



48TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY | *Selected Acts & Deliverances, June 28-July 2, 2021*

1) Approved to be sent down for the advice and consent of the Presbyteries:¹

- Overture 5, amend BCO 20-4; 24-3; 24-4 regarding election of pastor, associate pastor, and officers.
- Overture 18, amend BCO 24-1 to clarify that a session has discretion on the timing of some parts of the exam of officer nominees (note: Ov. 6 was answered by reference to this action).
- Overture 22, amend BCO 32-20 regarding time considerations for offenses revised.
- Overture 23, as amended, to “amend BCO 16 by adding a clause which prohibits ordination for men who self-identify as ‘gay Christians,’ ‘same-sex attracted Christians,’ ‘homosexual Christians,’ or like terms”. See Appendix 1.
- Overture 26, amend BCO 10 to permit telecommunication meetings.
- Overture 31, amend BCO 22 process for assistant to associate pastor.
- Overture 33, amend BCO 38-1 re confession document for case without process.
- Overture 37, amend BCO 21-4 and 24-1 clarifying moral requirements for church office (note: Ovs. 16 and 30 were answered by reference to this action). See Appendix 1.

2) Declined Approval:

- Overture 1, amend BCO 8-7 regarding chaplains.
- Overture 10, amend RAO 15-6.s by adding new paragraphs dealing with the content of minority reports.
- Overture 15, amend RAO 11-2 to disallow electronic communications regarding voting at the General Assembly.
- Overture 27, amend BCO 36 to require public excommunication.

3) Adopted:

- Overture 9, amend RAO 15-6.s.2), 3) regarding the number of members of the overtures committee required to file a minority report.
- Overture 13, endorse Lifeline Children’s Services.
- Overture 14, revise MTW manual (note: Ov. 3 was answered by reference to this action).
- Overture 17, amend RAO 9-3 to clarify funding for Ad Interim Committees.
- Overture 38, to commend the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality (note: Ov. 16 was answered by reference to this action also). See Appendix 1.
- Overture 45, seek Asian American flourishing, was answered by reference to the General Assembly’s action on Overture 48; with the 48th General Assembly asking the Moderator to appoint an Asian American commissioner to lead the Assembly in a time of corporate prayer, on behalf of our Asian American brothers and sisters; and by taking note of the pastoral letter developed by Metro Atlanta and Metropolitan New York Presbyteries. See Appendix 3.
- Overture 46, seek Asian American flourishing, was answered by reference to the General Assembly’s action on Overture 45.
- Overture 48, repudiate anti-Asian racism, was answered by reference to the adoption of a declaration (note: Ovs. 45 was answered by reference to this action). See Appendix 3.

¹ Find the full text of the overtures at <http://www.pcaac.org/general-assembly/overtures/>

- The recommendation of the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault that the Committee be continued to the 49th GA. See Appendix 2.
- 4) Declined to adopt:
- Overture 24, reduce registration fee for Ruling Elders to \$250 (note: Ov. 39 was answered by reference to this action).
 - Overture 32, form study committee for Biblical ethics in digital media.
 - Overture 43, form study committee for Biblical ethics in digital media.
 - Overture 36, appoint study committee re White Supremacy.
 - Overture 47, form study committee on Critical Race Theory.
- 5) Referred back to Presbytery:
- Overture 12, amend *BCO* 31-2; 32-2 to clarify that investigation shall precede process.
 - Overture 28, amend *BCO* 31-2 to describe sequence of discipline investigation.
 - Overture 29, add *BCO* Appendix of investigation suggestions.
- 6) Referred to 49th GA:
- Overture 19, amend *BCO* 38-1 and 42-2 to allow appealing a censure in a case without process.
 - Overture 20, amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 on pre-trial non-disciplinary suspensions.
 - Overture 21, amend *BCO* 42-6 on vote required for maintaining censure during an appeal.
 - Overture 34, amend *BCO* 38-1 re confession timing for case without process.
 - Overture 35, amend *BCO* 38-1 re counsel for case without process.
 - Overture 40, amend *BCO* 32-13 and 35-5 to allow victim protection provisions.
 - Overture 41, amend *BCO* 35-1 to expand potential witness eligibility.

