

1 **OVERTURE 10** from Northern California Presbytery (to CCB & OC)

2 “Amend *BCO* 1-4, 4-2, 5-10, 7-2, 9-2, 9-7 & Add a *BCO* 9-8

3 to Appoint Unordained Men and Women to Carry Out Diaconal Ministry”

4  
5 **Whereas** the scripture is the only infallible and inerrant rule of life and practice, and has, in  
6 the New Testament in particular, set forth certain principles for the government of  
7 the church which include the ministries of both elders and deacons; and

8  
9 **Whereas** the *BCO* recognizes these ministries and the men who carry out their work in  
10 terms of offices and officers, we affirm these shared commitments: men only may be  
11 ordained to offices in the church (1 Timothy 3), diaconal ministry is an important  
12 part of the church's mission and work (Acts 6, 1 Timothy 3, *BCO* 9), teaching and  
13 ruling elders are called to uphold the Bible fully within their churches and  
14 Presbyteries (2 Peter 1, *BCO* Preface II), Sessions are the authoritative court of local  
15 churches (*BCO* 4-3); and

16  
17 **Whereas** various interpretations of the Bible have led to a variety of practices within the  
18 PCA over the course of its entire history with respect to diaconal ministries. These  
19 differences have led to confusion and division over these various interpretations and  
20 practices, particularly in recent years; and

21  
22 **Whereas** local Sessions have always retained the authority to create, appoint, and oversee  
23 all biblically valid ministries within their local churches which are guided by  
24 unordained members of the church (*BCO* 1-5); and

25  
26 **Whereas** there is a strong desire to hold firm to the essentials of our faith and practice as  
27 outlined in scripture and our confession, and the *BCO* should not unduly bind the  
28 conscience of a session seeking to structure its diaconate under the authority of  
29 Scripture (Preface II.7); and

30  
31 **Whereas** these various interpretations of the Bible clearly exist within the PCA and it is  
32 desirable that the language of the *BCO* be more clear as it addresses the various  
33 practices of the organization and ministry of the diaconate. These changes will  
34 enable the current practices without opening the *BCO* to broader interpretation;

35  
36 **Now therefore, be it resolved**, for the good of the church and the promotion of order and  
37 peace, that the *BCO* be amended in the following areas: [Additions **bold** and  
38 **underlined**; ~~strike through~~ for deletions]

39  
40 *BCO* 1-4. The **ordained** officers of the Church, by whom all its powers  
41 are administered, are, according to the Scriptures, teaching and ruling  
42 elders and deacons.

43  
44 *BCO* 4-2 Its **ordained** officers are its teaching and ruling elders and its  
45 deacons.

1  
2 BCO 5-10 If deacons are elected, follow the procedures of (1) through (5)  
3 above. ~~If deacons are not elected, the duties of the office shall devolve~~  
4 ~~upon the ruling elders.~~

5  
6 BCO 7-2 The ordinary and perpetual classes of **ordained** office in the  
7 church are elders and deacons. . . .

8  
9 BCO 9-2. It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need,  
10 to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their  
11 duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church,  
12 to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to  
13 distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed.  
14 They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and  
15 personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other  
16 buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance  
17 affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without  
18 the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.

19 In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the  
20 supervision and authority of the Session. ~~In a church in which it is~~  
21 ~~impossible for any reason to secure deacons, the duties of the office shall~~  
22 ~~devolve upon the ruling elders.~~ **In a church in which deacons are not**  
23 **ordained, the responsibility for the oversight of diaconal ministries**  
24 **shall devolve upon the Session.**

25  
26 BCO 9-7. It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select  
27 and appoint godly men and women of the congregation to assist the  
28 deacons **and/or Session** in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans,  
29 the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need.

30  
31 [ADDITION: **BCO 9-8**] **In a local church which does not have**  
32 **ordained deacons, the Session may appoint an unordained body of**  
33 **men and women to carry out diaconal ministry. They may care for**  
34 **the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may**  
35 **be in any distress or need. However, these men and women do not**  
36 **carry the same constitutional rights as ordained deacons.**

37  
38 *Adopted by Northern California Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 5, 2010*  
39 *Attested by /s/ TE Samuel Wheatley, stated clerk*