

1 **OVERTURE 35** from North Florida Presbytery (to OC)  
2 “Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Assessment, and Conciliation”  
3

4 [Note: This overture is similar to Overtures 33 and 34, but differs in a number of details.]  
5

6 **Whereas**, the peace and purity of the Presbyterian Church in America has been disturbed by  
7 the sexual confusion prevalent in our culture; and  
8

9 **Whereas**, the lower courts of the Presbyterian Church in America would benefit from clear  
10 guidance about qualifications for ordained office with reference to complex and  
11 culturally contested matters concerning human sexuality; and  
12

13 **Whereas**, the Westminster Standards clearly teach that original sin, as a disposition or  
14 inclination, is truly and properly sin (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 6.5) and that  
15 same-sex sexual lust and same-sex sexual activity are violations of God’s righteous  
16 law (*Westminster Larger Catechism* 138 and 139); and  
17

18 **Whereas**, *BCO* 21-4.a states that trials for the ordination of ministers require careful  
19 examination of a candidate’s “acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his  
20 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 requires the same standards for the  
22 examination of ruling elder and deacon nominees; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, Calvary Presbytery unanimously adopted an overture commending the report of the  
25 Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality (AIC) to the 48th General Assembly on  
26 the following grounds: “The PCA ‘Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human  
27 Sexuality,’ is a biblically faithful work by gifted churchmen within the PCA. It is a  
28 most useful resource concerning the apologetic and pastoral task surrounding gender  
29 and sexuality confusion within the PCA and the broader culture;” and  
30

31 **Whereas**, the 48th General Assembly of the PCA declared the AIC report to be “a biblically  
32 faithful declaration;” and  
33

34 **Whereas**, the AIC report articulates the confessional doctrine of sanctification in relation to  
35 same-sex attraction, stating, “to teach that our sinful corruption must be entirely  
36 removed from any part of us in order to be considered truly repentant is a spiritually  
37 treacherous perversion of the doctrine of repentance” (p. 24). Additionally, the report  
38 teaches that “someone with homosexual attraction ought not to close himself or herself  
39 off to the pursuit of, and hope of, real change in those attractions, even if that change  
40 is incomplete and mixed” (p. 24); and  
41

42 **Whereas**, the AIC report articulates the confessional approach to terminology in relation to  
43 same-sex identity, stating, “Christians ought to understand themselves, define  
44 themselves, and describe themselves in light of their union with Christ and their  
45 identity as regenerate, justified, holy children of God (Rom. 6:5-11; 1 Cor. 6:15-20;  
46

1 Eph. 2:1-10). To juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desires alongside the term  
2 “Christian” is inconsistent with Biblical language and undermines the spiritual reality  
3 that we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)” (pp. 11-12); and  
4

5 **Whereas**, the AIC report articulates that “it is generally unwise to use the language of gay  
6 Christian” due to the dynamic and diverse uses of the term “gay” in our cultural  
7 discourse (p. 30); and  
8

9 **Whereas**, the AIC report also recognizes “a difference between speaking about a  
10 phenomenological facet of a person’s sin-stained reality and employing the language  
11 of sinful desires as a personal identity marker” (p. 11) and that some faithful believers  
12 employ the terminology of “gay” merely to describe their sexual attractions without  
13 any “intention to make a definitive statement about identity” (p. 30); and  
14

15 **Whereas**, the AIC report concludes that on the use of the terms “gay” and “gay Christian”  
16 that “we would do well to seek understanding before imparting advice. In practical  
17 and plain terms, the issue of terminology is more likely a matter for shepherding in  
18 wisdom, and not in itself grounds for discipline” (p. 30); and  
19

20 **Whereas**, the AIC report articulates the confessional approach to sexual orientation in relation  
21 to same-sex attraction, stating, “Insofar as the term orientation is used descriptively to  
22 articulate a particular set of experiences, namely the persistent and predominant sexual  
23 attractions of an individual, it can remain useful as a way of classifying those  
24 experiences in contrast to the experiences of the majority of other people. However,  
25 insofar as the term orientation carries with it a set of assumptions about the nature of  
26 that experience that is unbiblical (e.g., overemphasized rigidity, its normativity, etc.),  
27 then the terminology may require qualification or even rejection in some  
28 circumstances” (pp. 30-31); and  
29

30 **Whereas**, the AIC sets clear boundaries for ordained office in the PCA, stating, “Insofar as  
31 such persons display the requisite Christian maturity, we do not consider this sin  
32 struggle automatically to disqualify someone for leadership in the church (1 Cor. 6:9-  
33 11; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 1:3-11)” (p. 31); and  
34

35 **Whereas**, Westminster Larger Catechism 144 explicitly states: “The duties required in the  
36 ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man,  
37 and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the  
38 truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and  
39 only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever;  
40 a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good  
41 name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their  
42 gifts and graces, defending their innocence; a ready receiving of a good report, and  
43 unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging tale-bearers,  
44 flatterers, and slanderers;” and Westminster Larger Catechism 145 states: “The sins  
45 forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name  
46 of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false  
47

1 evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil  
2 cause, out-facing and over-bearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good,  
3 and good evil ... speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or  
4 perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful or equivocal expressions, to the  
5 prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying slandering, backbiting, detracting,  
6 talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; mis-  
7 constructing intentions, words and actions ... raising false rumors, receiving and  
8 countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion.”  
9

10 **Therefore, be it resolved**

11 A. That the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America advises  
12 all lower courts to:

- 13
- 14 1, Fulfill the duty to “give due and serious consideration” (BCO 14-7) to the  
15 approval of the 2021 Ad Interim Report on Human Sexuality by the 48th  
16 General Assembly by making a careful study of its contents,
- 17 2. Consider requiring all candidates for ordained office to do the same, and
- 18 3. Utilize the AIC report as a guide to examine the personal character of candidates  
19 for ordained office (BCO 21-4; 24-1) and to assess doctrinal or ethical charges  
20 brought against any ordained officer on relevant subject matters; and  
21

22 **B. Be it further resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church  
23 in America advises the courts of the church to exercise wisdom in weighing  
24 matters with regard to the complex issues addressed in the AIC report, especially  
25 avoiding hasty judgments based on terminology surrounding same-sex identity and  
26 orientation; and  
27

28 **C. Be it further resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church  
29 in America, in obedience to the ninth commandment, urges pastors and elders to  
30 exercise caution, fair judgment, charity, and restraint when interacting with the  
31 views of another, especially online, in order to ensure that we honor our fellow  
32 elders and the courts that protect the sanctity of our denomination; and  
33

34 **D. Be it further resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church  
35 in America exhorts pastors and elders to instruct their congregations on the historic  
36 teaching of the Bible and the Christian church regarding human sexuality, especially  
37 as stated in Genesis 2:24-25; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians  
38 7:1-28, Westminster Larger Catechism 138 and 139, and BCO 59-3; and  
39

40 **E. Be it finally resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church  
41 in America encourages presbyteries and congregations to seek the Lord in prayer  
42 for wisdom to navigate changing cultural contexts faithfully as a church committed  
43 to the Scriptures and to the Great Commission.  
44

45 *Adopted by North Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting on May 12, 2022*

46 *Attested by TE David Burke, stated clerk*