

1 **OVERTURE 46** from Hills and Plains Presbytery (OC)  
2 “Reaffirm PCA’s Commitment Regarding the Sanctity of Life and Our Stance  
3 Against Abortion in Particular”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the Word of God indicates that all human beings are created in the image of God  
6 (Genesis 1:26, 27) and therefore have great worth in God’s sight, and  
7

8 **Whereas**, God’s Word also indicates that human life is therefore of such value that to destroy  
9 that life for any reason other than that which God has prescribed, which is murder, is  
10 of such seriousness as to merit capital punishment (Genesis 9:5, 6), and  
11

12 **Whereas**, God has clearly indicated in his Word that murder is a sin against him, according  
13 to the moral law applicable to all times and circumstances, as codified in the tablets of  
14 stone known as the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17), and  
15

16 **Whereas**, the sin of abortion continues to be a common practice in our culture despite political  
17 and religious efforts to outlaw, restrict, and prevent it, and  
18

19 **Whereas**, our *Confession of Faith* indicates that it is proper and necessary for synods, “...by  
20 way of humble petition in cases extraordinary...” (WCF 31:4) to address matters  
21 which pertain to the civil magistrate, and  
22

23 **Whereas**, both the legalization of the murder of a helpless class, resulting in the loss of more  
24 than 51 million lives, and the forced subsidization of such by individuals opposed to  
25 it, constitute such an extraordinary case,  
26

27 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America  
28 officially, and on the basis of the inspired and authoritative Word of God, declare the  
29 following:  
30

31 We reaffirm our denomination’s commitment on this pertinent, prevalent issue  
32 regarding the sanctity of life and our stance against abortion in particular. We  
33 commend our denominational overtures, particularly  
34

- 35 1979 – Overture 7 - Revise Assembly’s statement on abortion
- 36 1980 – Overture 12 - Reaffirm original statement on abortion
- 37 1984 – Overture 14 - Adopt statement that a memorial service is Biblical and appropriate  
38 in cases of miscarriage
- 39 1989 – Overture 17 - Oppose research on transplantation of fetal tissue
- 40 1993 – Overture 25 - Protection of Life of the Unborn
- 41 1993 – Overture 41 - Exhort SBC to Continue Strong Stand Against Abortion
- 42 1999 – Overture 27 - Reaffirm the sanctity of life
- 43 2010 – Overture 28 - Sanctity of Life Resolution
- 44 2014 – Overture 43 - Expression of Support for Sanctity of Life and Marriage

45  
46 The content of these preceding overtures, which span years, and can be difficult to  
47 find, are compiled here, so as to be easy to reference.  
48

49 *Adopted by Hills and Plains Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 4, 2019*  
50 *Attested by /s/ RE Bill Boyd, stated clerk*

**Attachment**

**Overtures to Previous General Assemblies Regarding the Sanctity of Life**

**1979**

*15, North Georgia, to B&O, 7-8, B, p. 33; 7-37, III, 3, p. 97, Affirmative as amended, Revise Assembly's statement on abortion [M6GA, p. 72]*

**Overture 15.** From the Presbytery of North Georgia

Whereas, the Sixth General Assembly was of one mind in its general consideration of the abortion issue, but was divided on the question whether abortion might be justified if deemed necessary to save a woman's life,

Therefore, be it resolved that North Georgia Presbytery request the General Assembly to revise the Assembly's statement on abortion (*Minutes*, p. 72) to read as follows:

1. That because Scripture clearly affirms the sanctity of human life and condemns its arbitrary destruction, we affirm that the intentional killing of an unborn child between conception and birth (abortion) is clearly a violation of the Sixth Commandment in all cases except possibly that in which it appears that no other remedy will save the life of the mother. The Assembly is divided as to whether this case would justify abortion."

*Adopted unanimously at the Stated Winter Meeting of North Georgia Presbytery, January 20, 1979.*

*Attest: R. G. Valentine, Stated Clerk of North Georgia Presbytery*

Answered in the affirmative as amended. § 7-37, III, 3; p. 97.

