

1 **OVERTURE 35** from Savannah River Presbytery (to OC)  
2 “Affirm the PCA’s Commitment to the Sanctity of Biblical Sexual Relationships”  
3

4 **Whereas**, the Scripture is infallible and inerrant, the only rule of faith and practice, and the  
5 only touchstone of truth; and  
6

7 **Whereas**, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America “is subject to and  
8 subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments;” and  
9

10 **Whereas**, every officer (teaching elders, ruling elders, and deacons) in the Presbyterian  
11 Church in America vows that they “believe the Scriptures of the Old and New  
12 Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule  
13 of faith and practice;” and  
14

15 **Whereas**, all church courts in the Presbyterian Church in America have the power “to bear  
16 testimony against error in doctrine and immorality,” “to require obedience to the laws  
17 of Christ,” and “to cut off the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of  
18 believers” (*BCO* 11-2); and  
19

20 **Whereas**, every PCA Presbytery has power “to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the  
21 purity and peace of the Church” (*BCO* 13-9f); and  
22

23 **Whereas**, the Revoice Conference, held at Memorial Presbyterian Church in St. Louis,  
24 Missouri on July 26-28, 2018, was for the purpose of “Supporting, encouraging, and  
25 empowering gay, lesbian, same-sex attracted and other LGBT+ Christians;” and  
26

27 **Whereas**, some within the Presbyterian Church in America are claiming that same-sex  
28 attraction is not necessarily a sin but can be a disposition given to some: “that such a  
29 disposition of sinful desires are God given for the acceptance of all believers and the  
30 Church, and for the promotion of the Glory of God;” or “that individuals with sinful  
31 homosexual feelings of same-sex attraction have no control over these feelings and/or  
32 attractions; that though they may be unwanted, they are helpless to avoid and are in no  
33 need of repentance;” or who answer affirmatively: “Can a person claim to be born with  
34 same-sex attraction in the same manner as the man born blind?” or are in agreement  
35 with: “I believe my same-sex attractions are broken, but I do not believe they are sinful.  
36 It is not sinful for me to be attracted to another man;” or asserting that same-sex  
37 attraction and orientation are permissible under the Gospel as long as the person  
38 remains celibate; even though these assertions are contrary to what Jesus said that any  
39 and all lust in the heart is a sin: “I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with  
40 lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28); and  
41

42 **Whereas**, the Scripture teaches that same-sex attraction is an evidence that God has given  
43 over such people to “the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be  
44 dishonored among them” and “to degrading passions” in which “women exchanged  
45 the natural function for that which is unnatural” and “the men abandoned the natural

1 function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another” because they  
2 “exchanged the truth of God for a lie” and “did not see fit to acknowledge God any  
3 longer” (Romans 1:24-28); and  
4

5 **Whereas**, homosexuality is a sin from which God delivered some of the Corinthian Christians  
6 (“such **were** some of you...): “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit  
7 the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor  
8 adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor  
9 drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were  
10 some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in  
11 the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11);  
12 and continues to deliver believers from this and other sins; and  
13

14 **Whereas**, same-sex attraction is lust in the very same manner that heterosexual attraction is  
15 lust, and both are violations of the seventh commandment as the Larger Catechism  
16 teaches:  
17

18 Question 138: What are the duties required in the seventh commandment?  
19

20 Answer: The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in  
21 body, mind, affections, words, and behavior; and the preservation of it in  
22 ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses;  
23 temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by  
24 those that have not the gift of continency, conjugal love, and cohabitation;  
25 diligent labor in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and  
26 resisting temptations thereunto.  
27

28 Question 139: What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?  
29

30 Answer: The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the  
31 neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest,  
32 sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts,  
33 purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening  
34 thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel;  
35 prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing,  
36 tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of  
37 single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than  
38 one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony,  
39 drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings,  
40 stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in  
41 ourselves or others.  
42

43 **Therefore**, be it resolved, that in light of the fact that this current issue is once again  
44 confronting the PCA, the 47<sup>th</sup> General Assembly take the following actions:

1           **That** the 47<sup>th</sup> General Assembly reaffirm the action of the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

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3           Whereas God's Word teaches in the Old Testament that homosexuality is a  
4           sin, labeling it an "abomination" in such passages as Leviticus 18:22  
5           and 20:13, and clearly viewing it as sin in the story of Sodom in Genesis  
6           19:1-11; and

