to Specify that Clerks Must Be Elders   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>CF 1.6, “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture. . . . Nevertheless, we acknowledge . . . that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.”</p> <p>What is the point of the citation here? That which is set down in Scripture, expressly or by implication, is absolute; that which is circumstantial and prudential, should never be made absolute. Apart from mere procedural regulations, in anything that is materially a part of government and worship, the words, “in most cases” or “ordinarily” and the like, should always qualify such regulations.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 748, item BB.</p> | Calvary           | CCB, OC |

| #  | SUBJECT   | POSITION   | PRESB            | COC     |
|----|---|--|------------------|---------|
| 59 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 38-3.a to Recognize the Non-Punitive Removal of Individuals from Membership Roll | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>There is no problem here to be solved. A church member does not have the right to have his church membership dissolved immediately. All the church member needs to do is find a new church home and then ask for the dissolution. It is fitting that the session retain jurisdiction until the matter is settled, as there would be no guarantee that the new body would be some other branch of the visible church, or that there would be a new body at all.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 748, item BC.</p>   | Calvary          | CCB, OC |
| 60 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 58-5 to Specify that Only Men Lawfully Ordained Shall Distribute the Elements    | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>See comments on Overture 31</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 748, item BD.</p>  | Calvary          | CCB, OC |
| 61 | Declare the ‘Danvers Statement’ as a Biblically Faithful Declaration                              | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>I love the Danvers Statement! So, what’s with the “N”? The Overture confirms my doubts, expressed when we dealt with the “Nashville Statement”. PCA members, like I, can cheerfully endorse such statements, but why impose that on the whole denomination? Neither of these statements add anything to the PCA’s Confessional understanding and witness. But, in the eyes of some of us, there may be things that they doubt, or would have said otherwise. Why impose it upon them? It is not our part of the Church’s calling to hear and endorse statements of other parts or institutions. We have enough to do to care for our own house.</p> | Calvary          | OC      |
| 62 | Divide Tennessee Valley Presbytery into Two Presbyteries  | <p>AFFIRMATIVE, if approved by Committee of Commissioners.</p> <p>MNA recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE.<br/><i>CH</i>, 813, item 8.</p>  | Tennessee Valley | MNA     |
| 63 | Amend RAO 19-4 to Establish Preference in Recognition for an Objector to an In Gross Motion       | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>The “Whereas” portion of the Overture ably and convincingly sets forth its case.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 748, item BE.</p>  | South Texas      | CCB, OC |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION   | PRESB        | COC     |
|----|--|--|--------------|---------|
| 64 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 23-2 to Establish Associate Membership for Honorably Retired TEs  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>Associate membership offers no privilege or benefit that the retired minister doesn't have simply by regular attendance at worship. On the other hand, the word "<i>provided</i>" in the last sentence appears to make his membership in presbytery contingent up associate membership.</p> <p>Are we really going to defrock a retired minister if he does not agree with the idea of associate membership. The overture nowhere offers a Scriptural warrant for such an imposition.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 478, item BF.</p>  | Canada West  | CCB, OC |
| 65 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 38-1 re Confessions and Cases without Process   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The provision in question already requires the confessor to "come forward," which clearly implies that his doing so under the weight of his own conscience and not the prompting of a public accusation.</p> <p>The proposed closing paragraph seems to say that the court can properly compel through threat a confession in what appears to be a slightly veiled plea bargain.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 478-479, item BG.</p>   | Canada West  | CCB, OC |
| 66 | Issue a Declaration of Thanksgiving on the Occasion of the 250th Anniversary of the Nation's Founding<br><br>See also Overtures 76, 89 | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>A thoughtful and well-craft proposal, in the main. I should note that it is unfortunate that the "Therefore" cites Larger Catechism 191, "that the Church may be . . . countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate," without any explanatory comment. This is misleading. I am confident that the Americans in 1789 meant, "countenanced and maintained" <i>just as any other institution of social well-being</i>. That is the only construction of the phrase that fits the changes they made to the Confession of Faith. The naked statement sounds a bit like Establishment, and the American revisionists wanted nothing to do with that hangover from the Old Country.</p> | Philadelphia | OC      |
| 67 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 40-5 to Clarify a Court Shall Make Two Determinations before Citing a Lower Court                                     | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The proposed amendment does not provide any substantive improvement over the current language of the <i>BCO</i> and thus there is no reason to undo the well-established history of judicial construction with respect to that provision.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 479, item BH.</p>  | Potomac      | CCB, OC |

