

1 **OVERTURE 34** from Metro Atlanta Presbytery (to OC)
2 "Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Examination, and Conciliation"
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4 [Note: This overture is similar to but not identical to Overture 33.]
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6 **Whereas:** In this time of sexual confusion the Presbyterian Church in America needs to make
7 a clear statement about qualifications for ordained office; and
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9 **Whereas:** The Westminster Standards clearly state in Larger Catechism Question 139 that
10 both same-sex sexual activity and same-sex lust are violations of God's law; and
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12 **Whereas:** The 47th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America approved the
13 constitutionality of BCO 59-3, which states, "Marriage is only to be between one man
14 and one woman (Gen. 2:24,25; Matt. 19:4-6, 1 Cor. 7:2), in accordance with the Word
15 of God. Therefore, ministers in the Presbyterian Church in America who solemnize
16 marriages shall only solemnize marriages between one man and one woman;" and
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18 **Whereas:** *BCO* 21-4.c states that trials for the ordination of ministers, "shall consist of: (1) A
19 careful examination as to: (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, *especially*
20 *his personal character* and family management (based on the qualifications set out in
21 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9)," and *BCO* 24-1 states that each elder or deacon
22 nominee "shall then be examined in: a. his Christian experience, *especially his*
23 *personal character* and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1
24 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9);" and
25

26 **Whereas:** The 48th General Assembly of the PCA declared the *Report of the Ad interim*
27 *Committee on Human Sexuality* (AIC) as "a biblically faithful declaration." Further,
28 the grounds Calvary Presbytery unanimously adopted in sending up the overture
29 stated, "The PCA 'Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality,' is a
30 biblically faithful work by gifted churchmen within the PCA. It is a most useful
31 resource concerning the apologetic and pastoral task surrounding gender and sexuality
32 confusion within the PCA and the broader culture." Further, the grounds adopted by
33 the Committee of Commissioners on the Committee on Discipleship Ministries stated,
34 "The report of the ad interim on Human Sexuality is an excellent resource for members
35 and churches who seek to understand the biblical, confessional, and pastoral issues
36 involved with addressing the topics of homosexuality, same-sex attraction, and
37 transgenderism;" and
38

39 **Whereas:** The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *sin and temptation* in
40 relation to Same-Sex Attraction (SSA) in Statements 3-6 (p. 7-10) and in its section
41 on "Confessional Foundations" (pp. 14-24), stating, "'actual' sin refers not to the
42 reality or non-reality of sin, but to its being an act of the soul as opposed to a
43 *disposition* or *inclination* only. While it is significant that a distinction is made
44 between original and actual sin, the emphasis at this point in the Confession is that
45

1 original sin, as a disposition or inclination, is truly sin,” (p. 14, line 39-p. 15, line 3),
 2 and “when the temptation arises from within, it is our own act and is rightly called
 3 sin,” (p. 9, lines 18-19); and
 4

5 **Whereas:** The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *sanctification* in relation to
 6 SSA in Statement 7 (p. 10) and in its sections on “Real Change” (p. 22), “Celebrating
 7 Sincere Efforts” (p. 23), and “Discipleship for Believers Experiencing Same-Sex
 8 Attraction” (p. 24-25), stating, “to teach that our sinful corruption must be entirely
 9 removed from any part of us in order to be considered truly repentant is a spiritually
 10 treacherous perversion of the doctrine of repentance,” (p. 24, lines 24-26), and
 11 “Someone with homosexual attraction ought not close himself or herself off to the
 12 pursuit of, and hope of, real change in those attractions, even if that change is
 13 incomplete and mixed,” (p. 24, lines 38-40); and
 14

15 **Whereas:** The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *repentance* in relation to
 16 SSA in Statement 12 (p. 12-13) and in its section on “Confessional Foundations” (pp.
 17 14-24), stating, “Where we have mistreated those who struggle with same-sex
 18 attraction, or with any other sinful desires, we call ourselves to repentance. Where we
 19 have nurtured or made peace with sinful thoughts, desires, words, or deeds, we call
 20 ourselves to repentance,” (p. 14 lines 37-40), and, “We give thanks for penitent
 21 believers who, though they continue to struggle with same-sex attraction, are living
 22 lives of chastity and obedience. These brothers and sisters can serve as courageous
 23 examples of faith and faithfulness, as they pursue Christ with a long obedience in
 24 gospel dependence,” (p. 15, lines 2-5); and
 25

26 **Whereas:** The AIC clearly articulates the confessional approach to *sexual identity and*
 27 *orientation* in relation to SSA in Statements 9-10 (p. 11-12) and in its section on “The
 28 Christian’s Identity” (pp. 26-31), stating, “Insofar as the term orientation is used
 29 descriptively to articulate a particular set of experiences, namely the persistent and
 30 predominant sexual attractions of an individual, it can remain useful as a way of
 31 classifying those experiences in contrast to the experiences of the majority of other
 32 people. However, insofar as the term orientation carries with it a set of assumptions
 33 about the nature of that experience that is unbiblical (e.g., overemphasized rigidity, its
 34 normativity, etc.), then the terminology may require qualification or even rejection in
 35 some circumstances,” (p. 30, line 42-p. 31, line 4); and
 36