**1979**

*18, Eastern Carolina, to B&O, 7-8, B, p. 33; 7-37, III, 3, p. 97, Answered by statement; refer to Overture 15, Amend 1978 statement on abortion*

**1979**

*33, Mid-Atlantic, to B&O, 7-8, B, p. 34; 7-37, III, 3, p. 97, Answered as amended; refer to Overture 15,*

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**1980**

*12, Evangel, to B&O, 8-7, B, p. 33; 8-69, III, 2, p. 97, Affirmative as amended, Reaffirm original statement [M6GA] on abortion*

**Overture 12:** From Evangel Presbytery

Whereas, the General Assembly, as a Court of Jesus Christ, should speak with a united voice in affirming the sanctity of human life under the protection of the Sixth Commandment,

Therefore Be It Resolved, that Evangel Presbytery overture the Eighth General Assembly to reaffirm its original statement on abortion: "That because Scripture clearly affirms the sanctity of human life and condemns its arbitrary destruction, we affirm that the

1 intentional killing of an unborn child between conception and birth, for any reason at  
2 any time, is clearly a violation of the Sixth Commandment. "

3  
4 Added to this statement are the following affirmations: "Concerning crisis pregnancies in  
5 which it appears that the premature removal of the unborn child from the mother is a necessary  
6 consequence of medical procedures essential to preserving the mother's life, we affirm that:  
7 The Sixth Commandment not only forbids the taking of innocent life for whatever reason, but  
8 also requires the preserving of innocent life wherever possible, The life of the mother as well  
9 as her child comes under the full protection of the Sixth Commandment and all moral medical  
10 wisdom and skill must be used to preserve her life as well as the life of her child.

11 *Attest: C. Gene Pjorks Stated Clerk*

12  
13 To say that we are ever placed in the position of choosing between two sins (killing the child  
14 or neglecting the preservation of the mother's life) is to surrender our belief in the Sovereign  
15 overruling providence of our All-wise and All-holy God (1 Cor. 10:13) and to allege that we  
16 must 'do evil that good may come' . . a philosophy clearly condemned by Scripture.

17  
18 An exception is not made even in the extremely rare case in which in the judgment of  
19 competent medical authorities, the unborn child's continuing presence inside the mother's  
20 body will necessarily lead to the mother's death, the premature removal of the unborn child  
21 may be justified, provided that all medical wisdom, judgment, and skill are used to preserve  
22 the life of the child as well as the life of the mother. This premature removal of the unborn  
23 child shall be at that juncture of time where the greatest possibility for recovery is indicated  
24 for both mother and child. If life is lost in such a case, and the death occurs not out of criminal  
25 negligence, but merely out of the limitations of human knowledge and skill, all has been done  
26 morally that could be done. If we cannot save both lives, we are nevertheless morally bound  
27 to save the life we can. "

28  
29 *Adopted this 22nd day of January, 1980, in meeting at the Oak Park Presbyterian Church,*  
30 *Montgomery, Alabama. Answered in the affirmative as amended. § 8-69, III, 2; p. 97.*

31  
32 **1980**

33 *27, Ascension, to B&O, 8-7, B, p. 33; 8-69, III, 3, p. 98, Refer to Overture 12, Affirm action*  
34 *of Sixth GA re: abortion*

35  
36  
37 **1984**

38 *09, Central Florida, to CJB, 12-10, B, p. 48; 12-53, II, 32, p. 134, Refer to Overture 14, In re:*  
39 *Services for worship for infants who do not survive premature birth*

40  
41 **1984**

42 *14, Westminster, to B&O, 12-10, B, p. 42; 12-31, III, 3, p. 102, Affirmative as amended, Adopt*  
43 *statement that a memorial service is Biblical and appropriate in cases of miscarriage*  
44  
45

1 **Overture 14:** From the Presbytery of Westminster

2 Whereas, the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the teaching of Scripture,  
3 has affirmed that human life begins at conception and continues both before and after  
4 birth (Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Abortion, adopted by the Sixth General  
5 Assembly); and