| #  | SUBJECT   | POSITION   | PRESB               | COC  |
|----|---|--|---------------------|--|
| 68 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 14-1 to Make AC Members Appointed by Committees and Agencies Non-voting Members    | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The alleged potential confusion in “Whereas” 4 is unconvincing, given so many years of experience.</p> <p>Otherwise, the Overture’s argument is “precise” without attention to context. Every representative of permanent committees and agencies has been elected to, and is responsible to, the Assembly. The Administrative Committee deals with matters that are essential to their calling. Thus, the PCA has provided them a full seat at the table in the Committee appointed to deal with those matters.</p> <p>It might be thought that each committee and agency should, by right, present their own budgets to the Assembly. But wisdom suggested, and experience has confirmed, that such matters should be coordinated in one body. But that wisdom would be vitiated should the same be excluded from the actual decision-making process.</p> <p>AC makes no recommendation. <i>CH</i>, 509, line 18.<br/> CC recommends NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 1710, line 19.<br/> CTS recommends NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 1829, line 45.<br/> MNA no advice. <i>CH</i>, 812, line 11.<br/> RH recommends NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 2103, line 4.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS UNCLEAR</b>. <i>CH</i>, 479, item BI.</p> | Catawba Valley      | CCB, OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS, Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF |
| 69 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 32-18 and 42-5 to Clarify the Contents of the Record of the Case in Judicial Cases | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>This proposal is an outstanding remedy to a serious and debilitating defect in our rules of procedure. The Rationale effectively makes the case.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 479, item BJ.</p>  | Southwest Florida   | CCB, OC  |
| 70 | Expand Korean Northwest Boundaries  | <p>AFFIRMATIVE, if approved by Committee of Commissioners.</p> <p>MNA recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 813, item 9.</p>  | Korean Northwest    | MNA  |
| 71 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 5-9.e, 9-2, and 9-7 to Allow Session to Directly Administer Diaconal Ministry      | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The principles of biblical polity set forth in the <i>BCO</i> clearly require that a congregation have deacons (see Appendix II).</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 480, item BK.</p>  | Northern California | CCB, OC  |
| 72 | Add a new <i>BCO</i> 12-8 to Require Recording of Session and Diaconate Members in Session Minutes  | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>Regardless of our current controversies, this is a reasonable requirement for Session record-keeping and for Presbytery oversight (see also Appendix II).</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 480-481, item BL.</p>   | Ascension           | CCB, OC  |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION  | PRESB             | COC                             |
|----|--|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 73 | Amend RAO 4-9 to Require 2/3 Majority to Elect Stated Clerk and Coordinators after 3 Consecutive Years of Service                  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>See comment on Overtures 40, 41, 43.</p> <p>AC recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 509.</p> <p>MNA recommends answer in the NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 812.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 481, item BM.</p>   | TE Cody Hooper    | CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF |
| 74 | Add a New Chapter <i>BCO</i> 17A 'Of Commissioning for Non-Ordained Ministry'  | <p>REFER THE MATTER TO A STUDY COMMITTEE</p> <p>Charge to the Committee: to study the matter of commissioning for non-ordained ministry; Scripture warrant; history of use in Reformed church; and, if warranted, prepare an amendment to the <i>BCO</i> to be presented to the Assembly.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 481, item BN.</p>  | Eastern Carolina  | CCB, OC                         |
| 75 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 42 to Clarify the Process for Filing an Appeal  | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>See comments on Overture 29.</p> <p>Here is the point: The notice, at the meeting, prevents the court from enacting the judgment. Without that notice, the court may enact the judgment before the written appeal can be filed within the 30-day window. To avoid this, there would need to be a rule that the judgment could not be enacted for 30 days.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 481, item BO.</p> | Central Florida   | CCB, OC                         |
| 76 | Issue a Declaration of Thanksgiving for the USA on the 250th Anniversary of the Nation's Founding<br><br>See also Overtures 66, 89 | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>See Overture 66.</p>  | Calvary           | OC                              |
| 77 | Amend RAO 4-9 so that Coordinators and the Stated Clerk are Elected to 4-year Terms  | <p>REFER</p> <p>See comment on Overtures 40, 41, 43, 73.</p> <p>MNA recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 812.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 482, item BP.</p>  | Southeast Alabama | CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF |

