

1 **OVERTURE 43** from the Calvary Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC)
2 “Amend *RAO* 4-11 regarding Data on Age and 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,
8

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,
25

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,
40

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).

30
31 **Therefore, be it resolved** that Calvary Presbytery hereby overtures the 52nd General
32 Assembly to amend *RAO* 4-11 by adding the following to the third paragraph
33 (underlining for additions):

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35 Such statistical information shall not include data pertaining to age or ethnicity.

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37 So that the amended section will read as follows:

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39 **4-11.** The budget for each permanent Committee and Agency shall be
40 submitted to the Administrative Committee of General Assembly, which shall
41 independently evaluate the proposed budget of each permanent Committee and
42 Agency and report to the Assembly its considered opinion on the adoption. To
43 protect the ministry and fiduciary responsibilities of the Committees and
44 Agency Boards, the financial coordination and independent evaluation of the

1 budgets by the Administrative Committee shall be for review, discussion, and
2 recommendation to the Assembly.

3
4 Should modifications in budgets be deemed necessary by the Assembly, special
5 care shall be taken that changes not be made in such a way as to threaten the
6 continuity or effectiveness of the Committee's or Agency's ministry. Budgets
7 of permanent Committees and Agencies that are agreed upon by the
8 Administrative Committee may be changed only by a two-thirds vote of the
9 Assembly commissioners present and voting at the time the budget is submitted
10 for adoption. In the event the Administrative Committee disagrees with the
11 budget submitted by one of the Committees or Boards, in whole or any item
12 thereof, the General Assembly may adopt either the Committee's or Board's
13 budget or the Administrative Committee's recommended budget by simple
14 majority. The requirement of a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly applies
15 only to changes not recommended by the Administrative Committee, initiated
16 on the floor of the Assembly. With respect to the Committees and Agencies,
17 financial coordination is through the Administrative Committee to the
18 Assembly and from the General Assembly to the Committees and Agencies.
19 The Administrative Committee is a "filter upward" and has no downward
20 authority.

21
22 The Administrative Committee shall annually provide and publish guidelines
23 for the Partnership Share Giving Program of the PCA, including the Ministry
24 Ask. These guidelines shall include statistical information expressed both in per
25 capita giving terms and in proportional (percentage) giving terms to
26 demonstrate the giving necessary to attain full funding for budgets of the
27 General Assembly Committees and Agencies. Such statistical information shall
28 not include data pertaining to age or ethnicity.

29
30 The Committees and Agencies receiving support through the PCA Partnership
31 Share Giving Program shall present their financial needs and their Ministry Ask
32 to the Administrative Committee for review and recommendation in the course
33 of the regular budgeting process. Each Committee and Agency shall then be
34 free to request from the PCA churches and constituency the contributions
35 necessary to fund its approved budget.

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37 While all churches remain free to give their contributions as they by God's
38 guidance determine, all churches are encouraged to give, as they are able, at
39 least ten percent (10%) of their tithes and offerings to the PCA causes of
40 presbyteries and General Assembly.

41
42 The Administrative Committee shall maintain a manual containing the
43 Affirmation of Core Financial Standards. This information, by which each PCA
44 General Assembly ministry (Committee or Agency) shall function and by

1 which the budget process is governed for each Committee and Agency, shall be
2 available to all constituencies

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

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