

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

ITS DISTINGUISHING MARKS WITHIN
THE REFORMED TRADITION

& HOW IT WORKS WITHIN THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



EPHESIANS 2:13-22 (ESV)

- ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,^[d] but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by^[e] the Spirit.



WESTMINSTER CONFSSION

CHAPTER 25 *OF THE CHURCH*

I. THE CATHOLIC OR UNIVERSAL CHURCH, WHICH IS INVISIBLE, **CONSISTS OF THE WHOLE NUMBER OF THE ELECT, THAT HAVE BEEN, ARE, OR SHALL BE GATHERED** INTO ONE, UNDER CHRIST THE HEAD THEREOF; AND IS THE SPOUSE, THE BODY, THE FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL.

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION

CHAPTER 25 *OF THE CHURCH*

2. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all **those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children:** and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION

CHAPTER 25 *OF THE CHURCH*

3. UNTO THIS CATHOLIC VISIBLE CHURCH CHRIST HATH GIVEN **THE MINISTRY, ORACLES, AND ORDINANCES OF GOD**, FOR THE GATHERING AND PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, IN THIS LIFE, TO THE END OF THE WORLD: AND DOTH, BY HIS OWN PRESENCE AND SPIRIT, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, MAKE THEM EFFECTUAL THEREUNTO.

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION

CHAPTER 25 *OF THE CHURCH*

4. THIS CATHOLIC CHURCH HATH BEEN **SOMETIMES MORE, SOMETIMES LESS VISIBLE**. AND PARTICULAR CHURCHES, WHICH ARE MEMBERS THEREOF, ARE MORE OR LESS PURE, ACCORDING AS THE DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL IS TAUGHT AND EMBRACED, ORDINANCES ADMINISTERED, AND PUBLIC WORSHIP PERFORMED MORE OR LESS PURELY IN THEM.

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION

CHAPTER 25 OF THE CHURCH

5. THE PUREST CHURCHES UNDER HEAVEN ARE SUBJECT BOTH TO MIXTURE AND ERROR; AND SOME HAVE SO DEGENERATED, AS TO BECOME NO CHURCHES OF CHRIST, BUT SYNAGOGUES OF SATAN. NEVERTHELESS, **THERE SHALL BE ALWAYS A CHURCH ON EARTH, TO WORSHIP GOD** ACCORDING TO HIS WILL.

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION
CHAPTER 25 OF THE CHURCH

6. THERE IS **NO OTHER HEAD OF THE CHURCH BUT THE LORD JESUS** CHRIST. NOR CAN THE POPE OF ROME, IN ANY SENSE, BE HEAD THEREOF.

3 MARKS

According to the Reformed

1. PREACHING THE BIBLE
2. RIGHT ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS
3. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

4 MARKS

According to Rome

1. ONE
2. HOLY
3. CATHOLIC
4. APOSTOLIC CHURCH

9 MARKS

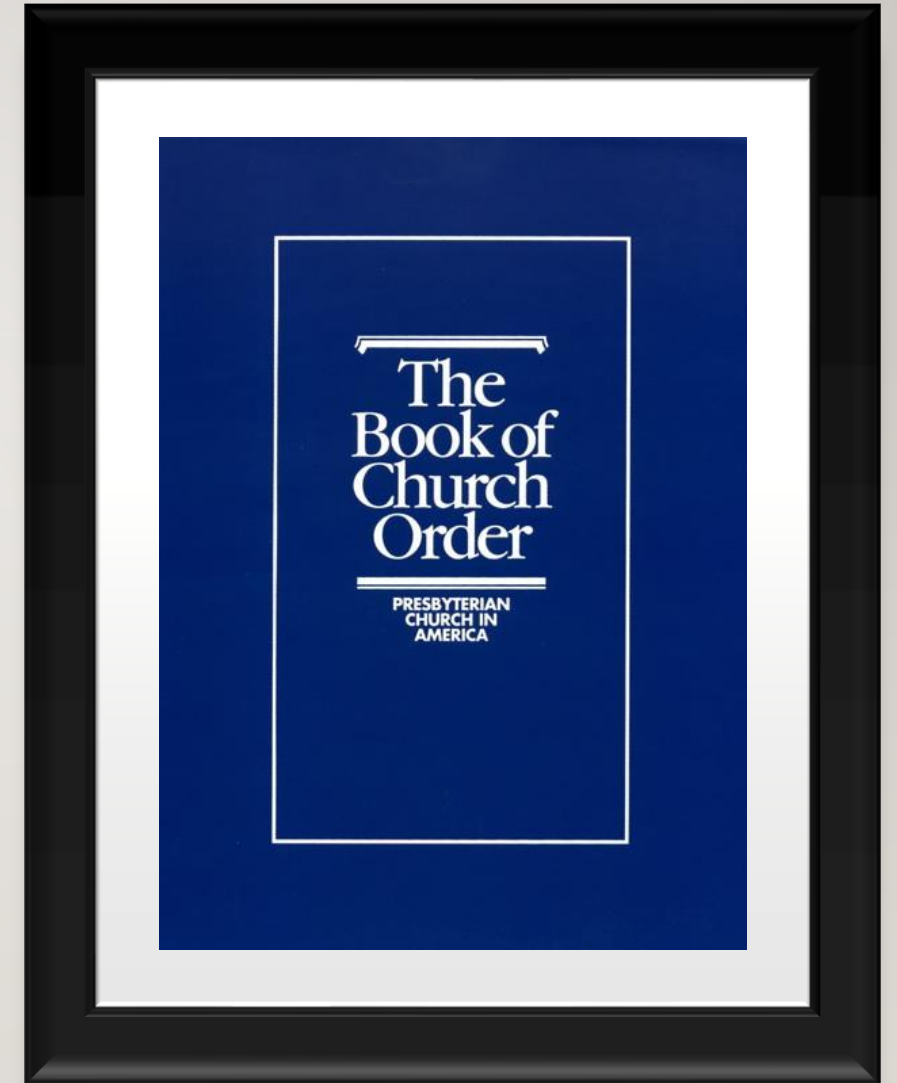
According to Mark Dever

1. Expository Preaching
2. Biblical Theology
3. The Gospel
4. Conversion
5. Evangelism
6. Membership
7. Discipline
8. Discipleship
9. Leadership

(PRESBYTERIAN) POLITY

- governance of the church by elders in graded courts, with these officers executing the responsibilities of their office in unison and on a parity with each other, and with the material care and service of the church being looked after by deacons under the supervision of the elders”

Dr. Robert L. Reymond



PCA PRESBYTERIANISM

From its inception, the church has determined its purpose to be “faithful to the Scriptures, true to the reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.”

Organized at a constitutional assembly in December 1973, this church was first known as the National Presbyterian Church but changed its name in 1974 to Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). It separated from the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern) in opposition to the long-developing theological liberalism which denied the deity of Jesus Christ and the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. Additionally, the PCA held to the traditional position on the role of women in church offices.

