

1 **OVERTURE 38** from Calvary Presbytery
2 "Commend Human Sexuality Report"
3

(to OC, CDM)

4 **WHEREAS** the PCA Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality has served the Presbyterian
5 Church in America very well by declaring
6

7 **STATEMENT 1: MARRIAGE**

8 We affirm that marriage is to be between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18-
9 25; Matt. 19:4-6; *WCF* 24.1). Sexual intimacy is a gift from God to be
10 cherished and is reserved for the marriage relationship between one man and
11 one woman (Prov. 5:18-19). Marriage was instituted by God for the mutual
12 help and blessing of husband and wife, for procreation and the raising together
13 of godly children, and to prevent sexual immorality (Gen. 1:28; 2:18; Mal.
14 2:14-15; 1 Cor. 7:2, 9; *WCF* 24.2). Marriage is also a God-ordained picture
15 of the differentiated relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-
16 33; Rev. 19:6-10). All other forms of sexual intimacy, including all forms of
17 lust and same-sex sexual activity of any kind, are sinful (Lev. 18:22; 20:13;
18 Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10; Jude 7; *WLC* 139).
19

20 Nevertheless, we do not believe that sexual intimacy in marriage
21 automatically eliminates unwanted sexual desires, nor that all sex within
22 marriage is sinless (*WCF* 6.5). We all stand in need of God's grace for sexual
23 sin and temptation, whether married or not. Moreover, sexual immorality is
24 not an unpardonable sin. There is no sin so small it does not deserve
25 damnation, and no sin so big it cannot be forgiven (*WCF* 15.4). There is hope
26 and forgiveness for all who repent of their sin and put their trust in Christ
27 (Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:35, 37; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31).
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29 **STATEMENT 2: IMAGE OF GOD**

30 We affirm that God created human beings in his image as male and female
31 (Gen. 1:26-27). Likewise, we recognize the goodness of the human body
32 (Gen. 1:31; John 1:14) and the call to glorify God with our bodies (1 Cor.
33 6:12-20). As a God of order and design, God opposes the confusion of man
34 as woman and woman as man (1 Cor. 11:14-15). While situations involving
35 such confusion can be heartbreaking and complex, men and women should
36 be helped to live in accordance with their biological sex.
37

38 Nevertheless, we ought to minister compassionately to those who are
39 sincerely confused and disturbed by their internal sense of gender identity
40 (Gal. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:24-26). We recognize that the effects of the Fall extend to
41 the corruption of our whole nature (*WSC* 18), which may include how we
42 think of our own gender and sexuality. Moreover, some persons, in rare
43 instances, may possess an objective medical condition in which their
44

1 anatomical development may be ambiguous or does not match their genetic
2 chromosomal sex. Such persons are also made in the image of God and should
3 live out their biological sex, insofar as it can be known.
4

5 **STATEMENT 3: ORIGINAL SIN**

6 We affirm that from the sin of our first parents we have received an inherited
7 guilt and an inherited depravity (Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-3). From this
8 original corruption—which is itself sinful and for which we are culpable—
9 proceed all actual transgressions. All the outworkings of our corrupted nature
10 (a corruption which remains, in part, even after regeneration) are truly and
11 properly called sin (*WCF* 6.1-5). Every sin, original and actual, deserves death
12 and renders us liable to the wrath of God (Rom. 3:23; James 2:10; *WCF* 6.6).
13 We must repent of our sin in general and our particular sins, particularly
14 (*WCF* 15.5). That is, we ought to grieve for our sin, hate our sin, turn from
15 our sin unto God, and endeavor to walk with God in obedience to his
16 commandments (*WCF* 15.2).
17

18 Nevertheless, God does not wish for believers to live in perpetual misery for
19 their sins, each of which are pardoned and mortified in Christ (*WCF* 6.5). By
20 the Spirit of Christ, we are able to make spiritual progress and to do good
21 works, not perfectly, but truly (*WCF* 16.3). Even our imperfect works are
22 made acceptable through Christ, and God is pleased to accept and reward
23 them as pleasing in his sight (*WCF* 16.6).