6 Whereas, miscarriage, as well as abortion, most often results in the death of a human being; and

7 Whereas, the loss of the life of an unborn child by miscarriage is often a definite source of  
8 grief and sorrow to the parents of the child; and

9 Whereas, funeral and memorial services are regularly conducted for the worship of God and  
10 the consolation of the living at the death of a loved one; and

11 Whereas, it has not generally been the practice in our churches to conduct memorial services  
12 at the time of miscarriages in which there are no physical remains of the child to be  
13 buried; and

14 Whereas, this issue which has long been neglected by the Church of Christ and which now,  
15 more than ever, should be addressed by the church in the light of Scripture;

16 Therefore, Westminster Presbytery respectfully overtures the Twelfth General Assembly to  
17 adopt the following statement: "In view of the Biblical teaching that life begins at  
18 conception, a memorial service, given to the glory of God and for the comfort of the  
19 bereaved, is Biblical and therefore appropriate in regard to miscarriage, and should be  
20 encouraged, regardless of the existence of physical remains available for burial."  
21

22 *Attest: Larry E. Ball, Stated Clerk*

23 *Answered in the affirmative as amended, 12-31, III, 3, p. 102.*  
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25  
26 **1989**

27 *23, Tennessee Valley, to B&O, 17-91, II, 5, p. 178, , Oppose research on transplantation of*  
28 *fetal tissue*  
29

30 **Overture 23** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery, "Oppose Research on Transplantation of  
31 Fetal Tissue"

32 Whereas National Institutes of Health (NIH), a federal agency under the Department of Health  
33 and Human Services is responsible for supporting the majority of health sciences  
34 research, and

35 Whereas NIH is in the process of deciding whether to lift the moratorium on the funding of  
36 fetal tissue research, and

37 Whereas NIH has accepted the unanimous recommendation from the Advisory Council to the  
38 Director, which states, according to the January 1989 issue of the *FASEB Newsletter*  
39 (the official newsletter of the Federation of American Societies of Experimental  
40 Biology), "The federal government should resume funding research on the therapeutic  
41 transplantation of fetal tissues from elective abortions as treatment for diabetes and  
42 Parkinson's disease," and

43 Whereas we, as members of the evangelical, Bible-believing denomination, The Presbyterian  
44 Church in America, believe that elective abortions are against the teaching of the  
45 Bible, and

1 Whereas we believe that the arguments to use fetal tissue obtained from elective abortions  
2 would be a seductive, though perhaps unintended, way to convince the general public  
3 that elective abortions are in the public interest if the tissues so obtained may be used  
4 for transplantations to relieve human suffering,  
5 Now therefore be it resolved that the Tennessee Valley Presbytery respectfully overture the  
6 17th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) to express its  
7 moral conviction to the executive and legislative branches of the federal government  
8 that such research using fetal tissue from *elective* abortions should not be allowed, and  
9 Be it further resolved that the General Assembly inform our congregations of these issues and  
10 encourage all members of the PCA to write their congressmen and senators informing  
11 them of their opposition.  
12

13 *Adopted at the Spring Stated Meeting of the Tennessee Valley Presbytery*

14 *Attest: J. Render Caines, Stated Clerk*  
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16  
17 **1993**

18 *39, Rocky Mountain, to B&O, 21-56, III, 25, p. 160, , Protection of Life of the Unborn*  
19

20 25. That Overture 39 from Rocky Mountain Presbytery be answered in the affirmative as  
21 amended.

22 *Adopted*

23 **OVERTURE 39** From Rocky Mountain Presbytery

24 "Protection of Life of the Unborn"

25 Whereas, Scripture teaches us the sacredness of human life (Genesis 9:6-7); and Whereas,  
26 Scripture teaches that human life begins at conception (Psalm 139:13-16) with God  
27 "having fashioned us in our mother's womb"; and Whereas, since 1973 a monstrous  
28 blight of abortion on demand has come upon our nation through the Supreme Court  
29 decision of *Roe v. Wade*-, and

