

1 **OVERTURE 42** from the Calvary Presbytery (to AC)
2 “Direct the Stated Clerk Not to Collect Statistical Data Pertaining to Age or Ethnicity”
3

4 **Whereas** *RAO* 4-11 authorizes the Administrative Committee to collect statistical information
5 for the purpose of providing and publishing “guidelines for the Partnership Share
6 Giving Program of the PCA, including the Ministry Ask” and for no other stated
7 reason; and,
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9 **Whereas** *RAO* 4-11 specifies that said “guidelines shall include statistical information
10 expressed both in per capita giving terms and in proportional (percentage) giving terms
11 to demonstrate the giving necessary to attain full funding for budgets of the General
12 Assembly Committees and Agencies” and nothing more; and,
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14 **Whereas** the Office of the Stated Clerk, through a note contained in a box on the bottom of
15 page 2 of the 2024 Annual Statistical Report Form, informed the congregations of the
16 PCA that “two new line items” regarding “communicant member ethnicity and age”
17 would appear “on the 2025 Annual Statistical Report Form” to be sent out for
18 completion in 2026; and,
19

20 **Whereas** the practical difficulties of collecting information on “communicant member
21 ethnicity and age” are greater than perhaps the Stated Clerk’s Office has yet considered
22 due to members’ reticence to share their ages or uncertain of how best to categorize
23 their ethnicity, with many of our members being the children of interracial/multiethnic
24 unions; and,
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26 **Whereas** the theological commitments of the PCA derived from Scripture and expressed in
27 the PCA’s subordinate Standards and Constitute militate against the collection of data
28 pertaining to ethnicity, for the PCA confesses with Scripture that though our members
29 come from many different backgrounds (ethnic and otherwise), our Triune God has
30 united us together as “one body” (1 Cor. 12:12), with Christ Himself being “our peace,
31 who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall” (Eph.
32 2:14), baptizing all “by one Spirit...into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether
33 slaves of free,” and making all “to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13), even while
34 acknowledging that Old Testament historical narratives, ceremonial laws, and
35 prophecies frequently refer to people groups by familial origin, tribal associations,
36 ethnic affinities, nations, and what some commentators might refer to as racial
37 distinctions, yet never in such a way so as to accept as appropriate the continuing use
38 of such distinctions in the formal categorization of members of the church of Jesus
39 Christ; and,
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41 **Whereas** the kingdoms of this world may collect (and even act upon) certain demographic
42 information, yet God has neither directed nor authorized the church to collect such
43 information pertaining to ethnicity; and,
44

1 **Whereas** there are two classes of people with which the church should be concerned, in its
2 formal statistical record-keeping: covenant-keepers and covenant-breakers (*BCO* 56-
3 4.j.), recorded in the PCA as those who are in covenant with God through their own
4 “profession of faith in Christ” (*BCO* 6-2; see also 57-3, 4) or “through the covenant
5 and by right of birth” as “non-communing members of the church” (*BCO* 6-1), thus
6 furnishing the church with two classes of those who are deemed in covenant with
7 God—communing members and non-communing members (*WCF* 25.2; *WLC* 62)—
8 and one additional record of those who break covenant with God and come under the
9 censure of excommunication (*BCO* 30-1, 4); and,

10
11 **Whereas** there is no clear usefulness or theological justification for further subdividing either
12 of these two categories (i.e., covenant-keepers and covenant-breakers) in terms of
13 either age or ethnicity; and,

14
15 **Whereas** the collection of data pertaining to age or ethnicity gives the appearance of the sins
16 of partiality (*James* 2:9) and pride, which must not be indulged even at the first stirring
17 of the same (*James* 1:14-15), as illustrated in King David’s sinful (and deadly) census
18 recorded in 2 Samuel 24 and cited in 1 Chronicles 21; and,

19
20 **Whereas** the resolution of the conflict between Hellenistic Jews and native Hebrews in Acts
21 6 does not constitute an approved example that would lead us by necessary inference
22 to collect denomination-wide demographic data pertaining to ethnicity or age; and,

23
24 **Whereas** the collection of demographic data pertaining to ethnicity or age is not necessary
25 for the undershepherds called and ordained by Christ to know the flock in their care;
26 and,

27
28 **Whereas** the church is called to “examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is
29 good; abstain from every form of evil” (1 *Thess.* 5:21-22).

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31 **Therefore, be it resolved** that Calvary Presbytery hereby overtures the 52nd General
32 Assembly to direct the Office of the Stated Clerk through the Administrative
33 Committee not to collect statistical data pertaining to age or ethnicity in annual
34 statistical reports

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37 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting of April 24, 2025.*

38 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Stated Clerk*