| #  | SUBJECT   | POSITION  | PRESB             | COC                             |
|----|---|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 78 | Amend RAO 4-21 to Authorize Electronic Meetings for GA Committees and Commissions               | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>Grudgingly. The Overture is correct that <i>Robert's</i> has capitulated on this point, and that the practice has already become customary among us, and thus ought to be regulated according to <i>Robert's</i>, but, in my judgment, more will be lost than gained in our capacity for true deliberation should our committees and agencies make impersonal meetings the standard way of attempting to transact business as part of the body of Christ.</p> <p>MNA recommends answer in reference to overture 79. <i>CH</i>, 812, line 40.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 482, item BQ.</p> | Southeast Alabama | CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF |
| 79 | Amend RAO 4-21 to Authorize Electronic Meetings for GA Committees and Commissions               | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>See comments on Overture 78.</p> <p>MNA recommends answer in the AFFIRMATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 813, line 1.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 482, item BR.</p>  | Calvary           | CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF |
| 80 | Erect Ad Interim Committee on Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory                          | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>See 52<sup>nd</sup> GA 2025-49, below.</p> <p>A further observation: Overture 80 has taken the opportunity to offer an extensive study of the matter, knowing that it will be necessarily published to the whole Assembly, in the "Whereas" portion of the Overture, so it appears that no further labor is necessary, at least from their point of view. Though I share that point of view, such a proposal strikes me as an abuse of the Overture process.</p> <p>Finally, it strikes me as untoward to use a "Whereas" in an Overture to refer to a brother PCA member that might be construed as an allegation of censurable views (see footnote 8).</p>                                 | Calvary           | OC, AC                          |
| 81 | Amend RAO 1-1 to Require Serving Wine and Grape Juice for the Lord's Supper at General Assembly | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>The "Whereas" portion of the Overture soundly makes the case for its adoption.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 482, item BS.</p>   | Potomac           | CCB, OC                         |

| #  | SUBJECT  | POSITION   | PRESB             | COC     |
|----|--|--|-------------------|---------|
| 82 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 12, 13, and 25 to Clarify the Right of the Congregation to Give Consent to those who Exercise Authority Over Them | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The Overture misunderstands Preliminary Principle 6 and its role in Presbyterian law since 1789. On this misunderstanding it proposes changes that will severely disable sound government, particularly with respect to <i>BCO</i> 13-9. Time and time again this argument has been put before the General Assembly, and each time it has been soundly repudiated. That wholesome stand should be maintained.</p> <p>In particular, though it is true that the “act for,” “act on” and “act against” language was approved by a General Assembly, when the same was proposed to be put into the <i>BCO</i> it was soundly rejected.</p> <p>Legitimate concerns about property rights, which are clearly protected in the <i>BCO</i>, should not lead us to distort and undermine the Christ-appointed authority structure with respect to church courts that is set forth in historic presbyterian polity: <i>BCO</i> 11-4, “Every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline seriously and reasonably proposed, and in general to maintain truth and righteousness, condemning erroneous opinions and practices which tend to the injury of the peace, purity, or progress of the Church. Although each court exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters especially belonging to it, the lower courts are subject to the review and control of the higher courts, in regular gradation. These courts are not separate and independent tribunals, but they have a mutual relation, and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole Church performed by it through the appropriate organ.”</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. However, CCB offers a number of arguments against the proposal. <i>CH</i>, 482-483, item BT.</p> | Rocky Mountain    | CCB, OC |
| 83 | Require Courses on Scripture and Doctrine at Covenant College and Covenant Seminary Be Taught by Ordained Elders                   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The Overture fails to distinguish academic teaching and ecclesiastical teaching. In the former the teacher has mastered a subject (e.g., the Bible) and conveys information that the hearer takes or leaves as he will. The only accountability is to have learned the material. An atheist could get an A in Bible while remaining an atheist. In the latter the teacher has mastered a subject (e.g., the Bible) and with the authority of Christ conveys information that the hearer is obliged to receive and live by or face church discipline. According to the Scripture a woman may not engage in ecclesiastical teaching, but that it no impediment to a woman engaging in academic teaching.</p> <p>CC recommends _____. <i>CH</i>, ?, item ?.</p> <p>CTS recommends NEGATIVE. <i>CH</i>, 1831, item 9.</p>   | Northwest Georgia | CC, CTS |

