

1 **OVERTURE 21** from Ascension Presbytery (to MNA)  
2 “Concur with Formation of New Ohio Presbytery”  
3

4 **Whereas**, a presbytery focused on a particular geographic region within political bounds can  
5 lead to a clearly defined vision and a more focused ministry between particular  
6 congregations in the presbytery;  
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8 **Whereas**, fostering a sense of connectionalism and cooperation of churches, teaching elders,  
9 and ruling elders beyond the local congregation is a hallmark of historic Presbyterianism;  
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11 **Whereas**, a presbytery that has greater concentration within a specific geographic region  
12 may and should lead to a greater emphasis on church planting within that region;  
13

14 **Whereas**, the Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries, as adopted by the 26th General Assembly  
15 of the Presbyterian Church in America, attached hereto as Exhibit A (the “Guidelines”),  
16 include “regional cohesiveness,” “member churches hav[ing] a potential for shared  
17 ministries,” and “member churches hav[ing] a common commitment to the region;”  
18

19 **Whereas**, the Presbytery of the Ascension can divide into two presbyteries and would still  
20 meet the Guidelines of having “a minimum of 10 churches” (#2), “a total communicant  
21 membership of at least 1000” (#3) and “at least 3 churches each having a membership  
22 of at least 125 communicant members (#6);  
23

24 **Whereas**, the Presbytery of the Ascension, not including the Ohio churches, will be enabled  
25 to have a greater focus on western Pennsylvania in order to advance the kingdom of  
26 Christ;  
27

28 **Whereas**, the newly formed Ohio presbytery will enable the Presbytery of the Ascension to  
29 focus on Pennsylvania, Great Lakes presbytery to focus on Michigan and its other  
30 areas, and the new Ohio presbytery to focus on Ohio for the advancement of the  
31 kingdom of Christ in their respective regions;  
32

33 **Now therefore, be it resolved**, that the Presbytery of the Ascension overture the 37th  
34 General Assembly to redraw the boundaries of the Presbytery of the Ascension to  
35 relinquish the Ohio counties currently within the boundaries of the Presbytery of the  
36 Ascension to a new Ohio Presbytery.  
37

38 The new Ohio presbytery shall consist of “all of Ohio north and east of and  
39 including the counties of Mercer, Shelby, Logan, Union, Madison, Pickaway,  
40 Hocking, Vinton, and Meigs, and south and west of but not including the  
41 counties of Columbiana, Carroll, Tuscarawas, Guernsey, Noble and Monroe  
42 (see Exhibit B attached hereto for new Ascension and Ohio Presbytery  
43 boundaries)”  
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45 *Adopted by the Presbytery of the Ascension at its stated meeting, April 25, 2009*

46 *Attested by /s/ RE Frederick R. Neikirk, stated clerk*

1 **EXHIBIT A**

2  
3 **Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries**

4 (M26GA, 26-44, p. 180)

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6 As presbyteries grow in the number of congregations and membership they include, there  
7 may come a time at which division of the presbytery may be helpful. Presbyteries should  
8 take care that they do not divide prematurely, causing one or more of the resulting  
9 presbyteries to lack the resources necessary for their future growth. On the other hand, a  
10 presbytery may become so large that it cannot give adequate attention to the needs of the  
11 churches and ministers within its membership, and may find even its efforts at church  
12 planting and other growth in ministry difficult.

13  
14 The 16th General Assembly (1988) established guidelines for the division of presbyteries  
15 presented below unchanged. These guidelines are sufficient in addressing most options.

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17 Special care should be taken to ensure that the division of a presbytery is not made in haste  
18 or without adequate consideration of the needs of all parties involved. Therefore, at the very  
19 earliest stages of discussion of a possible division, those initiating the discussion: (a) should  
20 take care to ensure that all churches and teaching elders (including missionaries and other  
21 out of bounds members) who will possibly be affected are fully informed of the discussion  
22 as early as possible; (b) should communicate with the stated clerk of the presbytery, who in  
23 turn should communicate with the entire presbytery; (c) should be encouraged to contact  
24 General Assembly Mission to North America and the General Assembly Stated Clerk very  
25 early in the process as well, for any assistance they may be able to offer in making a smooth  
26 transition and in giving advice that may be helpful to the planning process; and (d) should  
27 target the first meeting of a presbytery in the summer or fall of the year so that they may be  
28 able to fully participate in the nominating process of General Assembly without undue  
29 delay.

30  
31 (Following are Guidelines taken from the *M16GA* 1988, p.143, 16-63, III, 16-17.)

- 32 1. A presbytery should have a radius of 2-½ hours maximum driving distance.  
33 2. A presbytery should have a minimum of 10 churches.  
34 3. A presbytery should have a total communicant membership of at least 1000.  
35 4. Presbytery boundaries should not partition metropolitan areas.  
36 5. A presbytery should have regional cohesiveness.  
37 6. A presbytery should have at least 3 churches each having a membership of at least 125  
38 communicant members.  
39 7. Presbytery boundaries should be such that its member churches have a potential for  
40 shared ministries.  
41 8. Presbytery boundaries should be such that its member churches have a common  
42 commitment to the region within the boundaries and sense their shared responsibility to  
43 cover the region with the Gospel.  
44 9. When a presbytery reaches 30 churches, it should consider whether subdivision would  
45 lead to more effective ministry.

1        Reasons:

2

3        (i) It is often to the advantage of very large presbyteries to subdivide for more efficient  
4        oversight and closer cooperation.

5        (ii) Additional presbyteries are urgently needed in most of the United States, other than  
6        the South, and in Canada in order to make the Presbyterian system of government  
7        operate efficiently. A presbytery in an area where the PCA is not particularly strong  
8        could be viable with as few as ten churches, and even with less. (The first presbytery in  
9        this land had but seven.)

10

11       10. A presbytery should limit its boundaries to that geographic area for which it is able to  
12       take meaningful responsibility for evangelism and church development.

13

14       Reason : *M12GA*, 12-67, III, 8

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16       11. We acknowledge the existence of language presbyteries.

17       12. We recognize the “ideal nature of guidelines such as these and understand that several  
18       existing presbyteries do not presently meet all of them.”



**EXHIBIT B (continued)**

**Post-Division Presbytery Boundaries – Pennsylvania**

