

1 **OVERTURE 45** from Missouri Presbytery (to AC, OC)
2 “Form an Ad Interim Committee to Seek Consensus on Doctrinal Boundaries
3 and Pastoral Care in the Current Debates About Sexuality”
4

5 **Whereas** there is great responsibility and opportunity, occasioned by the cultural moment, for
6 the church to be better equipped to announce and embody the gracious, dignifying
7 welcome and life-giving wisdom found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ to non-Christians
8 who live with homosexuality or experience unique manifestations of brokenness in
9 matters of gender and sexuality; and
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11 **Whereas** there is significant complexity to some important aspects of the theological,
12 pastoral, terminological, and missiological issues underlying homosexuality; and
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14 **Whereas** there is already significant disagreement and discord within the PCA with respect to:
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- 16 • approaches to pastoral care for Christians living with homosexuality; and
- 17 • the use of such terms as “sexual orientation,” “gay,” “sexual minorities,” “gay
18 Christian” and the “identity questions” it raises, etc., and whether such use constitutes
19 profound doctrinal or perhaps practical error, and ought to be soundly condemned and
20 censured or, on the other hand, tolerated, with proper caveats and qualifications; and
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22 **Whereas** doctrinal boundaries and pastoral applications of sensitive and/or controversial
23 issues are best made by deliberative and collaborative debate, study, conversation, and
24 consensus-building rather than by judicial fiat in investigations and trials, a principle
25 that was demonstrated to be so helpful in the case of the Ad-Interim Committee on
26 Divorce and Remarriage (1992) and the Ad-interim Committee on the Days of
27 Creation (2000); and
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29 **Whereas** the peace and purity of the church as well as *the integrity of and energy for the*
30 *mission of the church to our secular culture* is at stake in these current debates; and
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32 **Whereas** our Presbytery *ad hoc* committee appointed to investigate Memorial PCA’s hosting
33 of the 2018 Revoice conference, after giving careful consideration to the underlying
34 theological, pastoral, and missiological matters, recommended that we overture the
35 General Assembly for a further in-depth study/consensus-building committee for the
36 purpose of coming to greater doctrinal clarity in pursuit of a deeper church unity on
37 issues touching homosexuality;
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39 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 47th General Assembly create an Ad Interim Committee
40 (AIC) to study the topic of sexuality with particular attention to the issue of where the
41 church has failed in its ministry to same-sex-attracted men and women, and what the
42 church ought to be doing now in its ministry to them, while neither compromising the
43 gospel nor dulling the vitality of its message to lost people.
44

45 The committee is tasked with preparing a report which:

- 1 • Shall seek, as much as consciences permit, *to build a consensus on these difficult*
2 *matters* so as to secure a place, within trusted boundaries, for our wider church to
3 grow in their witness to Christ and live at peace with one another; and
4
- 5 • Shall address: (1) the nature of temptation, sin, and repentance as regards same-
6 sex-attraction; (2) the propriety of using terms like “gay,” “gay Christian” when
7 referring to a believer living with same-sex attraction; (3) The status of
8 "orientation" as a valid anthropological category; (4) the practice of “celibate
9 partnerships” and “romantic coupling” for same-sex-attracted Christians; and
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- 11 ○ Shall include suggested ways to articulate and defend a Biblical understanding
12 of homosexuality in the context of a culture that denies that understanding; and
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- 14 ○ Shall include an annotated bibliography of resources on sexuality which the
15 Committee recommends for helping pastors and Sessions shepherd their
16 people who live with same-sex attraction; and
17
- 18 ○ This Committee may:
19 a. report to the 48th GA in Birmingham (2020) any statement it adopts as a
20 Committee, without needing to move it for GA adoption.
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- 22 b. recommend to the 48th GA any statement it believes would be prudent and
23 warranted for the Assembly to adopt.
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25 **Be it further resolved** that the Moderator of the 47th General Assembly appoint the seven
26 voting members who shall be either PCA teaching or PCA ruling elders (at least two
27 of each kind), including members whose writings have included theological
28 engagement on the issue and members who have had pastoral interaction with those
29 struggling with same-sex attraction; and
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31 **Be it further resolved** that the Committee be permitted to recruit others, within the confines
32 of its budget, to serve as its advisors, regardless of denomination or gender, with
33 particular concern to secure those with experience in counseling those dealing with
34 same-sex attraction; and
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36 **Be it further resolved**, that, in addition to Scripture and the PCA *Confession of Faith* and
37 Catechisms, the Committee consider studies and statements of other bodies outside
38 and within the PCA (including, but not limited to, the Council on Biblical Manhood
39 and Womanhood’s “Nashville Statement”; the RPCNA’s “Contemporary Perspectives
40 on Sexual Orientation: A Theological and Pastoral Analysis”; the RPCES’ “Pastoral
41 Care for the Repentant Homosexual”; Missouri Presbytery’s “Homosexuality and the
42 Gospel of Grace: Faithfulness to the Lord’s Calling in an Age of Sexual Autonomy”
43 and “Missouri Presbytery Ad Hoc Committee to Investigate Memorial Presbyterian
44 Church for Hosting the Revoice 18 Conference in July 2018”; the statements on
45

1 homosexuality issued by the 5th, 24th, and 27th General Assemblies of the PCA and
2 the January 14, 2015, Report of the CMC Subcommittee on Homosexuality) and
3 resources recommended in those documents; and
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5 **Be it further resolved** that the budget for the study committee be set at \$15,000/year and that
6 funds be derived from gifts to the AC designated for that purpose; and
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8 **Be it further resolved** that the committee shall present its report to the 48th General
9 Assembly, meeting in Birmingham, Alabama in 2020; and
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11 **Be it further resolved** that the 47th GA authorize the GA Moderator to appoint the seven
12 voting members of this Committee, **the slate to be approved by the vote of the GA**
13 **before dismissal of the 47th GA**, per *RAO* 9-4 and *RAO* 19-1 (Robert's Rules, RONR,
14 11th ed., pp. 174-175, pp. 495-496, and p. 579).
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16 *Adopted by Missouri Presbytery at its called meeting on May 18, 2019.*

17 *Attested by /s/ TE Timothy R. Butler, stated clerk*