

1 **OVERTURE 1** from Southeast Alabama Presbytery (to: CCB and OC)
2 “Amend *BCO* 6-1, 6-2, 6-4, 6-5 to Define Methods by Which People Are Received
3 into the Church”
4

5 **Whereas**, members of other churches seeking membership in our church may join by a
6 “letter of dismissal” or by “reaffirmation of faith (*BCO* 57-6),” yet our *Book of*
7 *Church Order* nowhere defines these terms more specifically to be of use to our
8 church, and,
9

10 **Whereas**, in our church there is widespread inconsistency and confusion regarding the
11 method by which members join and are dismissed from our church,
12

13 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 6 be amended as follows (new text in bold):
14

15 **6-1. Persons may enter into church membership by Profession of Faith,**
16 **Reaffirmation of Faith, or Transfer of Letter from some other church.**
17 Those only who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized,
18 and admitted by the Session to the Lord's Table, are entitled to all the rights
19 and privileges of the church. (See *BCO* 57-4 and 58-4)
20

21 **6-2.** The children of believers are, through the covenant and by right of birth,
22 non-communicating members of the church. Hence they are entitled to Baptism,
23 and to the pastoral oversight, instruction and government of the church, with a
24 view to their embracing Christ and thus possessing personally all benefits of
25 the covenant. (See *BCO* 56). **It is their duty and privilege personally to**
26 **receive and rest upon Christ, to confess Him before men, and seek**
27 **admission to the Lord's Table (See *BCO* 57).**
28

29 **6-3.** Communing members are those who have made a profession of faith in
30 Christ, have been baptized, and have been admitted by the Session to the
31 Lord's Table. (See *BCO* 46-4 for associate members).
32

33 **6-4.** When persons who have not been baptized desire to profess their
34 faith in Christ and be incorporated into the life of the church as believers,
35 they may be received by Profession of Faith. They shall do so by making
36 public their profession of faith and receiving baptism in accordance with
37 *BCO* 57 after appropriate instruction and examination by the session.
38

39 **6-5.** Persons who have previously made a profession of faith and have
40 been received into membership in a particular church may be received by
41 the session by Letter of Transfer if the church is recognized to be a true
42 branch of Christ's Church (*BCO* 2-2). When the person who previously
43 made a profession of faith and became a member in a particular church
44 is unable to secure a Letter of Transfer or if their church is not
45 recognized to be a true branch of Christ's Church (see *BCO* 2-2), they

1 **shall be received by Reaffirmation of Faith. Members received by Letter**
2 **of Transfer or by Reaffirmation of Faith shall be received in accordance**
3 **with the procedure in BCO 46-6.** [Note: The reference to *BCO* 46-6 assumes
4 passage of Overture 3. Present *BCO* 57-6 deals with receiving of members by
5 Letter of Transfer or Reaffirmation of Faith.]
6

7 **6-6.** All baptized persons are entitled to the watchful care, instruction and
8 government of the church, even though they are adults and have made no
9 profession of their faith in Christ.

10
11 **And be it further resolved** that the Stated Clerk be authorized to make any changes in
12 denominational certificates necessary to bring them into conformity with the
13 provisions of this overture.

14
15 **Rationale:**

16 The commonly used terms of membership (Reaffirmations of Faith, Transfer of Letter, etc.)
17 are defined nowhere in our constitution. Therefore, the above overture seeks to correct this
18 by defining in the chapter on membership (*BCO* 6) the ways one may join our church and
19 refer the reader to the appropriate place in the *BCO* for receiving the member.
20

21 *Adopted by The Presbytery of Southeast Alabama at its stated meeting, October 25, 2007*

22 *Attested by: /s/ TE Henry Lewis Smith, Stated Clerk*