24 **STATEMENT 4: DESIRE**

25 We affirm not only that our inclination toward sin is a result of the Fall, but
26 that our fallen desires are in themselves sinful (Rom 6:11-12; 1 Peter 1:14;
27 2:11). The desire for an illicit end—whether in sexual desire for a person of
28 the same sex or in sexual desire disconnected from the context of Biblical
29 marriage—is itself an illicit desire. Therefore, the experience of same-sex
30 attraction is not morally neutral; the attraction is an expression of original or
31 indwelling sin that must be repented of and put to death (Rom. 8:13).
32

33 Nevertheless, we must celebrate that, despite the continuing presence of sinful
34 desires (and even, at times, egregious sinful behavior), repentant, justified,
35 and adopted believers are free from condemnation through the imputed
36 righteousness of Christ (Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:21) and are able to please God by
37 walking in the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-6).
38

39 **STATEMENT 5: CONCUPISCENCE**

40 We affirm that impure thoughts and desires arising in us prior to and apart
41 from a conscious act of the will are still sin. We reject the Roman Catholic
42 understanding of concupiscence whereby disordered desires that afflict us due
43 to the Fall do not become sin without a consenting act of the will. These

1 desires within us are not mere weaknesses or inclinations to sin but are
 2 themselves idolatrous and sinful.
 3 Nevertheless, we recognize that many persons who experience same-sex
 4 attraction describe their desires as arising in them unbidden and unwanted.
 5 We also recognize that the presence of same-sex attraction is often owing to
 6 many factors, which always include our own sin nature and may include being
 7 sinned against in the past. As with any sinful pattern or propensity—which
 8 may include disordered desires, extramarital lust, pornographic addictions,
 9 and all abusive sexual behavior—the actions of others, though never finally
 10 determinative, can be significant and influential. This should move us to
 11 compassion and understanding. Moreover, it is true for all of us that sin can
 12 be both unchosen bondage and idolatrous rebellion at the same time. We all
 13 experience sin, at times, as a kind of voluntary servitude (Rom. 7:13-20).

14 **STATEMENT 6: TEMPTATION**

15 We affirm that Scripture speaks of temptation in different ways. There are
 16 some temptations God gives us in the form of morally neutral trials, and other
 17 temptations God never gives us because they arise from within as morally
 18 illicit desires (James 1:2, 13-14). When temptations come from without, the
 19 temptation itself is not sin, unless we enter into the temptation. But when the
 20 temptation arises from within, it is our own act and is rightly called sin.

21
 22
 23 Nevertheless, there is an important degree of moral difference between
 24 temptation to sin and giving in to sin, even when the temptation is itself an
 25 expressing of indwelling sin. While our goal is the weakening and lessening
 26 of internal temptations to sin, Christians should feel their greatest
 27 responsibility not for the fact that such temptations occur but for thoroughly
 28 and immediately fleeing and resisting the temptations when they arise. We
 29 can avoid “entering into” temptation by refusing to internally ponder and
 30 entertain the proposal and desire to actual sin. Without some distinction
 31 between (1) the illicit temptations that arise in us due to original sin and (2)
 32 the willful giving over to actual sin, Christians will be too discouraged to
 33 “make every effort” at growth in godliness and will feel like failures in their
 34 necessary efforts to be holy as God is holy (2 Peter 1:5-7; 1 Peter 1:14-16). God
 35 is pleased with our sincere obedience, even though it may be accompanied
 36 with many weaknesses and imperfections (*WCF* 16.6).