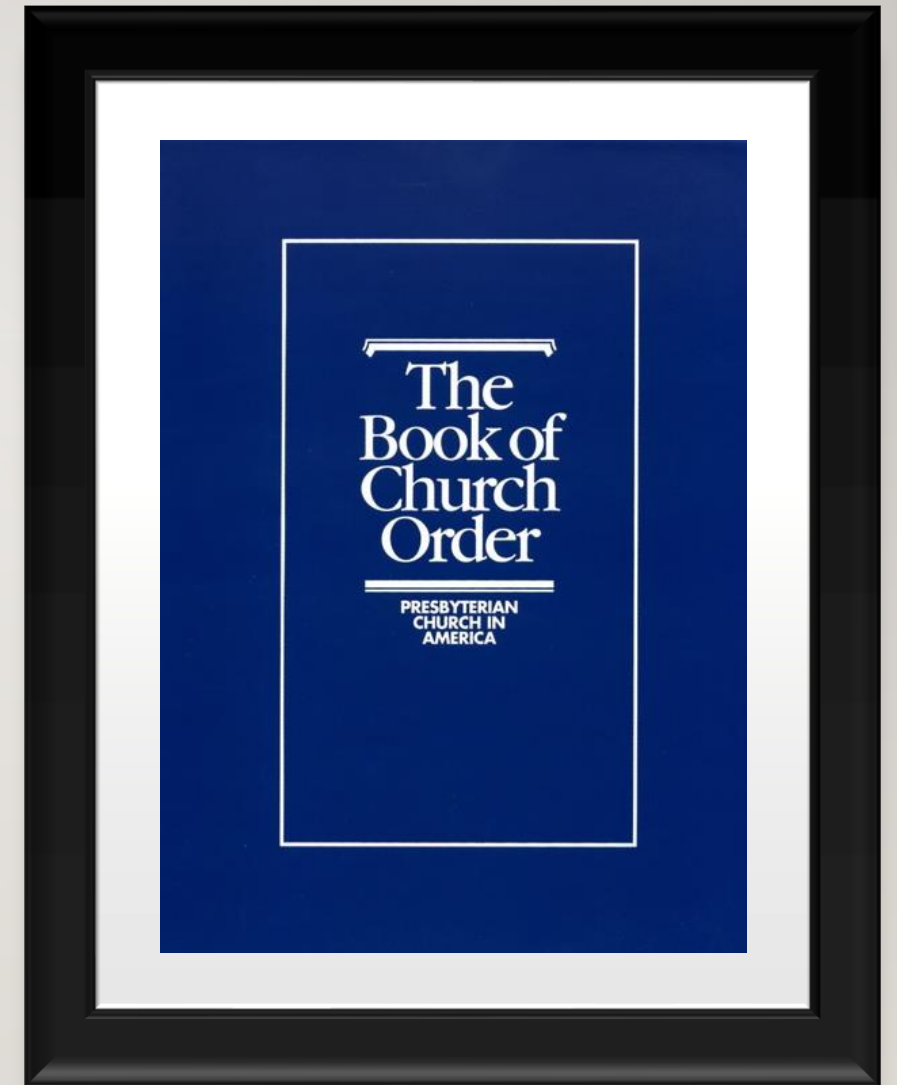
In December 1973, delegates, representing some 260 congregations with a combined communicant membership of over 41,000 that had left the PCUS, gathered at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and organized the National Presbyterian Church, which later became the Presbyterian Church in America.



PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLES

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

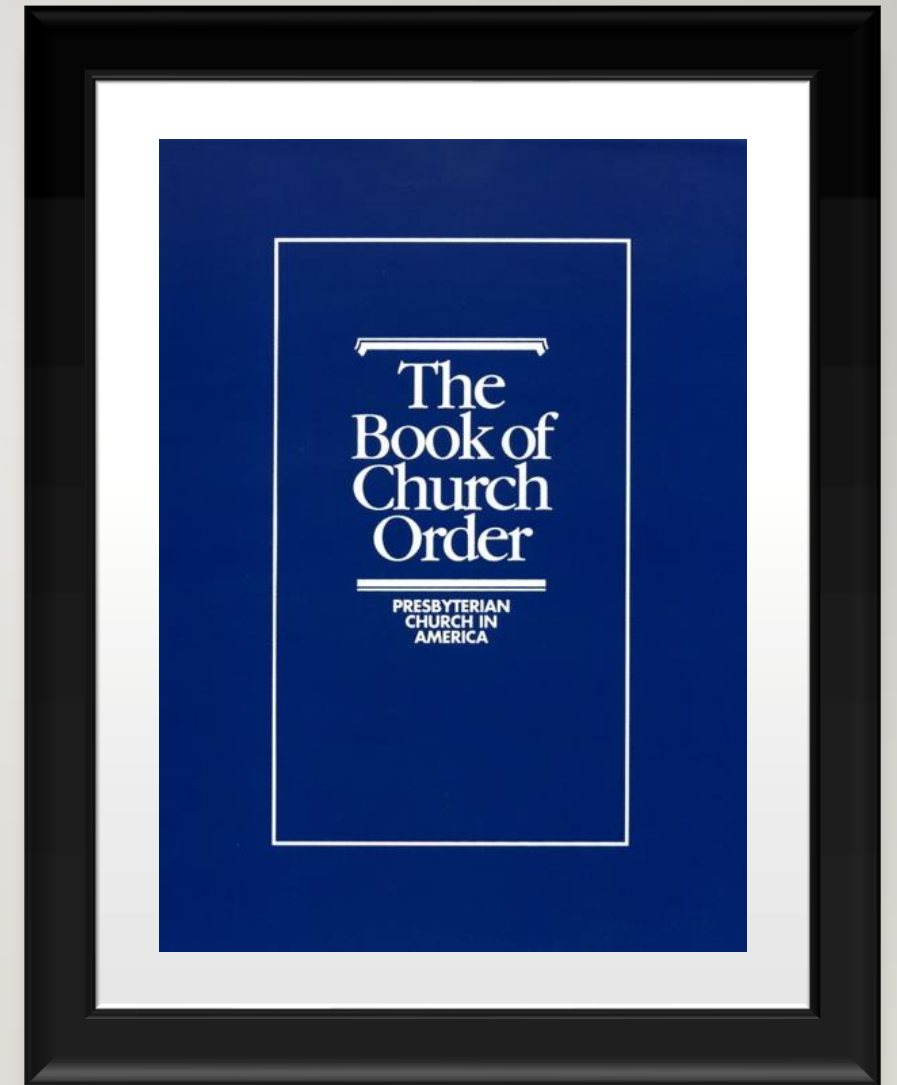
BCO PART I



CHURCH GOVERNMENT

BCO CHAPTER I

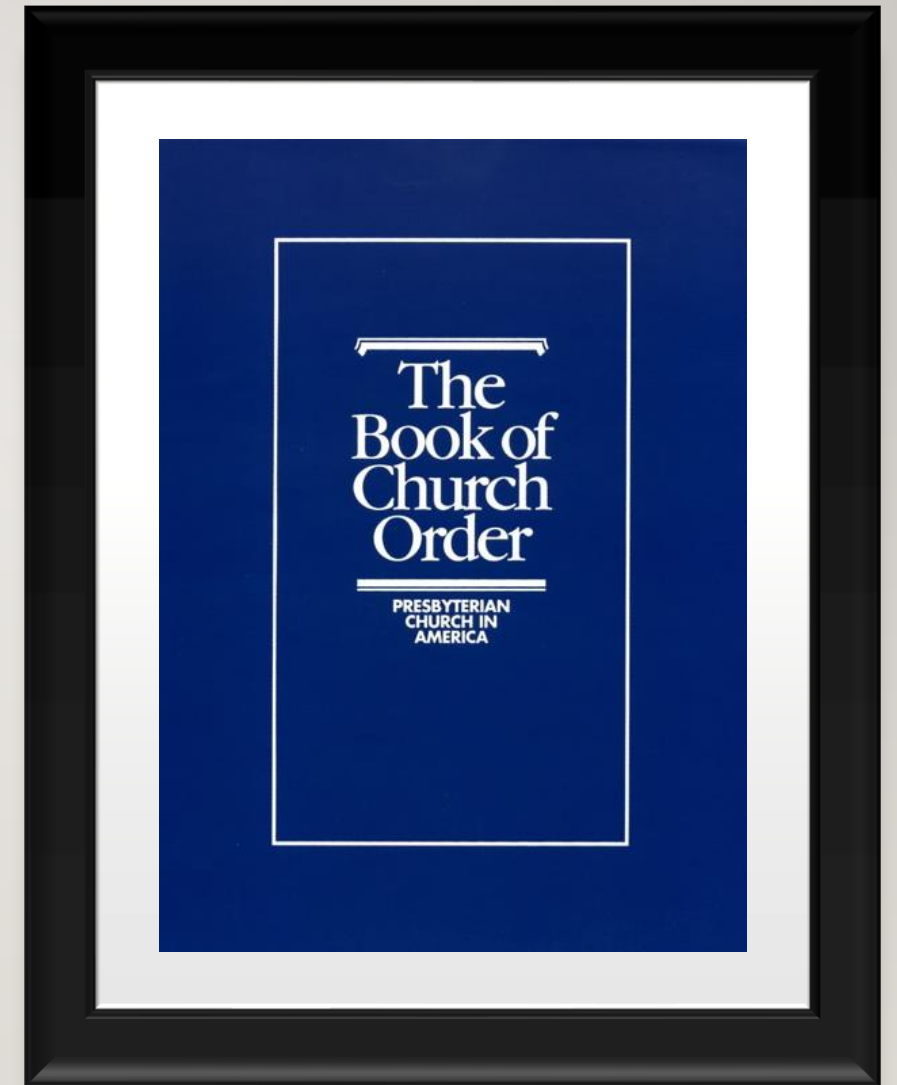
- REPRESENTATIVE
- CATHOLIC
- MEMBERS PLUS THEIR CHILDREN
- JOINT POWER NOT SEVERAL
- ORDAINED OFFICERS
- NECESSARY