7           Whereas the New Testament reaffirms the sinfulness of this "unnatural"  
8           practice in such passages as Romans 1:26, 27 and Jude 7, even stating  
9           in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom  
10          of heaven;

11          Therefore, be it resolved that the Fifth General Assembly of the  
12          Presbyterian Church in America affirm the Biblical position for our  
13          denomination which states that:

- 14  
15           1. The act of homosexuality is a sin according to God's Word;  
16           2. Churches should actively seek to lead the homosexual person to  
17           confession and repentance that he might find justification and  
18           sanctification in Jesus Christ, according to I Corinthians 6:11; and  
19           3. In light of the Biblical view of its sinfulness, a practicing  
20           homosexual continuing in this sin would not be a fit candidate for  
21           ordination or membership in the Presbyterian Church in America.  
22           ([http://pcahistory.org/ga/5th\\_pcaga\\_1977.pdf](http://pcahistory.org/ga/5th_pcaga_1977.pdf) p. 68).

23  
24          **Further**, that the 47<sup>th</sup> General Assembly reaffirm the declaration of the 21<sup>st</sup> PCA General  
25          Assembly:

26  
27          Therefore, the 21<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in  
28          America makes the following declaration: The Bible, which is our infallible  
29          rule of faith and practice, commands us to express redemptive love and  
30          compassion to all persons. It further commands us to condemn sexual  
31          behavior which deviates from God's revealed standard as sinful and  
32          destructive. The Bible calls all who engage in these behaviors to repentance  
33          by turning to God and proving their repentance by their deeds. The  
34          chaplains of the Presbyterian Church in America are committed to  
35          providing a compassionate, redemptive, and caring ministry to military  
36          service members, their families, and other groups among whom they are  
37          called to minister regardless of sexual behavior or the diseases with which  
38          their constituents may be afflicted. Therefore, Presbyterian Church in  
39          America chaplains endorsed by the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint  
40          Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel will continue to preach  
41          and minister in light of the whole counsel of God on these matters.  
42          ([http://pcahistory.org/ga/21st\\_pcaga\\_1993.pdf](http://pcahistory.org/ga/21st_pcaga_1993.pdf) pp. 94-95)

43  
44          **And further**, that the 47<sup>th</sup> General Assembly reaffirm the principles regarding the biblical  
45          teachings on homosexuality contained in the "A Declaration of Conscience Addressed

1 to the President of the United States of America" adopted by the 21st PCA General  
2 Assembly ([http://pcahistory.org/ga/21st\\_pcaga\\_1993.pdf](http://pcahistory.org/ga/21st_pcaga_1993.pdf), pp. 129-132). The letter  
3 said in part:  
4

5 Mr. President, in this Declaration the General Assembly of the Presbyterian  
6 Church in America humbly declares its conscience concerning the moral  
7 legitimacy of homosexuality. God has spoken without equivocation through  
8 His Word declaring homosexuality to be a perversion of His created order,  
9 His moral law, and the foundations of society....  
10

11 In particular, we feel compelled of conscience to speak because of the  
12 slanderous way in which truth has been portrayed, as if opposition to  
13 homosexual practice is merely a matter of prejudice against a minority.  
14 Please be informed that to act on this basis is to misjudge the issue entirely.  
15 This is a question of moral principle, striking at the very root of God's  
16 authority, man's created nature, and the structure and preservation of human  
17 society. We do not act out of a hateful prejudice which rejects the rights of  
18 minority peoples and seeks to exclude them from our communities. On the  
19 contrary, we affirm and rejoice in the God-created differences among the  
20 peoples of the world and we condemn prejudice as contrary to the heart of  
21 the gospel by which we live: that Jesus Christ is by His grace making of  
22 various peoples one community of love and fellowship. As His disciples we  
23 are called to judge, not by appearances, but to judge righteous judgment  
24 (John 7:24). The God we serve has made it plain that with Him there is no  
25 partiality, and that in this we must be like Him (Romans 2:11, James 2:1-9).  
26 As citizens we support the recognition and protection of the civil rights of  
27 all peoples.  
28