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 38 **STATEMENT 7: SANCTIFICATION**

39 We affirm that Christians should flee immoral behavior and not yield to
 40 temptation. By the power of the Holy Spirit working through the ordinary
 41 means of grace, Christians should seek to wither, weaken, and put to death
 42 the underlying idolatries and sinful desires that lead to sinful behavior. The
 43 goal is not just consistent fleeing from, and regular resistance to, temptation,
 44 but the diminishment and even the end of the occurrences of sinful desires
 45 through the reordering of the loves of one’s heart toward Christ. Through the

1 virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, we can make substantial progress in
 2 the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Rom.
 3 6:14-19; Heb. 12:14; 1 John 4:4; *WCF* 13.1).

4
 5 Nevertheless, this process of sanctification—even when the Christian is
 6 diligent and fervent in the application of the means of grace—will always be
 7 accompanied by many weaknesses and imperfections (*WCF* 16.5, 6), with the
 8 Spirit and the flesh warring against one another until final glorification (*WCF*
 9 13.2). The believer who struggles with same-sex attraction should expect to
 10 see the regenerate nature increasingly overcome the remaining corruption of
 11 the flesh, but this progress will often be slow and uneven. Moreover, the
 12 process of mortification and vivification involves the whole person, not
 13 simply unwanted sexual desires. The aim of sanctification in one's sexual life
 14 cannot be reduced to attraction to persons of the opposite sex (though some
 15 persons may experience movement in this direction), but rather involves
 16 growing in grace and perfecting holiness in the fear of God (*WCF* 13.3).

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 18 **STATEMENT 8: IMPECCABILITY**

19 We affirm the impeccability of Christ. The incarnate Son of God neither
 20 sinned (in thought, word, deed, or desire) nor had the possibility of sinning.
 21 Christ experienced temptation passively, in the form of trials and the devil's
 22 entreaties, not actively, in the form of disordered desires. Christ had only the
 23 suffering part of temptation, where we also have the sinning part. Christ had
 24 no inward disposition or inclination unto the least evil, being perfect in all
 25 graces and all their operations at all times.

26
 27 Nevertheless, Christ endured, from without, real soul-wrenching temptations
 28 which qualified him to be our sympathetic high priest (Heb. 2:18; 4:15).
 29 Christ assumed a human nature that was susceptible to suffering and death.
 30 He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3).

31
 32 **STATEMENT 9: IDENTITY**

33 We affirm that the believer's most important identity is found in Christ (Rom.
 34 8:38-39;
 35 Eph. 1:4, 7). Christians ought to understand themselves, define themselves,
 36 and describe themselves in light of their union with Christ and their identity
 37 as regenerate, justified, holy children of God (Rom. 6:5-11; 1 Cor. 6:15-20;
 38 Eph. 2:1-10). To juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desires alongside the
 39 term "Christian" is inconsistent with Biblical language and undermines the
 40 spiritual reality that we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

41
 42 Nevertheless, being honest about our sin struggles is important. While
 43 Christians should not identify with their sin so as to embrace it or seek to base
 44 their identity on it, Christians ought to acknowledge their sin in an effort to
 45 overcome it. There is a difference between speaking about a

1 phenomenological facet of a person’s sin-stained reality and employing the
2 language of sinful desires as a personal identity marker. That is, we name our
3 sins, but are not named by them. Moreover, we recognize that there are some
4 secondary identities, when not rooted in sinful desires or struggles against the
5 flesh, that can be legitimately affirmed along with our primary identity as
6 Christians. For example, the distinctions between male and female, or
7 between various nationalities and people groups, are not eradicated in
8 becoming Christians, but serve to magnify the glory of God in his plan of
9 salvation (Gen. 1:27; 1 Peter 3:7; Rev. 5:9; 7:9-10).

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11 **STATEMENT 10: LANGUAGE**

12 We affirm that those in our churches would be wise to avoid the term “gay
13 Christian.” Although the term “gay” may refer to more than being attracted
14 to persons of the same sex, the term does not communicate less than that. For
15 many people in our culture, to self-identify as “gay” suggests that one is
16 engaged in homosexual practice. At the very least, the term normally
17 communicates the presence and approval of same-sex sexual attraction as
18 morally neutral or morally praiseworthy. Even if “gay,” for some Christians,
19 simply means “same-sex attraction,” it is still inappropriate to juxtapose this
20 sinful desire, or any other sinful desire, as an identity marker alongside our
21 identity as new creations in Christ.