THE VISIBLE CHURCH

BCO CHAPTER 2

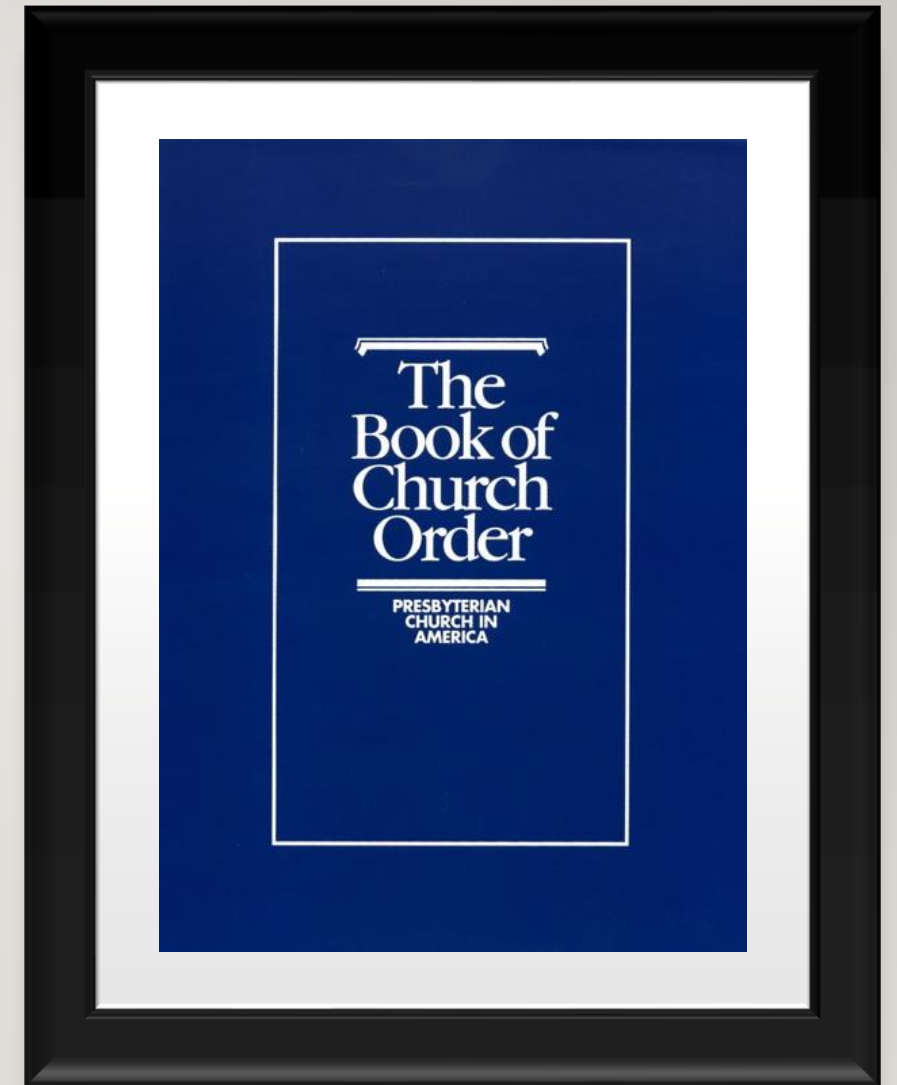
- VISIBLE KINGDOM OF GRACE
- DENOMINATIONS ARE TRUE IF BIBLICAL
- CHURCHES SHOULD BE EVERYWHERE