37 **Whereas:** The AIC addresses the issue of *terminology* on pages 29-30, stating, “We should
 38 choose our language carefully with the goal that it expresses the truth and
 39 communicates clearly and winsomely in our particular context... language itself is a
 40 secondary issue relative to the doctrine it expresses. Sometimes there are
 41 disagreements about language even when the underlying doctrinal commitments seem
 42 to be the same. Thus, while doctrinal truth is rightly understood as obligating our
 43 affirmation, *issues around terminology are more properly understood as issues of*
 44 *wisdom*, necessitating careful Scriptural and pastoral guidance,” (p. 29, lines 11-17).
 45 While the AIC does not forbid use of the term “gay,” it still issues caution stating, “the

1 word gay is not a neutral word in our cultural discourse, and Christians should be
 2 mindful of these dynamics when considering use of the term,” (p. 30, lines 7-8). Of
 3 the term “Gay Christian,” the AIC states, “we believe it is generally unwise to use the
 4 language of gay Christian,” (p. 30, lines 28-19). On both terms “gay” and “gay
 5 christian” the report concludes, “we would do well to *seek understanding before*
 6 *imparting advice*. In practical and plain terms, the issue of terminology is more likely
 7 *a matter for shepherding in wisdom, and not in and of itself grounds for discipline;”*
 8 and
 9

10 **Whereas:** The AIC sets clear boundaries for ordained office in the PCA, stating, “Insofar as
 11 such persons display the requisite Christian maturity, we do not consider this sin
 12 struggle automatically to disqualify someone for leadership in the church (1 Cor. 6:9-
 13 11, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 1:3-11), (p. 31, lines 30-31);” and
 14

15 **Whereas:** The AIC articulated its interpretation of 1 Cor. 6:9 as follows: “*Paul coined the*
 16 *term arsenokoitai (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10) from the use of two related terms in the*
 17 *Septuagint version of Leviticus 18 and 20. The basic meaning is “man-bedders” or*
 18 *men who have sex with other men.... The combination of arsenokoitai and malakoi,*
 19 *uniquely used in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 6:9, likely refers most directly—*
 20 *as per the ESV footnote—to the active and passive partners in consensual homosexual*
 21 *activity. For more extended discussion, see Chapter 5 in Kevin DeYoung, What Does*
 22 *the Bible Really Say About Homosexuality? (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015),” (p. 6,*
 23 *note 4); and*
 24

25 **Whereas:** In a recent decision on a complaint about a minister in Missouri Presbytery, the
 26 SJC stated, “If the Complainant had demonstrated, for example, that the minister was
 27 *involved in homosexual behavior, cultivated unrepentant lustings, taught that either*
 28 *of those were not sinful, or was not continually seeking to mortify those temptations,*
 29 *it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint,” (SJC 2020-12, p. 23, lines 27-*
 30 *30) affirming the AIC report and laying out clear boundaries for ordained leadership*
 31 *in the PCA; and*
 32

33 **Whereas:** The Westminster Standards clearly state in Larger Catechism Question 144 that
 34 “The duties required in the Ninth Commandment are, the preserving and promoting of
 35 truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own;
 36 appearing and standing for the truth;...a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving,
 37 desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their
 38 infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocence;
 39 a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report,
 40 concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers;” and Larger
 41 Catechism Question 145 states that “The sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment
 42 are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own,
 43 especially in public judicature...speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a
 44 wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal
 45 expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering,

1 backbiting, detracting, tale bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and
2 partial censuring; misconstructing intentions, words, and actions;...raising false
3 rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just
4 defense; evil suspicion;” and
5

6 **Whereas:** CDM has already published the AIC report in book form for easy distribution
7 ([https://www.pcabookstore.com/p-6275893-a-body-for-the-lordpca-papers-on-](https://www.pcabookstore.com/p-6275893-a-body-for-the-lordpca-papers-on-human-sexuality.aspx)
8 [human-sexuality.aspx](https://www.pcabookstore.com/p-6275893-a-body-for-the-lordpca-papers-on-human-sexuality.aspx)), and the PCA History website has all PCA studies available
9 for easy download
10 (https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2021_human_sexuality_report.pdf).
11

12 **Therefore be it resolved**

13 **A.** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America advises all
14 presbyteries and sessions to:

- 15 1. Fulfill the duty to “give due and serious consideration” (*BCO* 14-7) by making
16 careful study of the 2021 *Ad interim Report on Human Sexuality*,
- 17 2. Consider requiring all candidates for ordained office to do the same, and
- 18 3. Utilize said report in examining the personal character of candidates for
19 ordained office (*BCO* 21-4, 24-1); and
20

21 **B. Be it further resolved** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church
22 in America advises the courts of the church not to use certain terms as litmus tests
23 for biblical faithfulness or grounds for discipline but to seek understanding before
24 imparting advice, in keeping with the 2021 *Ad interim Report on Human*
25 *Sexuality's* statements on terminology (p. 29-30); and
26

27 **C. Be it further resolved** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church
28 in America exhorts pastors and elders to instruct their congregations on the historic
29 teaching of the Bible and the Christian church on human sexuality, especially as
30 stated in Gen. 2:24,25, Rom. 1:24-32, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Cor. 7:1-28, Westminster
31 Larger Catechism 139, and *BCO* 59-3; and
32

33 **D. Be it finally resolved** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church
34 in America encourages presbyteries and congregations to seek the Lord in prayer
35 for wisdom to navigate changing cultural contexts faithfully as a church committed
36 to the scriptures, and to earnestly ask “the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers
37 into his harvest fields,” (Luke 10:2).
38

39 *Adopted by Metro Atlanta Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 3, 2022*

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