22
23 Nevertheless, we recognize that some Christians may use the term “gay” in
24 an effort to be more readily understood by non-Christians. The word “gay” is
25 common in our culture, and we do not think it wise for churches to police
26 every use of the term. Our burden is that we do not justify our sin struggles
27 by affixing them to our identity as Christians. Churches should be gentle,
28 patient, and intentional with believers who call themselves “gay Christians,”
29 encouraging them, as part of the process of sanctification, to leave behind
30 identification language rooted in sinful desires, to live chaste lives, to refrain
31 from entering into temptation, and to mortify their sinful desires.

32
33 **STATEMENT 11: FRIENDSHIP**

34 We affirm that our contemporary ecclesiastical culture has an underdeveloped
35 understanding of friendship and often does not honor singleness as it should.
36 The church must work to see that all members, including believers who
37 struggle with same-sex attraction, are valued members of the body of Christ
38 and engaged in meaningful relationships through the blessings of the family
39 of God. Likewise we affirm the value of Christians who share common
40 struggles gathering together for mutual accountability, exhortation, and
41 encouragement.

42
43 Nevertheless, we do not support the formation of exclusive, contractual
44 marriage-like friendships, nor do we support same-sex romantic behavior or
45 the assumption that certain sensibilities and interests are necessarily aspects

1 of a gay identity. We do not consider same-sex attraction a gift in itself, nor
2 do we think this sin struggle, or any sin struggle, should be celebrated in the
3 church.

4 **STATEMENT 12: REPENTANCE AND HOPE**

5 We affirm that the entire life of the believer is one of repentance. Where we
6 have mistreated those who struggle with same-sex attraction, or with any
7 other sinful desires, we call ourselves to repentance. Where we have nurtured
8 or made peace with sinful thoughts, desires, words, or deeds, we call ourselves
9 to repentance. Where we have heaped upon others misplaced shame or have
10 not dealt well with necessary God-given shame, we call ourselves to
11 repentance.

12
13 Nevertheless, as we call ourselves to the evangelical grace of repentance
14 (*WCF* 15.1), we see many reasons for rejoicing (*Phil.* 4:1). We give thanks
15 for penitent believers who, though they continue to struggle with same-sex
16 attraction, are living lives of chastity and obedience. These brothers and
17 sisters can serve as courageous examples of faith and faithfulness, as they
18 pursue Christ with a long obedience in gospel dependence. We also give
19 thanks for ministries and churches within our denomination that minister to
20 sexual strugglers (of all kinds) with Biblical truth and grace. Most
21 importantly, we give thanks for the gospel that can save and transform the
22 worst of sinners—older brothers and younger brothers, tax collectors and
23 Pharisees, insiders and outsiders. We rejoice in ten thousand spiritual
24 blessings that are ours when we turn from sin by the power of the Spirit, trust
25 in the promises of God, and rest upon Christ alone for justification,
26 sanctification, and eternal life (*WCF* 14.2).

27
28 **Therefore be it resolved** that the Calvary Presbytery hereby overtures the 48th General
29 Assembly and asks it to declare the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human
30 Sexuality as a biblically faithful declaration and refer it to the Committee on
31 Discipleship Ministries for inclusion and promotion among its denominational
32 teaching materials.

33
34 **Grounds:**

35 The PCA "Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality," is a biblically faithful
36 work by gifted churchmen within the PCA. It is a most useful resource concerning the
37 apologetic and pastoral task surrounding gender and sexuality confusion within the PCA and
38 the broader culture.

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40 *Adopted unanimously by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 22, 2021*

41 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, stated clerk*