30 Whereas, the Christian Church has had a long history of opposition to abortion (e.g., *Didache*,  
31 2.2); and

32 Whereas, the PCA has taken a consistent Christian position in opposition to abortion on  
33 demand (see e.g., *M6GA*, Appendix O, pp. 270-285, as well as subsequent GAs to the  
34 6th GA, that passed resolutions in opposition to abortion); and

35 Whereas, the Christian Church in this land is free to lawfully appeal and plead to her rulers  
36 for godly laws and precepts to be enacted, and contrariwise, to urge the repeal of  
37 ungodly laws; and

38 Whereas, President Clinton has enacted executive orders to further endanger the safety and  
39 sanctity of the unborn; and

40 Whereas, President Clinton has taken a public stand approving abortion on demand, despite  
41 the Christian Church's (including President Clinton's own Church) long and honorable  
42 support of the unborn;

43 Therefore, Be it Resolved that the 21st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in  
44 America prayerfully and respectfully urge President Clinton to do all in his power as  
45 Chief Executive of the United States of America (having been placed in that position

1 by God, Rom. 13:1-7) to protect the life of the unborn, for ultimately he must answer  
2 to Almighty God for the responsibilities to which he has been entrusted (2 Corinthians  
3 5:10) and that the Stated Clerk of the PCA communicate this to the President by means  
4 of this overture and the PCA's position paper on abortion."  
5

6 *Adopted at the Spring Stated Meeting of Rocky Mountain Presbytery on April 22, 1993.*

7 *Attested by: /s/ Lyle E. Lagasse Stated Clerk*  
8

9 **1993**

10 *41, South Texas, to B&O, 21-56, III, 27, p. 161, , Exhort SBC to continue strong stand against*  
11 *abortion*  
12

13 27. That Overture 41, from South Texas Presbytery be answered in the affirmative as amended:  
14 *Adopted*  
15

16 **OVERTURE 41** from the Presbytery of South Texas

17 "Exhort SBC to Continue Strong Stand Against Abortion" *Adopted*  
18

19 Whereas, the Bible declares that life begins at conception and therefore, that abortion is  
20 murder,

21 Whereas, the present administration of the federal government supports pro-abortion positions  
22 and practices;

23 Whereas, the Southern Baptist Convention has on numerous prior occasions taken a stance in  
24 opposition to abortion;

25 Therefore Let it Be Resolved that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in  
26 America exhorts our brothers in the Southern Baptist Convention to continue to take  
27 a Scriptural position concerning the value of human life and the atrocity of abortion  
28 and the responsibility of all Christian leaders to support human life issues.  
29

30 *Adopted by the Presbytery of South Texas on April 24, 1993.*

31 *Attested by: /s/ Irvin M. May Jr., Stated Clerk*  
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33 **1999**

34 *27, Philadelphia, to B&O, 27-44, III, 14, p. 175, Affirmative as amended, Reaffirm the sanctity*  
35 *of life*  
36

37  
38 That **OVERTURE 27** from the Presbytery of Philadelphia, "Reaffirm the Sanctity of Life,"  
39 be answered with this substitute: *Adopted as amended*  
40

41 The 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PCA reaffirms with united voice the sanctity of human life  
42 under the protection of the Sixth Commandment. And to that end,  
43

- 1 1. The Stated Clerk is requested to do the following:
  - 2 a. Remind all the churches and presbyteries of the continuing availability of its  
3 published report on the sanctity of Human Life adopted by the Sixth General  
4 Assembly.
  - 5 b. That his letter to the churches regarding the actions of the 27th General  
6 Assembly repeat recommendations 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 urging our churches and  
7 presbyteries to seek God’s enablement and grace to implement them in light of  
8 the continued tragedy of abortion on demand in America.
  - 9 c. Appoint someone to lead the Assembly in prayer for this issue at this time.
  - 10 d. Appoint a national PCA day of prayer and fasting for the ending of abortion to  
11 be held at an appropriate day in the year AD 2000, inviting NAE churches, our  
12 sister NAPARC churches and other approved PCA ministries and agencies to  
13 join with us.
- 14 2. That each of the PCA Presbyteries be urged to establish a pro-life committee to  
15 address the recommendations of the Sixth General Assembly Report on the  
16 Sanctity of Human Life among its constituent particular churches.

