

1 **OVERTURE 45** from Metro Atlanta Presbytery (to OC, CDM, AC)
2 "Seek Asian American Flourishing"
3

4 **Whereas**, the 44th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America recognized,
5 confessed, condemned, and repented of past failures to love brothers and sisters from
6 minority cultures in accordance with what the Gospel requires, as well as failures to
7 lovingly confront our brothers and sisters concerning racial sins and personal bigotry,
8 and failing to "learn to do good, seek justice and correct oppression" (Isaiah 1:17); and
9

10 **Whereas**, the 44th General Assembly resolved to praise and recommit itself to the gospel task
11 of racial reconciliation, diligently seeking effective courses of action to further that
12 goal, with humility, sincerity, and zeal, for the glory of God and the furtherance of the
13 Gospel; and
14

15 **Whereas**, Metro Atlanta Presbytery learned with sorrow of the tragic deaths of eight people
16 in and around our own presbytery on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, six of whom were of
17 Asian descent, who were wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters made in the image of
18 God; and
19

20 **Whereas**, even though the ultimate motivation of this shooter remains unestablished, these
21 tragic shootings happened within the larger context of an increase in violence in this
22 nation against Asian Americans over the last year; and
23 • have brought to light the racism that many of our Asian American brothers and
24 sisters in Christ, and Asian American neighbors have experienced, and remind
25 them of the anti-Asian racism that has been present in the past; and
26

27 **Whereas**, Asian Americans have been members of the PCA since its earliest days, even before
28 the Tenth General Assembly, which approved the formation of the first Korean
29 Language Presbytery in 1982; and
30 • Korean-Americans alone constitute more than 10% of Presbyteries (9 of 88),
31 11% of churches (218 of 1,927), and 14% of Teaching Elders (682 of 4,951);
32 and
33

34 **Whereas**, the PCA recognizes a desire and need to grow in our ability as a denomination to
35 shepherd and be shepherded by such a large and important part of our body;
36

37 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 48th General Assembly ask the Moderator to appoint an
38 Asian American commissioner to lead the Assembly in a time of corporate prayer with
39 one voice (Korean style), on behalf of our Asian American brothers and sisters; and
40

41 **Be it further resolved**, that the attached "Pastoral Letter" be offered as an example of how a
42 church or presbytery might provide shepherding care for its Asian American members
43 in light of the recent shootings and rise in violence; and
44

1 **Be it further resolved that** this General Assembly appoint five Asian Americans from
2 diverse generations and cultural backgrounds to serve the PCA over the next three years by:

- 3 • Exploring with CDM and *byFaith* the possibility of producing a series of multimedia
4 resources (interviews, articles, videos, podcasts, book list, etc.) on the Asian American
5 experience in the United States, in the PCA, and Asian American Presbyterianism
6 more broadly, in order to help churches, sessions, presbyteries, and PCA committees
7 and agencies grow in affirming, receiving, cultivating, and deploying the contributions,
8 gifts, unique cultural backgrounds, stories, and leadership of Asian Americans; and
- 9 • Coordinating with the Administrative Committee to have a future General Assembly
10 commemorate the more than forty years of faithful ministry by Asian Americans in
11 the PCA (this might include an Assembly-wide panel to discuss the Asian American
12 experience in the United States, in the PCA, and in Asian American Presbyterianism
13 more broadly, recognizing and honoring the original members of the first Korean
14 Language Presbytery, etc.); and
- 15 • Preparing the PCA with earnest prayer for the possibility that in the next forty years,
16 God might draw to himself individuals and communities from every tribe, language,
17 people, and nation, so that the bride of Christ globally, and the PCA specifically, might
18 come to better reflect the progress of the gospel among all peoples; and

19
20 **Be it finally resolved,** that the General Assembly recognize that the flourishing of our Asian
21 American brothers and sisters now and in the future, will contribute to the flourishing
22 of us all as the body of Christ, because if one member suffers, all suffer together; if
23 one member is honored, all rejoice together, for the glory of God.

24
25 *Adopted by Metro Atlanta Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 4, 2021*

26 *Attested by /s/ TE Randy Schlichting, stated clerk*

27

Attachment

Pastoral Letter

Shepherding Asian American Brothers and Sisters

Dear Brothers and Fathers,

In one of our Lord Jesus Christ's final interactions with the apostles, he spoke to Peter with a specific message about his and the others' role of shepherding those who followed Him. If we were to put our calling and mission into one word, it would be "shepherd." We are to receive the shepherding hand and voice of Jesus and to shepherd the flock over whom God has given us responsibility and authority. It is a humbling calling that draws us into constant reliance upon the Holy Trinity and the fellowship of the Body of Christ.

More specifically, Jesus asked Peter a series of questions. Here's what we see and hear:

John 21 (ESV):

¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"

He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶ He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Tend my sheep."

¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

¹⁸ Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."

¹⁹ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me!"

We have Jesus' expectation that we shepherd, and our congregations have the expectation that their elders will shepherd and lead them. Jesus directs us to "take care of my sheep." No doubt, all of us within the Presbyterian Church in America want to shepherd and to receive shepherding. The intention of our letter is to encourage and exhort, and perhaps to reveal an area where greater focus is needed. As we have laid out in our overture, our Asian American brothers and sisters in the PCA have been wounded, and as any good shepherd might do, we want to bind up those wounds. Just as the Lord gave Peter a second chance, we are given another opportunity to take care of the Lord's sheep.

Tragic events like those that occurred in Atlanta on March 16, 2021, bring pain and suffering that extends even further than that experienced by the victims and their close friends and

1 families. Events like this one bring into focus the darkness and fallenness of our world, and
2 our responses to this event will bring into focus the darkness and fallenness of our own hearts.
3 Thus, we are called to bring our hearts to the heart of God and to his grace and mercy. And
4 we want to lead and carry those in our flock to God’s heart, too. How can we do that? Where
5 do we start?
6

- 7 1. Pray. Ask the Lord for forgiveness, for comfort, and for wisdom.
- 8 2. Listen. Have ears to hear what the word of God and the Spirit of God say to you.
- 9 3. Locate. Find the Korean PCA church that is geographically closest to your church and
10 make a connection with an elder there to learn how they are doing.
- 11 4. Invite. Extend an invitation to those of Asian descent in your congregation or your
12 community to come and share with your congregation how they are feeling and what
13 their needs are. Be bold and persistent in your invitations. Be humble in listening.
- 14 5. Visit. Go to the Asian Americans in your church and community and pray with and
15 for them. This may take some extra effort and focus if there are not any Asian
16 Americans in your congregation, and you may need to network within your
17 community to meet someone new.
18

19 Shepherd those who are in particular pain and have been wounded. You know how to shepherd.
20 We aren’t asking you to do anything unusual, but to pay special attention to those who have
21 silently been persecuted and disrespected.
22

23 When Jesus rejoined his apostles on the beach that morning, he gave symbolic gestures that
24 he cared about them. He knew they were fishermen, and he helped them catch fish. He spoke
25 words of comfort and they knew it was the Lord. You may need to make some symbolic and
26 substantive efforts to show that you care about your Asian American brothers and sisters. May
27 the Lord give us grace to have a witness to a watching world that is both corporate and
28 individual.
29

30 To summarize, shepherd your Asian American families through grieving with them,
31 comforting them, and empathizing with them. Condemn the tragic shootings in Atlanta and
32 the other acts of anti-Asian behavior that have gone on in our country and in our communities.
33 And humbly ask for the shepherding that your Asian brothers and sisters can give you in the
34 spirit of Ephesians 5:21 – “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”
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36 Respectfully in Christ,
37
38 _____