POWER

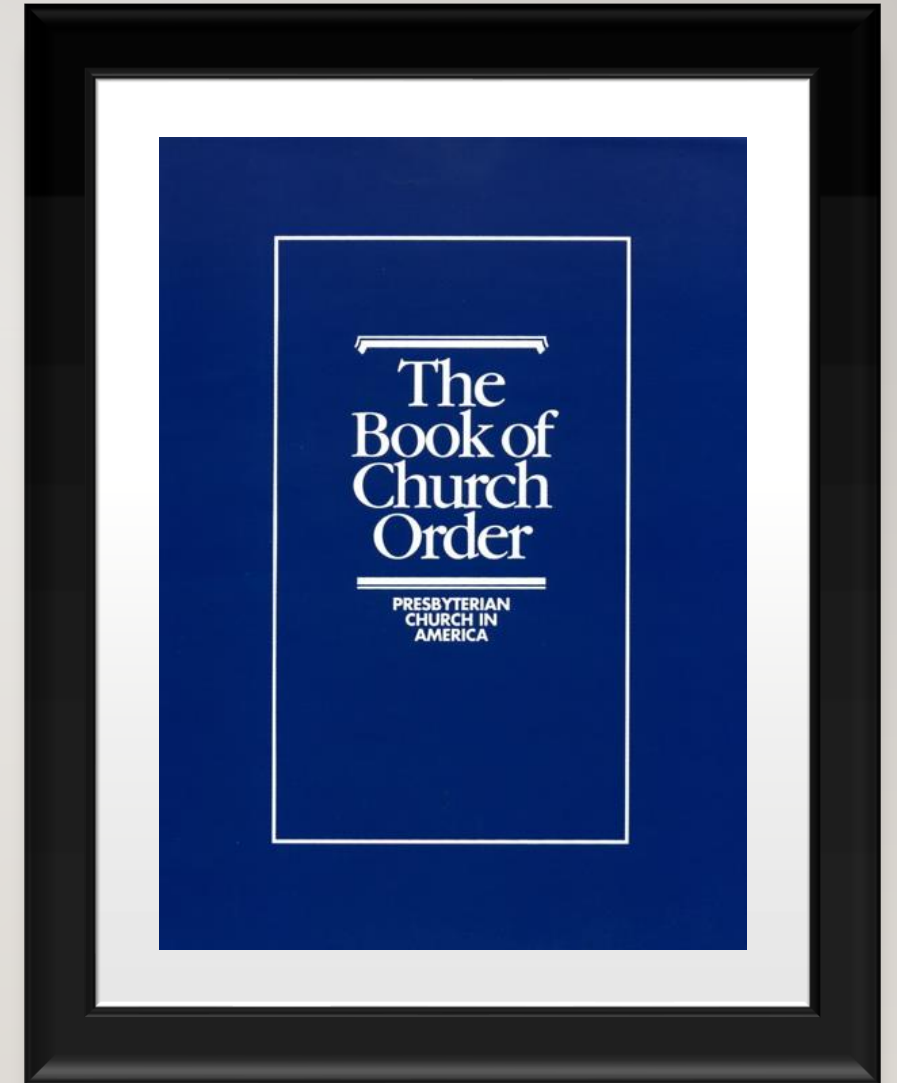
BCO CHAPTER 3

- RESTS IN THE LEADERSHIP
- MINSTERIAL & DECLARATIVE
- SPIRITUAL NOT LEGAL
- MEANS OF GRACE



PARTICULAR BCO CHAPTER 4

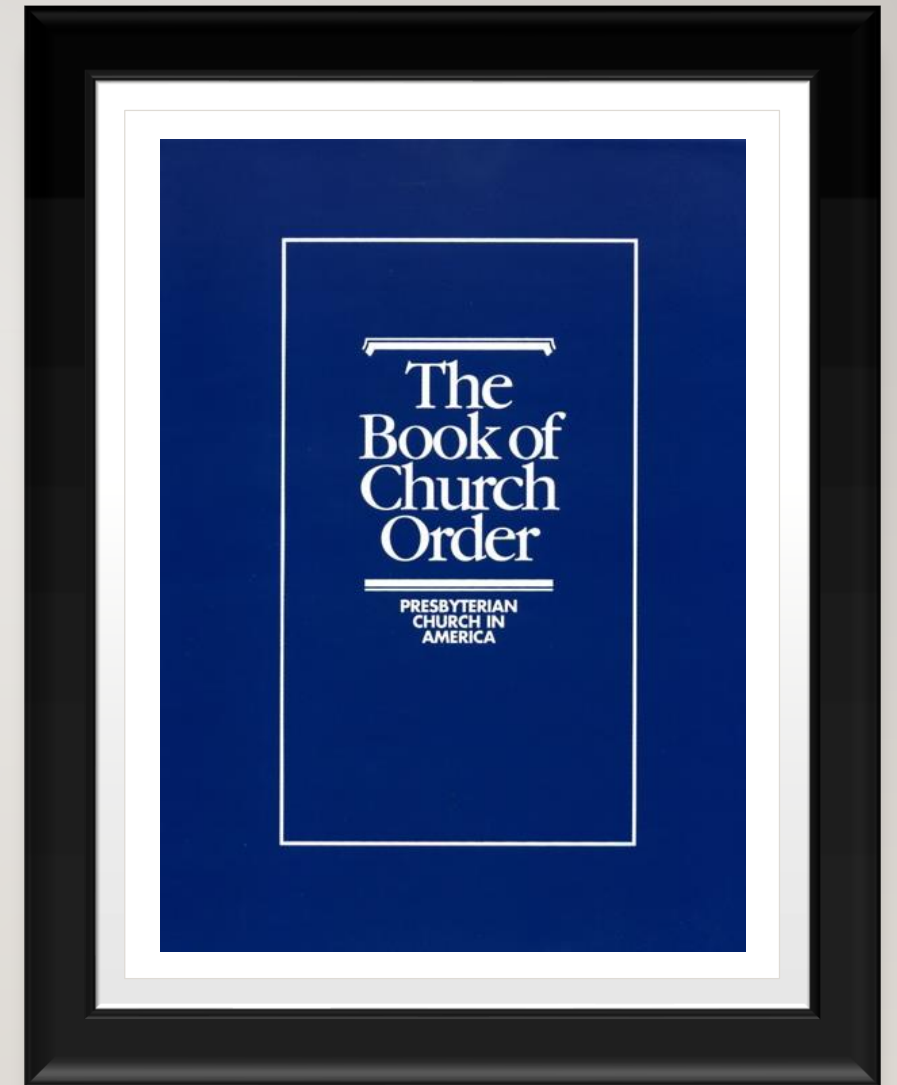
- COMMUNITY MADE UP OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES
- OFFICERS ARE ELDERS AND DEACONS
- JURISDICTION IS IN ITS OFFICERS
- CHURCH IS CHARACTERIZED BY WORSHIP
- ALWAYS ASSEMBLE



CHURCH PLANTING

BCO CHAPTER 5

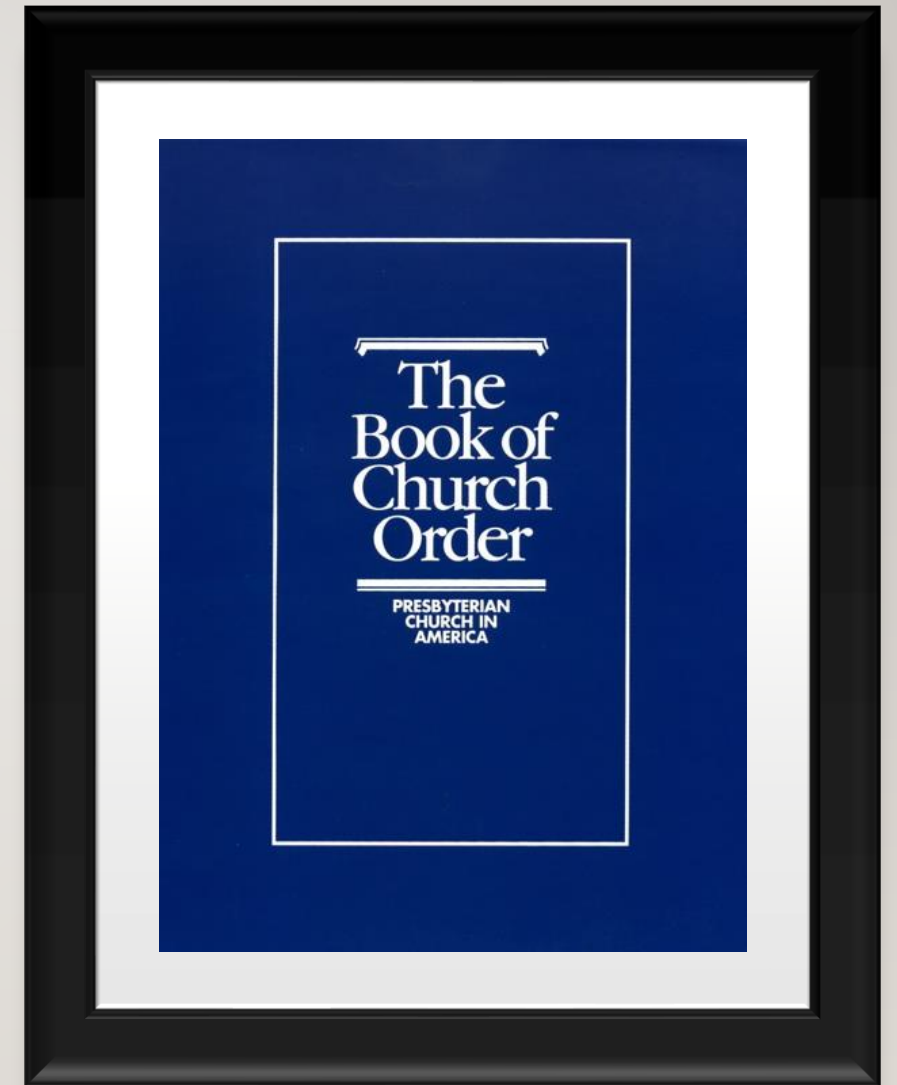
- STARTING
- OVERSEEING
- RELATIONSHIP TO PRESBYTERY
- TRAINING OFFICERS
- DEACONS
- CARING FOR MEMBERS