| #  | SUBJECT   | POSITION   | PRESB                            | COC     |
|----|---|--|----------------------------------|---------|
| 84 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 12 and 13 to Require Annual Attestation of Officer's Views   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>The Overture would have the PCA adopt an inquisitorial system that is utterly alien to the judicial procedures of the <i>BCO</i>.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 483, item BU.</p>                          | Northwest Georgia                | CCB, OC |
| 85 | Add <i>BCO</i> 44 on Objections   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>There is no evidence that there is a malady in the current text that is in need of remedy.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 483, item BV.</p>   | Northwest Georgia                | CCB, OC |
| 86 | Amend <i>BCO</i> 43 to Rename Complaints as Inquiries   | <p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>There is no warrant for such an extensive change in the Rules of Discipline and the proposed terminology will cloud not clarify the procedure in question.</p> <p>NOTE: CCB reports the proposed amendment <b>IS NOT</b> in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 483, item BW.</p> | Session of Grace Covenant Church | CCB, OC |
| 87 | Change the Boundaries of Pittsburgh Presbytery and the Ohio Presbytery  | <p>AFFIRMATIVE, if approved by Committee of Commissioners.</p> <p>MNA recommends affirmative <i>CH</i>, 813, item 6.</p>   | Pittsburgh                       | MNA     |
| 88 | Instruct the AC to Format the <i>BCO</i> for Ease of Printing   | <p>AFFIRMATIVE, if approved by Committee of Commissioners.</p> <p>AC recommends affirmative <i>CH</i>, ?, item ?.</p>  | Siouxlands                       | AC      |
| 89 | Issue a Declaration of Thanksgiving for the United States of America on the 250 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nation's Founding<br><br>See also Overtures 66, 76 | <p>AFFIRMATIVE</p> <p>See Overture 66</p>  | Fellowship                       | OC      |

APPENDIX I  
Some Thoughts on the Consideration of Overtures<sup>1</sup>

In considering an Overture before the General Assembly, the Elders of the Church have a high privilege and responsibility, before our Lord, before the Lord's people, and before a watching world. The calling to uphold the will of the Lord of the Church as revealed in Scripture, to love for the brethren, to reasonable engagement in a collegial spirit, and to seek not the good of a party, but the good of the church, would be hopelessly burdensome but for the promise of our Lord to work in and through our efforts at faithfulness.

Over many years of pursuing this calling, I have been guided by a number of principles that I offer for the encouragement of my brothers in this labor.

1. Providence prevails—the Lord orders our business, and though we know not for what particular end, we do know that it comes as a summons to trust, obey, and rejoice, knowing that all is for one's spiritual and eternal good.<sup>2</sup>
2. Concerning majority rule—The Presbyterian Church does not hold “the theory that majorities are wise and should rule, but that the Church comes to see together the mind of Christ by counseling together in love. While, from practical necessity, the majority prevails when there is a difference of judgment, this difference of judgment, after deliberation, is simply a failure of men to work out the rule of Christ. And the members of a majority ought to grieve more over the difference of judgment than rejoice over carrying the decision their way.”<sup>3</sup>
3. Look to the Word of Christ, as delivered in the Scriptures, as the rule for settling all substantial matters; exercise prudence and good sense in all matters merely circumstantial; and have the wisdom to so distinguish.
4. Those who overture the Assembly are “Fathers and Brethren” and should be treated as such with dignity and kindness.
5. Proposals should be considered with a sense of fair play, integrity and charity, putting aside selfishness, pride or party spirit, in order to glorify Christ in His Church and edify His people.
6. The burden of proof is on the proposer: To prevail a proposal must offer evidence and a rationale that is compelling, while displaying the virtues of “*brevitas et claritas*”.
7. *The Book of Church Order* is not a detailed collection of rules and regulations covering every circumstance, nor are amendments to the same a means for settling all controversies in the church. The *BCO* is a document of governmental structures and principles, in all that is necessary rooted in Scripture, while “there are some circumstances concerning the . . . government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.” (CF 1.6.)

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<sup>1</sup> For thoughts on the nature and practice of debate see my “Twenty Principles of Effective argumentation,” <https://newhopefairfax.org/resources/<Articles><Recent Authors>>.

<sup>2</sup> An adaptation of J.I. Packer, *New Geneva Study Bible*, p. 957.

<sup>3</sup> F.P. Ramsay, *An Exposition of the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Richmond: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1898), p. 92.

8. There is a general objection to any proposed change in *The Book of Church Order*: Any new language will include undiscovered ambiguities that might well have disastrous unintended consequences, consequences that will only appear when the provisions are tested in cases by sharp and contending minds seeking possible meanings to their advantage. Thus, unless the change proposed is clearly necessary, the old language is to be preferred, because it has already been long-tested in cases, and persuasive precedents guide the church as to its meaning.

## Appendix II

DOES THE *BCO* (AND THUS THE PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL POLITY SET FORTH THEREIN) REQUIRE THAT A CONGREGATION HAVE DEACONS?