17  
18 RE Robert Brown led the Assembly in prayer regarding the sanctity of life issue  
19 NOTE: The following commissioners registered their negative note on Recommendation 14,  
20 especially item 6 - TE David F. Coffin Jr ; TE J. Paul Pynor, and TE Scott R. Wright  
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22  
23 **2010**  
24 *28, South Florida, to OC, 38-54, III, 4, p. 352, Affirmative as amended, Sanctity of Life*  
25 *Resolution*  
26

27 4. That **Overture 28** from South Florida Presbytery (“Sanctity of Life Resolution”) be  
28 answered in the affirmative as amended as follows (strike-through for deletions; underscore  
29 and bold for additions):  
30

31 Therefore be it resolved by the Presbyterian Church in America, that we will encourage all our  
32 members to immediately begin to approach professing Christians in all denominations:  
33

34 To join with the entire Body of Christ for the protection of the unborn, acting in  
35 solidarity with other denominations in prayer and obedience to God, by whose  
36 sovereign might alone the scourge of legalized abortion will be broken;  
37

38 To offer pastoral and practical care for those individuals affected by unplanned  
39 pregnancies or victimized by abortion;  
40

41 To speak prophetically against the culture of death, confronting it in the power of  
42 God’s truth;  
43

1 To proclaim ~~hold our culture accountable before~~ the binding and unchallengeable  
2 authority of God's Holy Word over every man, woman, institution, and nation, in  
3 every area of life;

4  
5 To lovingly call offending parties to repentance in Jesus Christ, and restoration by the  
6 Holy Spirit to new obedience;

7  
8 To declare ~~proclaim~~ the authoritative truth of God, both to our own members and in  
9 the public square, concerning God's righteous demands upon the judicial, legislative,  
10 and executive branches of our government at every level.

11  
12 The General Assembly instructs the Stated Clerk to communicate the substance of this  
13 overture to each presbytery, session and teaching elder of the PCA to further  
14 communicate to their congregations.

15  
16 so that as amended, the resolution reads:

17  
18 Therefore be it resolved by the Presbyterian Church in America, that we will encourage all our  
19 members to immediately begin to approach professing Christians in all denominations:

20  
21 To join with the entire Body of Christ for the protection of the unborn, acting in  
22 solidarity with other denominations in prayer and obedience to God, by whose  
23 sovereign might alone the scourge of legalized abortion will be broken;

24  
25 To offer pastoral and practical care for those individuals affected by unplanned  
26 pregnancies or victimized by abortion;

27  
28 To speak prophetically against the culture of death, confronting it in the power of  
29 God's truth;

30  
31 To proclaim the binding and unchallengeable authority of God's Holy Word over  
32 every man, woman, institution, and nation, in every area of life;

33  
34 To lovingly call offending parties to repentance in Jesus Christ, and restoration by the  
35 Holy Spirit to new obedience;

36  
37 To declare the authoritative truth of God, both to our own members and in the public  
38 square, concerning God's righteous demands upon the judicial, legislative, and  
39 executive branches of our government at every level.

40  
41 The General Assembly instructs the Stated Clerk to communicate the substance of this  
42 overture to each presbytery, session and teaching elder of the PCA to further  
43 communicate to their congregations.” *Adopted*



1 Grounds:

- 2 a) The Holy Spirit, speaking infallibly in Scripture, declares that human life is sacred, and  
3 that it begins at conception.  
4 b) This authoritative declaration by Almighty God makes the protection of all human life  
5 from the moment of conception to the moment of birth an inescapable moral duty for all  
6 men.  
7 c) The taking of the life of an unborn person is a violation of the sixth commandment, "Thou  
8 shall not murder," and is in fact premeditated murder.  
9 d) A considerable number of our elected and appointed government leaders want to make  
10 and keep legal the killing of the unborn for any and every reason.  
11 e) This assault on the unborn calls for a unified effort by Christians of all denominations to  
12 protect the unborn child from the moment of conception to the moment of birth and  
13 afterwards.  
14 f) Each and every person will one day stand before our sovereign God to give an account for  
15 his or her life, and whether or not that life was lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ,  
16 the Lord of life.