MEMBERS

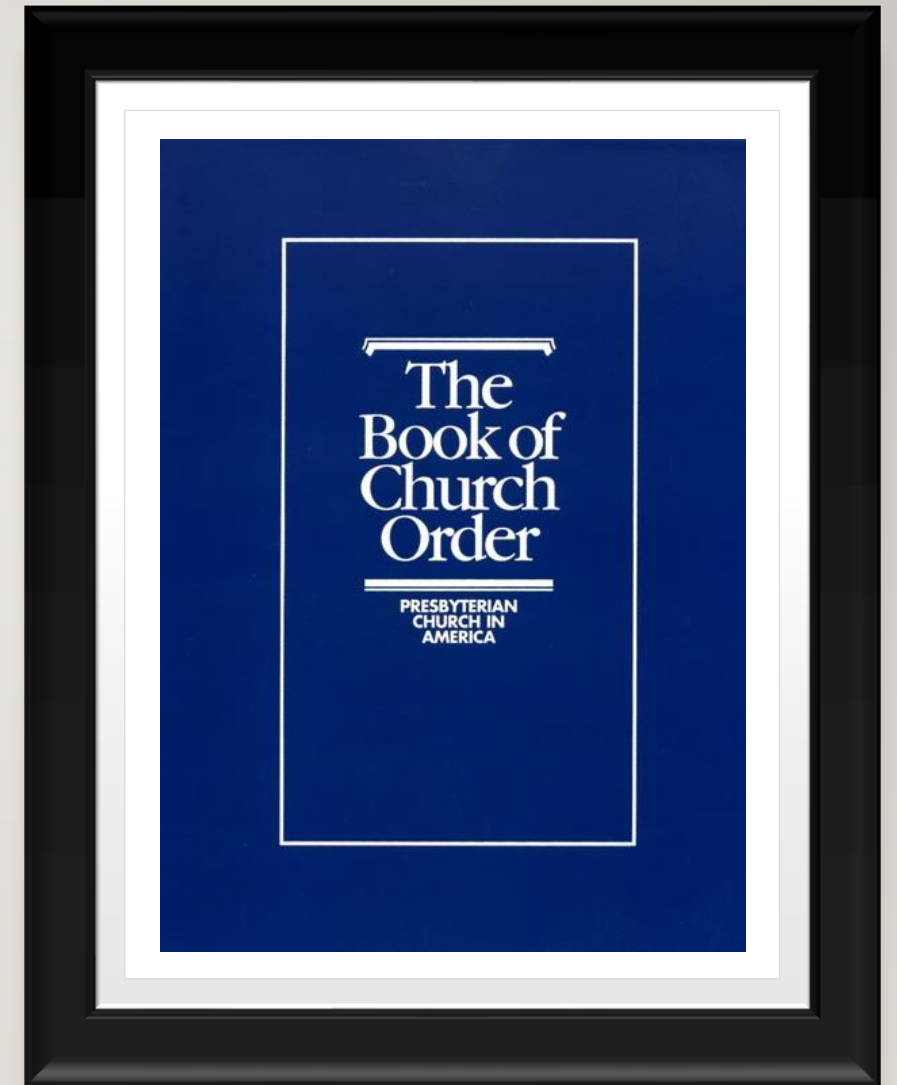
BCO CHAPTER 6

- CHILDREN (NON-COMMUNING)
- COMMUNING
- ENTITLEMENTS
- RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES



WHAT CHURCH OFFICERS AREN'T? BCO CHAPTER 7

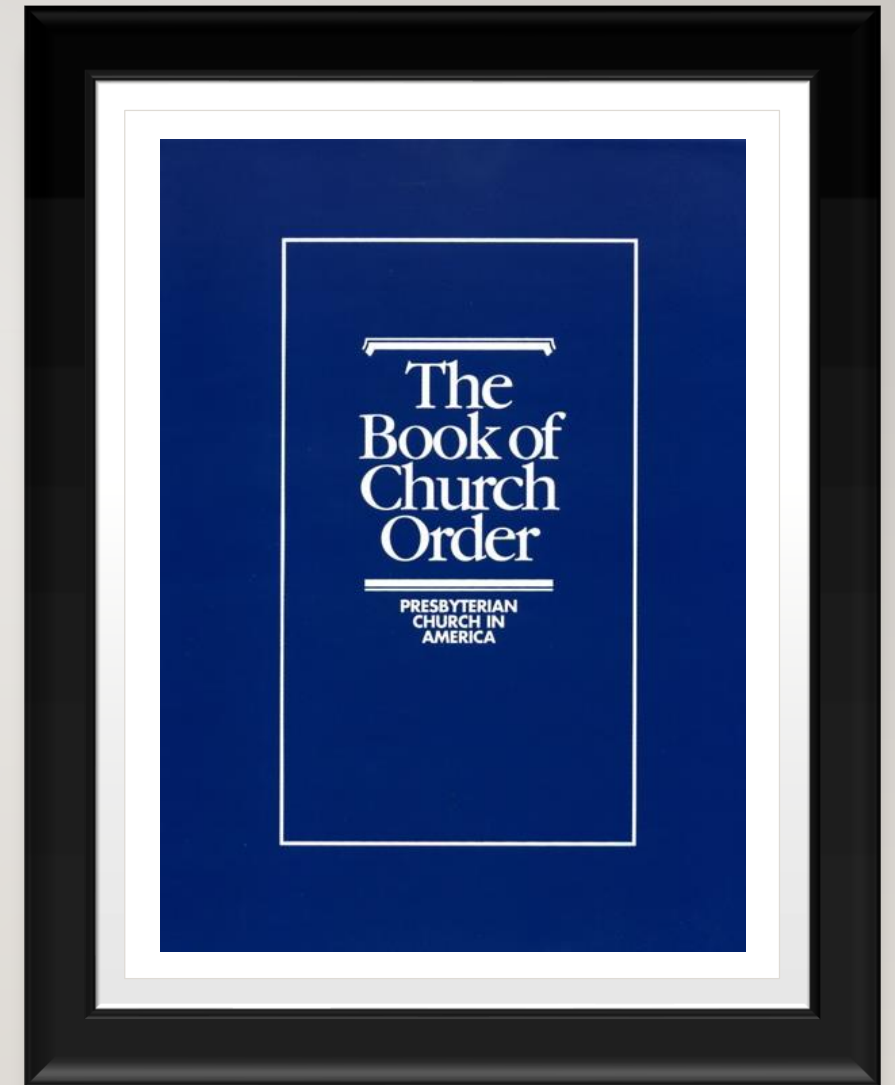
- NOT AN APOSTLE
- NOT EXTRAORDINARY
- NOT LONE RANGERS
- NOT USURPER



ELDERS

BCO CHAPTER 8

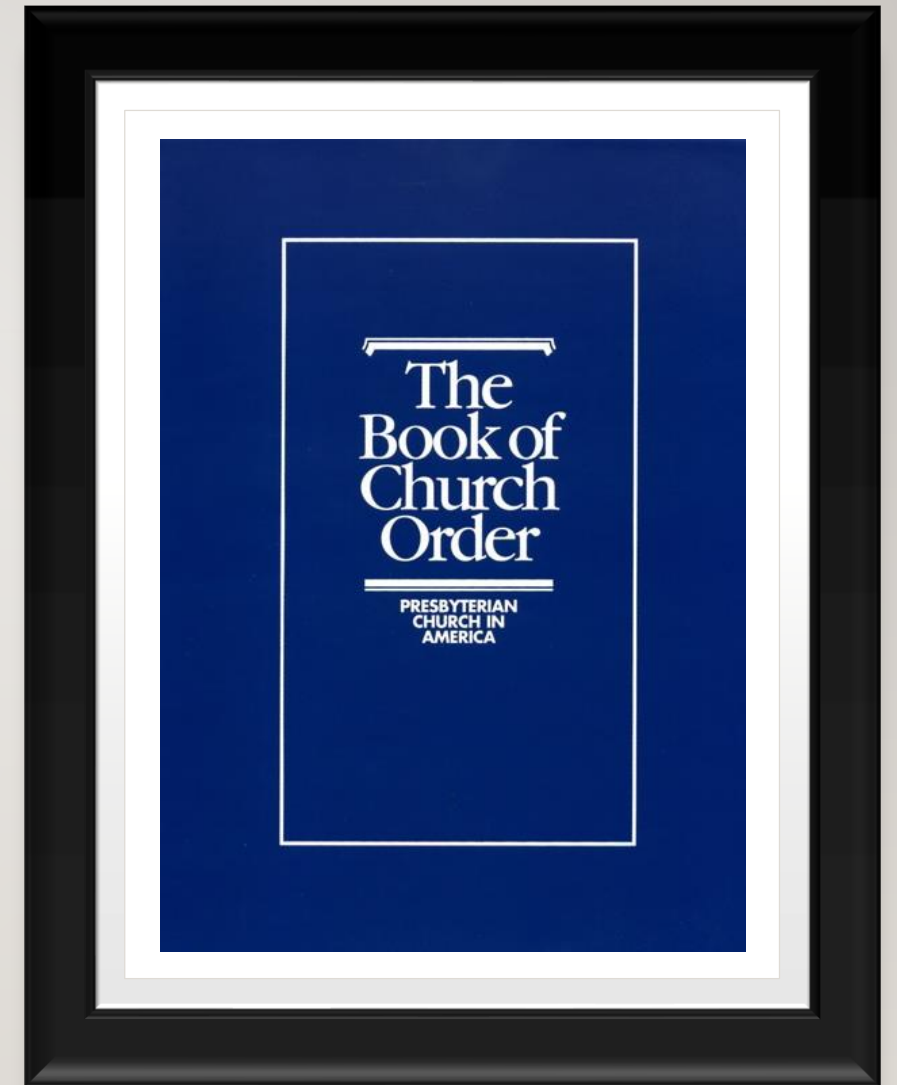
- DIGNIFIED & USEFUL
- BIBLICALLY QUALIFIED
- DUTIFUL
- TEACHERS ELDERS ARE SPECIAL
- TEACHERS ELDERS COOPERATE :WITH RE'S
- TE'S MAY WORK IN SPECIAL WAYS THRU
PRESBYTERY
- TE & RE IS ONE OFFICE W/ DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS



DEACONS

BCO CHAPTER 9

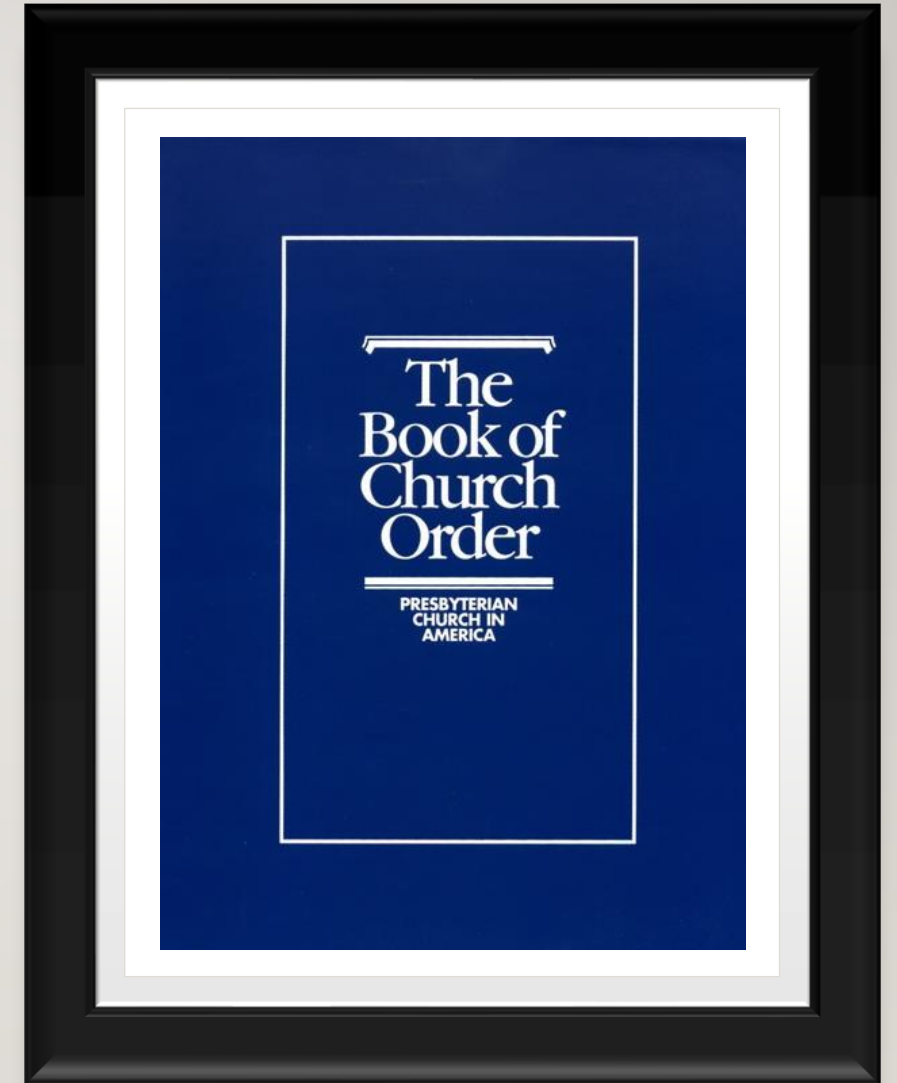
- SYMPATHY & SERVICE
- SERVANT LEADERS
- BUILDING & PROPERTY
- MERCY MINISTRY
- LIBRALITY OF THE SAINTS
- ASSIST THE ELDERS



CHURCH COURTS

BCO CHAPTERS 10 & 11

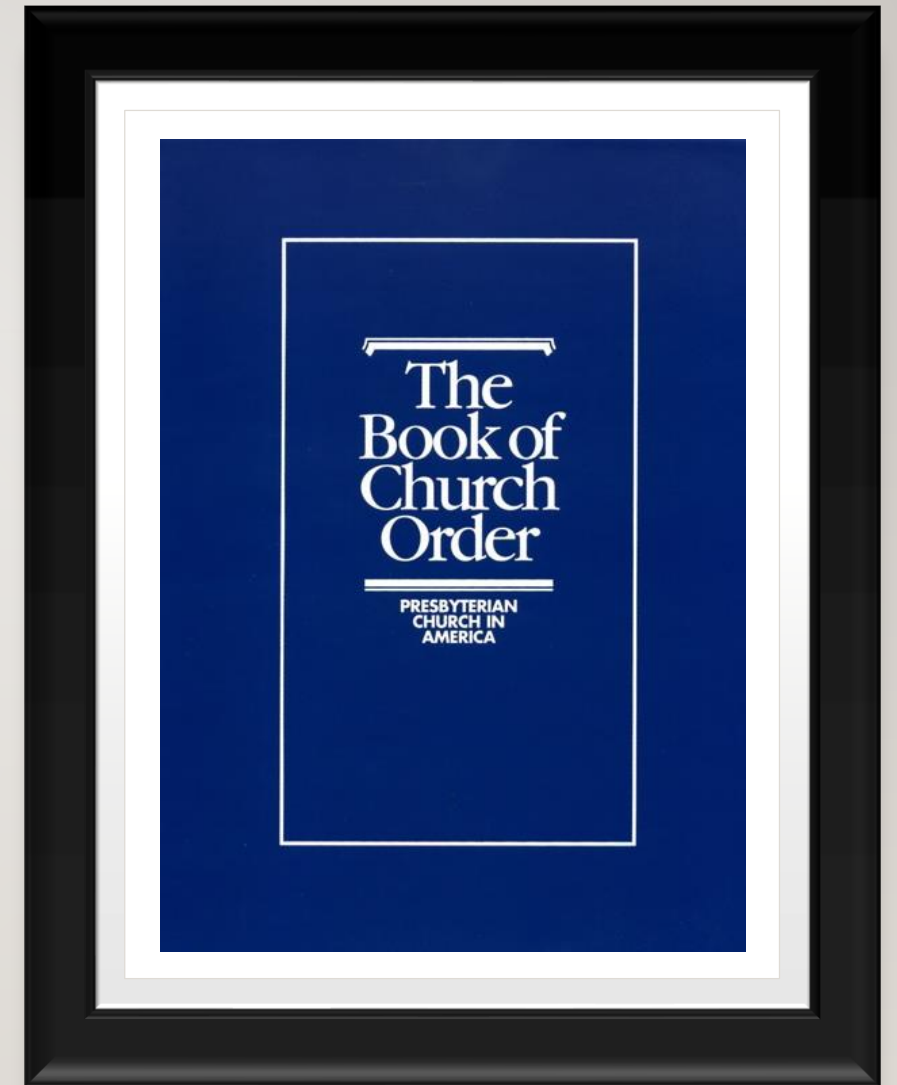
- GRADED (Session / Presbytery / General Assembly)
- GOVERNED BY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES
(Moderators/Clerks/Treasurer)
- SPIRITUAL NOT CIVIL IN NATURE
- CHRIST'S DOCTRINE, ORDER, WORSHIP