YES, DEMONSTRABLY

Dr. David F. Coffin, Jr.

### I. CHRIST, THE KING AND HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Jesus gives “*all offices necessary* for the edification of His Church and the perfecting of His saints.” *BCO* Preface, I.<sup>4</sup>

Christ has ordained “His system of doctrine, government, discipline and worship, all of which are either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary inference may be deduced therefrom; and to which things *He commands* that nothing be added, and that *from them naught be taken away*.” *BCO* Preface, I.

“The *ordinary and perpetual classes of office* in the Church are elders and *deacons*. . . . In accord with Scripture, these offices are open to men only.” *BCO* 7-2.

“The *office of deacon* is set forth in the Scriptures as *ordinary and perpetual* in the Church. . . .” *BCO* 9-1.

“Its [*the particular church’s*] officers are its teaching and ruling elders and *its deacons*.” *BCO* 4-2.

“To the office of deacon . . . shall be chosen men. . . .” *BCO* 9-3.

QED: For a minister and/or Session to hold as policy that there shall be no ordained deacon in a congregation is to say that Jesus has not given the diaconate as necessary to the edification of the church and the perfection of His people and is to take away from his commands concerning the church’s ordinary and perpetual officers.

### II. THE DOCTRINE OF VOCATION

“*Ordinary vocation to office* in the Church is *the calling of God by the Spirit*, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God’s people, and the concurring judgment of a lawful court of the Church.” *BCO* 16-1.

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<sup>4</sup> Emphasis added throughout.

“Upon *those whom God calls* to bear office in His Church *He bestows suitable gifts for the discharge of their various duties.*” BCO 16-3

“Those who have been called to office in the Church *are to be inducted* by the ordination of a court.” BCO 17-2.

“*Ordination* is the authoritative *admission of one duly called to an office* in the Church of God. . . .” BCO 17-3.

QED: For a minister and/or Session to hold as policy that there shall be no ordained deacon in a congregation is to deny that God by the Spirit may call a man from that congregation to the office of deacon, or is to deny a man called and gifted of God by the Spirit his right to be elected and ordained to the office and exercise his gifts in the diaconal labor for which they were given.

### III. THE POWERS OF THE CHURCH

“The officers of the Church, *by whom all its powers are administered*, are according to the Scriptures, teaching and ruling elders and *deacons.*” BCO 4-1.

“This *power, as exercised by the people*, extends to *the choice of those officers* whom He has appointed in His Church.” BCO 3-1.

QED: For a minister and/or Session to hold as policy that there shall be no ordained deacon in a congregation is to deny the congregation the Christ-appointed administrator of part of the church’s power, and to deny the right of the people to exercise their power in choosing deacons.

### IV. THE RIGHTS OF MEMBERS SEVERALLY AND THE CONGREGATION AS A WHOLE

“At such times as determined by the Session, *communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session*, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications. . . .” BCO 24-1.

“All communing members in good and regular standing . . . *are entitled to vote in the election of church officers.* . . .” BCO 24-3.

“If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time *request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers*, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure.” BCO 24-1.

“The *number of officers to be elected* shall be *determined by the congregation* after hearing the Session’s recommendation.” BCO 24-1.

QED: For a minister and/or Session to hold as policy that there shall be no ordained deacon in a congregation is to transgress the rights of communicant members to nominate candidates for the diaconate and to vote on their election if found qualified; and to deny the right of the

congregation to require the Session to hold an election for the diaconate, as well as the right of the congregation to set the number of deacons to be elected.

#### V. REASONS WHY A CONGREGATION MIGHT NOT HAVE DEACONS

“In a church in which it is *impossible* for any reason to secure deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders.” *BCO* 9-2.

What reason might make it “impossible”?

- a. Jesus calls no man to be a deacon (possible, but unlikely).
- b. No man is found qualified by the Session to be a deacon.
- c. The Congregation recognizes no man as called of God to be a deacon.

But according to the *BCO* the pastor and/or the Session cannot antecedently decide, as a matter of policy, that there shall be no deacons. This is to violate the rights of Jesus, the rights of men called by Him to the office, and the rights of members severally, and of the congregation as a whole. Further, the required remedy in each case of *impossibility* is to pray that the Lord would provide what is “*necessary* for the edification of His Church and the perfecting of His saints,” and to *labor diligently* to see to it that the means of grace are so employed that men become suitably spiritual, are recognized as such by the people, and thus are nominated, trained, elected and ordained to serve as deacons.