17  
18 **OVERTURE 28** from the South Florida Presbytery "Sanctity of Life Resolution"

19  
20 Whereas the Holy Spirit, speaking infallibly in Scripture, declares that human life is sacred,  
21 and that it begins at conception; and

22 Whereas this authoritative declaration by Almighty God makes the protection of all human  
23 life from the moment of conception to the moment of birth an inescapable moral duty  
24 for all men; and

25 Whereas the taking of the life of an unborn person is a violation of the sixth commandment,  
26 "Thou shall not murder," and is in fact premeditated murder; and

27 Whereas a considerable number of our elected and appointed government leaders want to  
28 make and keep legal the killing of the unborn for any and every reason; and

29 Whereas this assault on the unborn calls for a unified effort by Christians of all dominations  
30 to protect the unborn child from the moment of conception to the moment of birth and  
31 afterwards; and

32 Whereas each and every person will one day stand before our sovereign God to give an  
33 account for his or her life, and whether or not that life was lived under the Lordship of  
34 Jesus Christ, the Lord of life;

35 Therefore be it resolved by the Presbyterian Church in America, that we will encourage all our  
36 members to immediately begin to approach professing Christians in all denominations:

37  
38 To join with the entire Body of Christ for the protection of the unborn, acting in  
39 solidarity with other denominations in prayer and obedience to God, by whose  
40 sovereign might alone the scourge of legalized abortion will be broken;

41  
42 To speak prophetically against the culture of death, confronting it in the power of  
43 God's truth;

1 To hold our culture accountable before the binding and unchallengeable authority of  
2 God's Holy Word over every man, woman, institution, and nation, in every area of  
3 life;

4  
5 To lovingly call offending parties to repentance in Jesus Christ, and restoration by the  
6 Holy Spirit to new obedience;

7  
8 To proclaim the authoritative truth of God, both to our own members and in the public  
9 square, concerning God's righteous demands upon the judicial, legislative, and  
10 executive branches of our government at every level.

11  
12 *Adopted by the South Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 20, 2010*

13 *Attested by /s/ TE William N. Sofield, stated clerk*

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15  
16 **2014**

17 *43, Savannah River, to OC, 57, 66, 850, Negative, Expression of Support for Sanctity of Life*  
18 *and Marriage*

19  
20 **OVERTURE 43** from Savannah River Presbytery (to OC) "Expression of Support for  
21 Sanctity of Life and Marriage"

22  
23 Whereas the Bible states that when there is a conflict between God's Law and human law, we  
24 must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29), and Whereas the First Amendment of the  
25 U.S. Constitution specifically prohibits Congress from establishing any law  
26 "prohibiting the free exercise of religion," and

27 Whereas the environment for religious freedom worsens day by day in the United States, and  
28 Whereas some Christians today – including employers, chaplains, and others, must choose  
29 between being faithful to their Biblical convictions regarding the sanctity of human  
30 life and the sanctity of marriage, or face punitive federal government penalties, and

31 Whereas God calls His Church to bear prophetic witness to His Truth in human society, and  
32 Whereas the Presbyterian Church in America, of which the Savannah River Presbytery is a  
33 member, is on record regarding the sanctity of human life and of marriage in  
34 accordance with that Truth; therefore

35 Be it resolved that Savannah River Presbytery hereby go on record expressing its gratitude to  
36 and prayers for corporations, public and private for-profit and non-profit entities,  
37 chaplains and others who have taken a stand for the sanctity of human life, and to the  
38 Christian men and women in private businesses facing fines, penalties, and ostracism  
39 for declining out of religious conviction to provide their services for same-sex  
40 marriage ceremonies, and

41 Be it further resolved that Savannah River Presbytery call upon the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of  
42 the Presbyterian Church in America to adopt this resolution.

43  
44 *Adopted by Savannah River Presbytery at its Stated Meeting, April 15, 2014*

45 *Attested by/s/ RE William L Hatcher, stated clerk*