SESSION, PRESBYTERY & GA + COMMISSIONS

BCO CHAPTER 12 -15

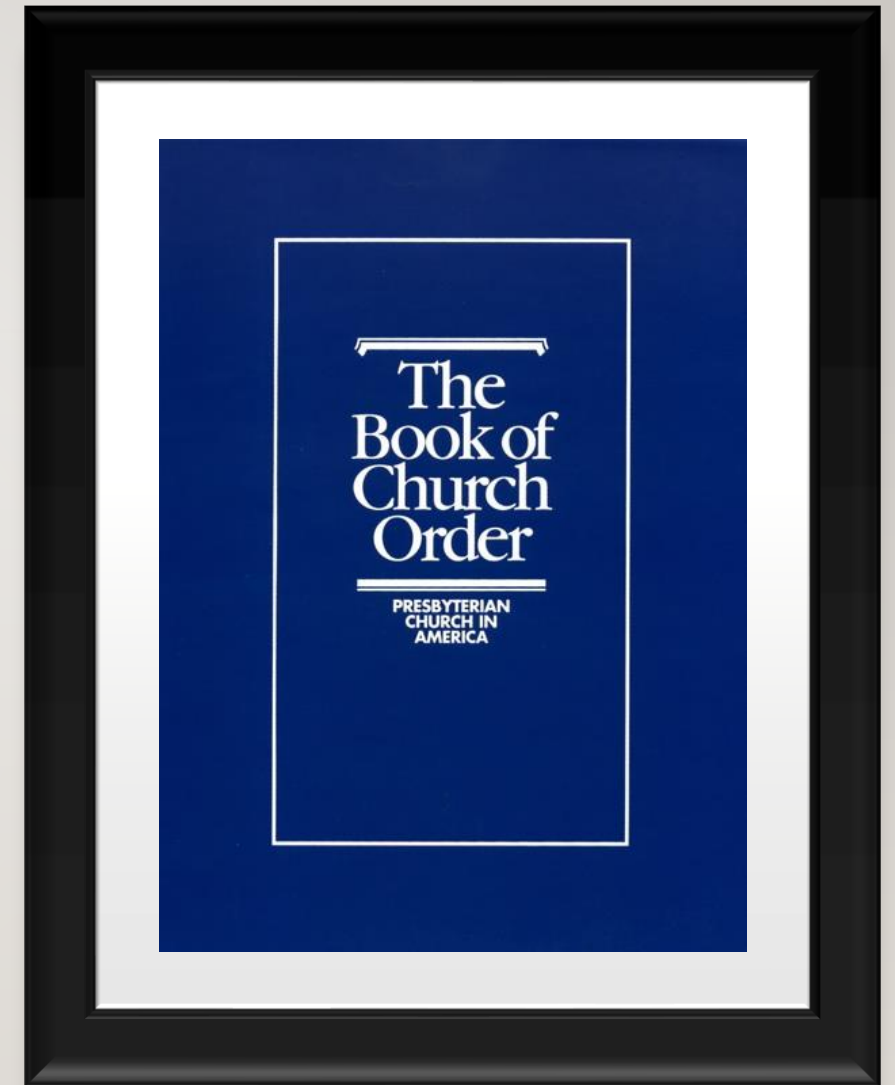
- MEETINGS
- MINISTERS
- COMMISSIONERS
- CANDIDATES
- COMMISSIONS ARE NOT COMMITTEES
- REVIEW AND CONTROL
- COMPLAINT AND APPEAL



CALLING, ORDINATION, CANDIDACY, INTERN, LICENSURE

BCO CHAPTERS 16-19

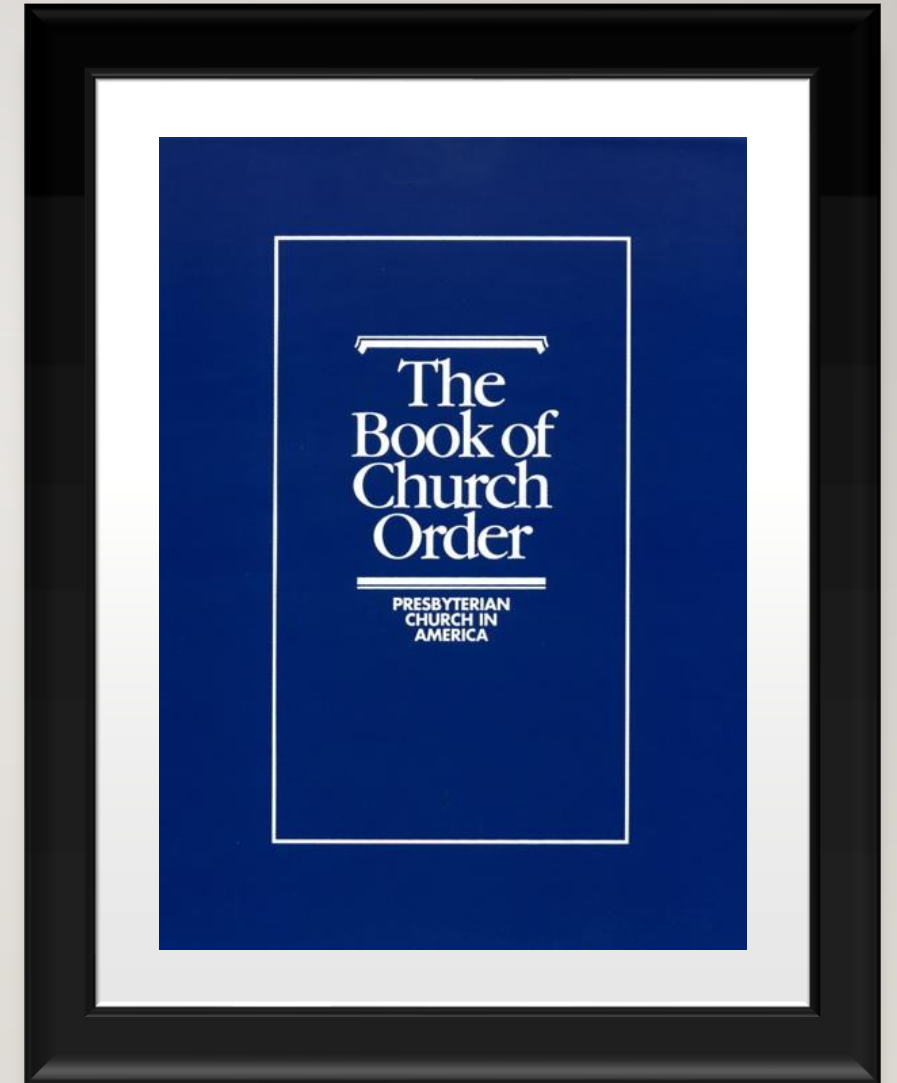
- SENSE OF CALL
- CHURCH RECOGNITION
- TESTING THE GIFT
- FORMAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO CHURCH
- EDUCATION
- EXAMINATION
- PRACTICE



PASTORS OR MINISTERS

BCO CHAPTERS 20-23

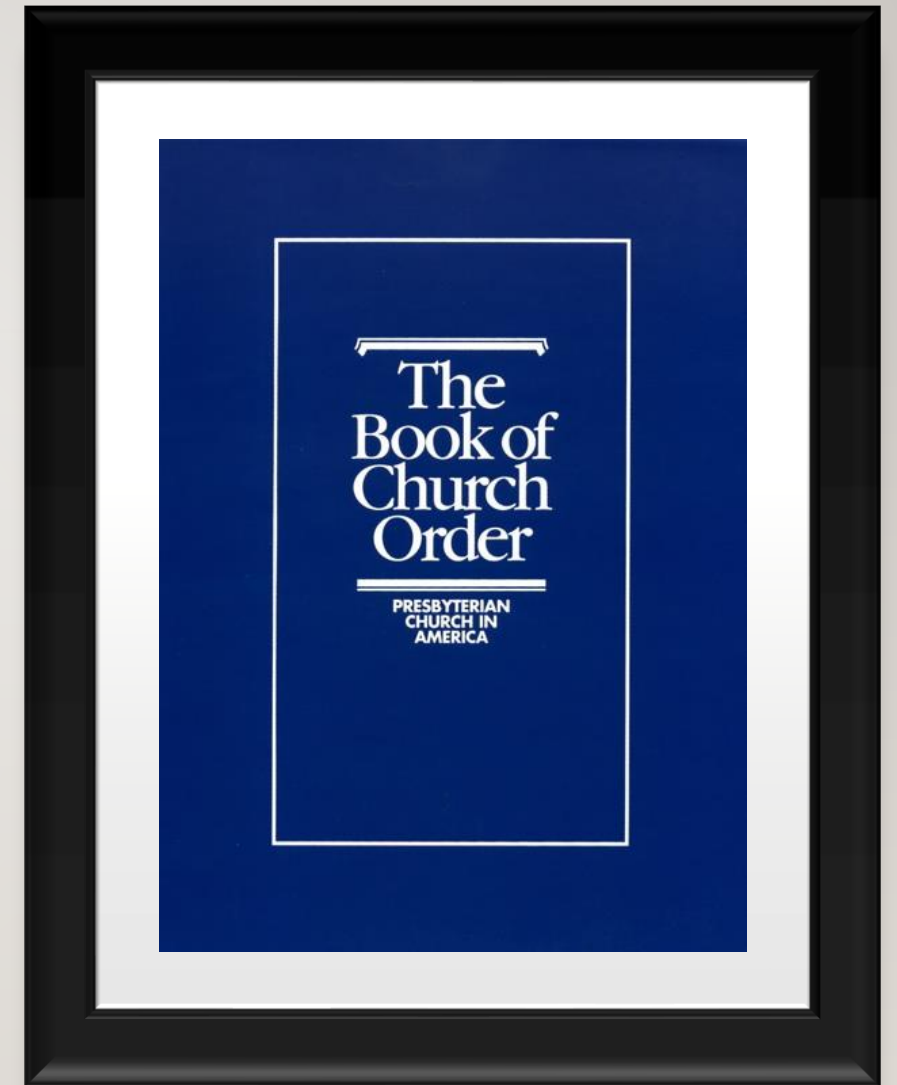
- CALL
- CONGREGATION
- CHURCH COURT (THE PRESBYTERY)
- EXCEPTIONS
- MEETINGS & COMMISSIONS
- ORDINATION BY LAYING ON OF HANDS
- VOWS
- DISOLUTION



