

1 **OVERTURE 43** from Potomac Presbytery (to OC)

2 "Pursuing Racial Reconciliation and the Advance of the Gospel"

3
4 **Whereas**, the 43rd General Assembly considered a personal resolution on racial reconciliation
5 and referred the matter to the 44th General Assembly, so that lower courts could
6 perfect and propose a resolution encouraging "heartfelt repentance"; and

7
8 **Whereas**, in the 1973 "Message to All the Churches," the founding generation of the
9 Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) expressly declared our denomination to be
10 the "continuing church" of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS),
11 saying, "We have called ourselves 'Continuing' Presbyterians because we seek to
12 continue the faith of the founding fathers of that Church"; and

13
14 **Whereas**, the formation and identity of the PCA was shaped through the honorable and
15 courageous commitment of our founding denominational leaders and churches to be
16 faithful to the Scriptures in doctrine and in practice, and these convictions remain
17 with us to this day; and

18
19 **Whereas**, during the Civil Rights period, there were founding denominational leaders and
20 churches who not only failed to pursue racial reconciliation but also actively worked
21 against it in both church and society through sinful practices, such as the segregation
22 of worshipers by race; the exclusion of persons from Church membership on the
23 basis of race; the exclusion of churches, or elders, from membership in Presbyteries,
24 on the basis of race; the teaching that the Bible sanctions racial segregation and
25 discourages inter-racial marriage; the participation in and defense of white
26 supremacist organizations; and the failure to live out the gospel imperative that "love
27 does no wrong to a neighbor" (Romans 13:10); and

28
29 **Whereas**, the vestiges of these sins continue to affect our denomination to this day and
30 significantly hinder efforts for reconciliation with our African-American and other
31 minority brothers and sisters by: often refusing to lay down our cultural preferences
32 so that these brothers and sisters might feel more welcome in our churches; not
33 sufficiently encouraging minority culture brothers into leadership within our General
34 Assembly Committees and Agencies, presbyteries, and churches, as evidenced by
35 our history; failing to lovingly confront our brothers and sisters concerning racial
36 sins and personal bigotry; and failing to "learn to do good, seek justice and correct
37 oppression" (Isaiah 1:17); and

38
39 **Whereas**, the 30th General Assembly adopted a resolution on racial reconciliation that
40 confessed "heinous sins" connected with unbiblical forms of servitude, but did not
41 deal specifically with the racial sins committed during the much more recent Civil
42 Rights period, which betrayed the visible unity of all believers in Christ (Ephesians
43 2:11-22), the command to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31), and the
44 image of God in all people (Genesis 1:27); and

1 **Whereas**, God has once more given the PCA a gracious opportunity to show the beauty,
2 grace, and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through confession and through the
3 fruits of repentance: such as, formative and corrective discipline for racial sins; in
4 understanding and appreciation of minority cultures; intentionally establishing
5 interracial friendships and partnerships inside and outside our denomination; renewing
6 our church's commitment to develop minority leadership at the congregational,
7 presbytery, and denominational levels; and encouraging a denomination-wide vision
8 for and commitment to a more racially and ethnically diverse church in obedience to
9 the Great Commission; and

10
11 **Therefore be it resolved**, that the 44th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in
12 America does recognize, confess, and condemn these past and continuing racial sins
13 and failure to love brothers and sisters from minority cultures in accordance with
14 what the Gospel requires; and

15
16 **Be it further resolved**, that this General Assembly praises and recommits itself to the
17 gospel task of racial reconciliation, diligently seeking effective courses of action to
18 further that goal, with humility, sincerity and zeal, for the glory of God and the
19 furtherance of the Gospel; and

20
21 **Be it finally resolved**, that the General Assembly urges the congregations and presbyteries
22 of the Presbyterian Church in America to make this resolution known to their
23 members in order that they may prayerfully confess their own racial sins as led by
24 the Spirit and strive towards racial reconciliation for the advancement of the gospel,
25 the love of Christ, and the glory of God.

26
27 *Adopted unanimously by Potomac Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 19, 2016*

28 *Attested by /s/ RE Charles D. Robinson, stated clerk*