

1 **OVERTURE 13** from the Presbytery of Grace (to OC)
2 "Adopt Danvers Statement on Gender Issues"
3

4 **Whereas** the 36th General Assembly chose not to appoint a study committee for the purpose
5 of determining the question of ordaining women to the office of Deacon; and
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7 **Whereas** through its Overtures Committee as well as its Committee on Review of Presbytery
8 Records, the 36th General Assembly gave the impression that the lower courts should
9 discuss this and other related issues, with a view that a resolution of the issue might
10 be forthcoming; and
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12 **Whereas** there is a need to give direction to our local churches as well as respond to the
13 Assembly's suggestion; and
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15 **Whereas** there is a biblically based Statement on Gender Issues endorsed by Evangelicals
16 and Reformed alike, which has been in circulation for more than twenty years;
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18 **Therefore**, the Presbytery of Grace overtures the 37th General Assembly to adopt the following
19 "Danvers' Statement," offered by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
20 and modified as indicated below, as the Statement of Gender Issues of the Presbyterian
21 Church in America.
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24 **The Statement of Gender Issues of the Presbyterian Church in America**
25 An adaptation of the Danvers' Statement
26

27 **Rationale**
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29 We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which
30 we observe with deep concern:
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- 32 1. The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary
33 differences between masculinity and femininity;
- 34 2. The tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God
35 out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;
- 36 3. The increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions
37 or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership
38 of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed
39 wives;
- 40 4. The widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking,
41 and the many ministries historically performed by women;
- 42 5. The growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and
43 historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal
44 of human sexuality;
- 45 6. The upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;

- 1 7. The emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to
2 Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;
- 3 8. The increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to
4 reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;
- 5 9. The consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and
6 the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm
7 of technical ingenuity;
- 8 10. And behind all this, the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit
9 of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity, which in the power of
10 the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

11 12 **Affirmations**

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14 Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

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16 1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons, and
17 distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:18).
- 18 2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created
19 order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen. 2: 18, 21-24; 1 Cor. 11:7-9;
20 1 Tim. 2: 12-14).
- 21 3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a
22 result of sin (Gen. 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor. 11:7-9).
- 23 4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen. 3: 1-7,
24 12, 16).

25
26 In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced
27 by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission
28 tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.

29
30 In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an
31 abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist
32 limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in
33 appropriate ministries.

- 34
35 5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and
36 dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen. 1:26-27,2:18;
37 Gal. 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in
38 the family and in the covenant community (Gen. 2:18; Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3:18-19;
39 1 Tim 2:11-15).
- 40 6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

41
42 In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and
43 grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance
44 to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to
45 their husbands' leadership (Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3: 18-19; Tit. 2:3-5;
46 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

1 In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal
2 share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, **in accordance with**
3 **the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the offices of Elder (*Ruling and***
4 ***Teaching*) and Deacon** are restricted to men (Gal. 3:28;
5 1 Cor. 11 :2-16; 1 Tim. 2: 11-15). (See explanatory note below concerning
6 the bold print.)
7

- 8 7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no
9 earthly submission—domestic, religious, or civil—ever implies a mandate to follow a
10 human authority into sin (Dan. 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet. 3:1-2).
- 11 8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set
12 aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim. 2: 11-15, 3: 1-13; Tit. 1:5-9).
13 Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment
14 of God's will.
- 15 9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with
16 countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses
17 and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction,
18 crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion
19 from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling
20 ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor. 12:7-21).
- 21 10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly
22 destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

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24 **Explanatory note:** In the original Danvers' Statement, Affirmation 6 contained the words
25 "some governing and teaching roles within the church . . ." which have been replaced above by
26 the words "in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures the offices of Elder (*Ruling*
27 *and Teaching*) and Deacon"

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29 *Adopted by Grace Presbytery at its stated meeting, 13 January 2009.*
30 *Attested by /s/ TE Eugene C. Case, stated clerk*