

1 **OVERTURE 26** from Potomac Presbytery (to OC)
2 “Statement On Political Violence”
3

4 **Whereas**, the Presbyterian Church in America has not hesitated to speak to pressing moral
5 issues, such as condemning violence against the unborn (1978) and abused children
6 (2014), as well as providing guidelines for non-violent protest (1988); and
7

8 **Whereas**, God has ordained civil governments to be his “servants” and “ministers,” and
9 armed them with the power of the sword to enforce justice and maintain order in a
10 fallen world; and that Christians are to be subject to the governing authorities, at all
11 levels of government (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13; *WCF* 23.1); and
12

13 **Whereas**, the Lord Jesus declared, “blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons
14 of God” (Matthew 5:9); and
15

16 **Whereas**, our Lord commanded his followers to, “love your enemies, do good to those who
17 hate you” (Luke 6:27); and
18

19 **Whereas** on the night of his betrayal, Jesus commanded Peter to put away his sword, “for all
20 who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52), thus establishing for
21 his Kingdom a spiritual means of conquest; and
22

23 **Whereas**, the Apostle Paul exhorted Christians facing opposition in the capital of the Roman
24 empire, “if possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans
25 12:18); and
26

27 **Whereas**, the Apostle Paul directed believers, in their speech to those outside the church, to
28 speak with wisdom and grace, with words thoughtfully adapted to the needs of those
29 who hear (Col. 4:5-6); and
30

31 **Whereas**, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* states the duties required in the sixth
32 commandment include “peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior,
33 forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and
34 requiting good for evil” (*WLC* 135); and
35

36 **Whereas**, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* states the sins forbidden in the sixth
37 commandment include “all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in
38 case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing
39 the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy,
40 desire of revenge; all excessive passions” (*WLC* 136); and
41

42 **Whereas**, the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom is clearly affirmed in the *Westminster*
43 *Confession of Faith* (*WCF* 25.2; 31.4) and the *Book of Church Order* (Preliminary
44 Principles 2.7; 11-2); and

1 **Whereas**, the United States has seen an increase in political violence and intimidation in
2 recent years, from across the political spectrum, including arson, assaults on
3 government buildings, and a growing number of personal threats to public officials;
4 and

5
6 **Whereas**, at some of these violent events, Christian symbols have figured prominently,
7 causing confusion to a watching world by an unhelpful conflation of the Kingdom of
8 Christ with unlawful and violent actions; and

9
10 **Whereas**, Christians may be tempted to ignore, excuse, or minimize violence that aids their
11 preferred political views; and

12
13 **Whereas**, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and
14 other national and state agencies report they are anticipating more acts of political
15 violence; and

16
17 **Whereas**, many members of the Presbyterian Church in America have served and continue to
18 serve sacrificially in law enforcement and the U.S. military, lawfully bearing arms in
19 order to secure the blessings of liberty, law, and order in our cities, and the peaceful
20 transfer of power, all within the moral obligations of law enforcement and just war as
21 declared by lawful authorities (cf. *WCF* 21.2); and

22
23 **Whereas**, the Church should seek the peace of the place God has sent us (Jeremiah 29:7) by
24 leading our divided country towards healthy civic discourse; and

25
26 **Whereas**, Scripture teaches that servants of the living and reigning God must disobey any
27 subordinate authority that directs them to do what God has forbidden, or to fail to do
28 what God has required (Exodus 1:15-22; Joshua 2; 1 Kings 18.1-15; Daniel 3 and 6;
29 Acts 5:17-42), and yet Scripture does not warrant private violent resistance in such
30 cases;

31
32 **Therefore, be it resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in
33 America remind our members and neighbors of our allegiance to the Prince of Peace,
34 the Lord Jesus Christ, as “the sole Head of the Church and Law-giver in Zion”
35 (Message to All Churches, 1973); and

36
37 **Be it further resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America
38 condemn political violence and intimidation in unlawful expressions, especially that
39 which is illicitly done in the name of Christ; and

40
41 **Be it further resolved**, that the Moderator of the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian
42 Church in America appoint a commissioner to pray for peace in our nation and that
43 the Church of Jesus Christ would be instruments of that peace; and

1 **Be it finally resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America
2 encourage her members to “seek peace and pursue it” in the public square (Psalm
3 34:14); to “be subject to the governing authorities” (Romans 13:1); and to pray for
4 peace and for “all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet
5 life, godly and dignified in every way.” (I Timothy 2:2).

6
7 *Adopted by Potomac Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 19, 2022*

8 *Attested by /s/s RE Charles D. Robinson stated clerk*