ELECTING OFFICERS

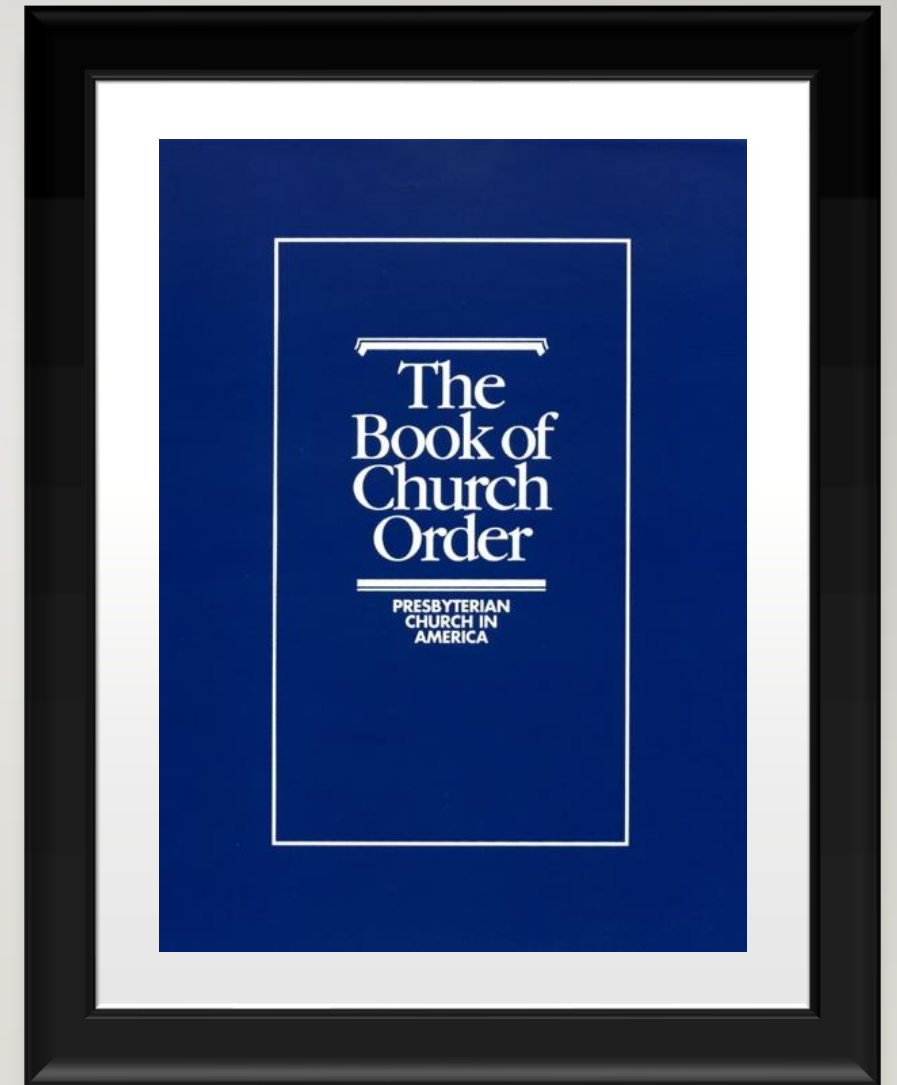
BCO CHAPTERS 24

- QUALIFIED MEN
- TRAINED
- CONGREGATION VOTES
- OFFICE IS PERPETUAL
- WORTHY OF HONOR



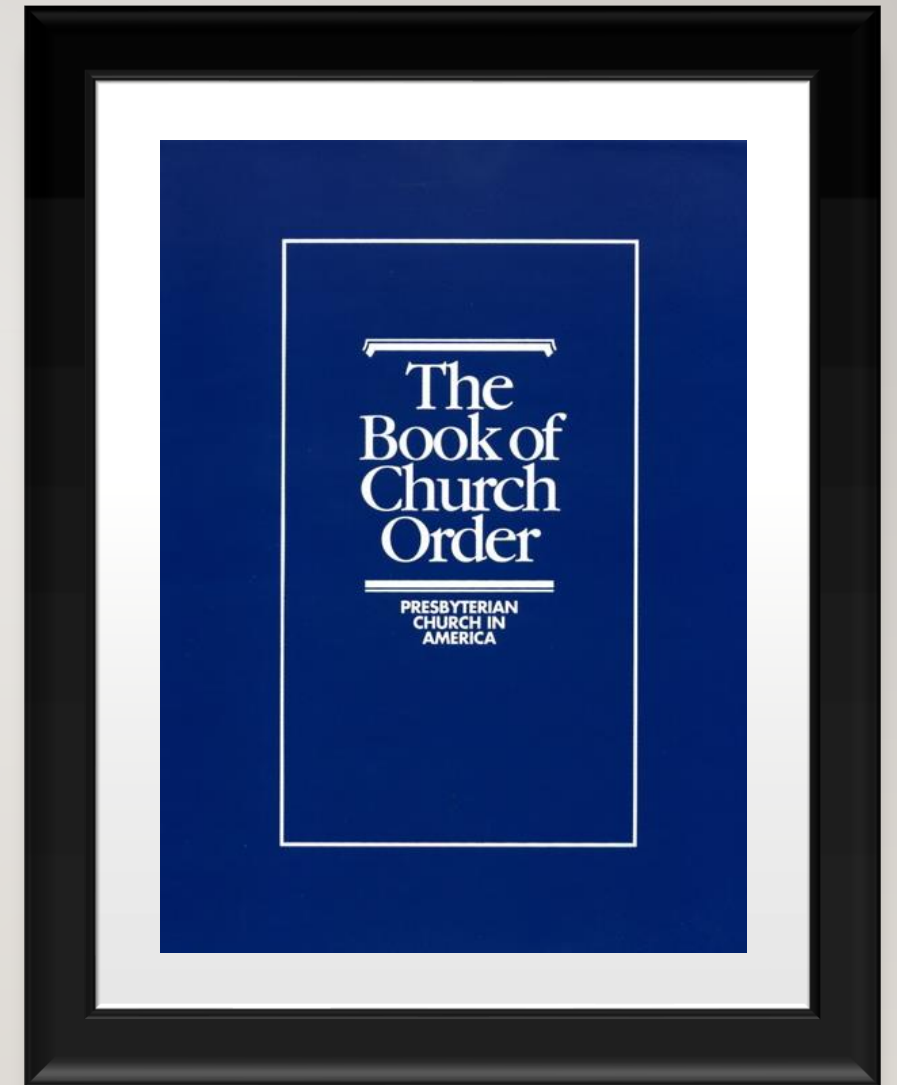
CONGREGATION & CONSTITUTION BCO CHAPTERS 25-26

- OLDER PCA FOLK VIEW THIS SIGNIFICANTLY
- LOCAL CHURCH OWNS ITS PROPERTY
- PCA WILL NEVER BEHAVE LIKE THE PCUS
- HOW TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION
- HOW TO JOIN WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONS



RULES OF DISCIPLINE
BCO PART 2

DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP
BCO PART 3



SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our Mission is Reaching Out,
Folding In, Growing Up for the
glory of God