29 And yet in perfect consistency with this commitment we stand resolutely  
30 opposed to homosexual practice as incompatible with the temporal good of  
31 our nation and the eternal good of its people. As a part of the Church of  
32 Jesus Christ, the Presbyterian Church in America has a primary concern for  
33 the spiritual well-being of women and men created in the image of God.  
34 Responsibility to such a calling will thrust us into irreconcilable conflict  
35 with any government policy ostensibly approving a way of life under its  
36 sphere of responsibility which is contrary to the eternal good of its citizens.  
37 Further, such approval would be a grievous violation of the government's  
38 own God-ordained calling (Romans 13:1-4)....  
39

40 Together a man and a woman, united outwardly in the institution of  
41 marriage, united inwardly in love and affection, and united physically in  
42 sexual relations, are the means of transmitting and nurturing life, and that  
43 life, growing and flourishing in families, is the necessary foundation of all  
44 society. Homosexuality is a violation of these creation ordinances: it is a  
45 perversion of human nature, the gift of sexuality and the social order....

1 Here nature itself, the land personified, is portrayed as revolted by  
2 homosexuality as a perversion of God's purposes. Lest this be thought of as  
3 an outmoded and unenlightened perspective, the New Testament affirms  
4 this same truth with even greater clarity when it excludes, not merely from  
5 the land of Israel, but from the eternal Kingdom of God, those who pursue  
6 homosexual practice....  
7

8 Please note: in condemning homosexual practice we claim no self-  
9 righteousness. The Bible we cite also teaches that all particular sins flow  
10 from one rebellious disposition of heart, a disposition of heart that belongs  
11 to all (Ephesians 2:1- 3). If we have been preserved from this perversion, it  
12 is only by God's mercy. And that mercy in Jesus Christ is so broad and free  
13 that may extend even to those caught up in homosexual practice, freeing  
14 them from its bondage. In the same passage we cited above the Apostle  
15 reminds the Corinthian believers, "And such were some of you; but you  
16 were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of  
17 the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."....  
18

19 To conclude, while condemning homosexual practice, we affirm our duty  
20 to love and do good to all, even those who are pursuing this perversion. But  
21 for us such love includes the responsibility to speak the truth in love. The  
22 truth is that our nation will suffer grievously if accommodated to this  
23 perversion. More profoundly, however, the truth is that those given over to  
24 homosexual practice will face the judgment of God. We understand the  
25 gospel to teach that there is no hope for such persons until they see this truth,  
26 embrace it, and turn away from their perversion through the power of Jesus  
27 Christ. Thus love requires that we bear witness to their hopeless condition  
28 in order that they might find hope. Love forbids our silence in the face of  
29 the eternal consequences of believing a lie.  
30

31 **And further**, that the 47<sup>th</sup> General Assembly reaffirm the action of the 24<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:  
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33 We affirm the Bible's teaching that promotion of homosexual conduct and  
34 relationships by any society, including action by the governments to  
35 sanction and legitimize homosexual relationships by the legalization of  
36 homosexual marriages, is an abominable sin calling for God's judgment  
37 upon any such society (Lev. 18:22 and Rom. 1:18-32). We also reaffirm our  
38 belief in the transforming power of God's grace and our commitment to  
39 'speaking the truth in love' to those in the homosexual community.  
40 ([http://pcahistory.org/ga/24th\\_pcaaga\\_1996.pdf](http://pcahistory.org/ga/24th_pcaaga_1996.pdf), p. 315)  
41

42 **And further resolve**, to remind all PCA officers and churches:  
43

- 44 1. That all persons are born sinners justly deserving God's wrath and  
45 condemnation, and that outside of Christ all sinners are enslaved to

1 corruption which distorts their hearts and their understanding of God's  
2 created order.

3 2. That homosexuality is a sin according to God's Word, both in thought,  
4 attraction, and behavior.

5 3. That churches should actively seek to lead all sinners, including those  
6 enslaved in homosexuality, to repentance of their sin and to embrace  
7 Jesus Christ by faith as he is offered in the gospel, so they may find  
8 justification, sanctification, and their identity in Jesus Christ alone.

9 4. That long as those enslaved in homosexuality continue in this practice  
10 of sin, they are not be considered candidates for church membership or  
11 ordination in the Presbyterian Church in America.

12  
13 *Adopted by Savannah River Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 16, 2019*

14 *Attested by /s/ RE William Hatcher, stated clerk*