APPENDIX 1: Actions of the 48th General Assembly With Respect to Same-Sex Attraction

On Wednesday, June 30, the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality made its report to the Assembly. A link to the recording can be found here (the recording begins at 2:05:45):

<https://livestream.com/accounts/8521918/events/9731338/videos/222908335>

On a voice vote the Assembly answered Overture 38, to "Commend Human Sexuality Report" in the affirmative (vote in Overtures Committee, 124-3-0).

"Therefore be it resolved that the Calvary Presbytery hereby overtures the 48th General Assembly and asks it to declare the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality as a biblically faithful declaration and refer it to the Committee on Discipleship Ministries for inclusion and promotion among its denominational teaching materials."

GROUNDS: The PCA "Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality," is a biblically faithful work by gifted churchmen within the PCA. It is a most useful resource concerning the apologetic and pastoral task surrounding gender and sexuality confusion within the PCA and the broader culture.

The Assembly voted to answer Overture 23, to “Amend BCO 16 by Adding a Clause Which Prohibits Ordination for Men Who Self-Identify as ‘Gay Christians,’ ‘Same-sex Attracted Christians,’ ‘Homosexual Christians,’ or Like Terms” in the affirmative as amended. The vote was 1438-417.

The Overture as Received

BCO 17-4. Men who self-identify as a “gay Christian,” “same-sex attracted Christian,” “homosexual Christian,” or like term shall be deemed not qualified for ordination in the Presbyterian Church in America.

First vote: 88-38-2. Minority Report notice given

Committee reconvened. A revised main motion carried by a vote of 106-12-0. The Overture as Amended:

BCO 16-4 Officers in the Presbyterian Church in America must be above reproach in their walk and Christlike in their character. Those who profess an identity (such as, but not limited to, “gay Christian,” “same sex attracted Christian,” “homosexual Christian,” or like terms) that undermines or contradicts their identity as new creations in Christ, either by denying the sinfulness of fallen desires (such as, but not limited to, same sex attraction), or by denying the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, or by failing to pursue Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions are not qualified for ordained office.

The Assembly voted to answer Overture 37 “Amend BCO 21-4 and 24-1 Clarifying Moral Requirements for Church Office,” in the affirmative as amended. The vote was 1130-692. There was a Minority Report proposed as a substitute, but it failed 1,209-617. The Overture as Amended:

BCO 21-4 e. In the examination of the candidate’s personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potentially notorious concerns, such as but not limited to relational sins, sexual immorality (including homosexuality, child sexual abuse, fornication, and pornography), addictions, abusive behavior, racism, and financial mismanagement. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3; Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, he must not be known by reputation or self-profession according to his remaining sinfulness but rather by the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of the pastoral office, Presbyteries are encouraged to appoint a committee to conduct detailed examinations of these matters and to give prayerful support to candidates.

BCO 24-1. 24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the office of ruling elders and deacon in the following manner: . . .

In the examination of each nominee’s personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potentially notorious concerns, such as but not limited to relational sins, sexual immorality (including homosexuality, child sexual abuse, fornication, and pornography), addictions, abusive behavior, racism, and financial mismanagement. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. Each nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending upon this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5;

Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3; Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, he must not be known by reputation or self-profession according to his remaining sinfulness but rather by the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of church office, Sessions are encouraged to appoint a committee to conduct detailed examinations into these matters and to give prayerful support to nominees.

APPENDIX 2: Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

The 47th GA authorized the Moderator to appoint a seven-man Study Committee on the above-named subject, which Committee would include non-voting advisors, regardless of denominational affiliation or gender (five female advisors, all health professionals, or advocates, were appointed). The Committee was tasked to accomplish the following:

- a. The Committee shall prepare an annotated bibliography of resources the Committee endorses on topics related to child abuse and sexual assault, domestic abuse and sexual assault, and domestic oppression. The annotated bibliography should also include pastoral resources for the care of victims of these sins, as well as ministry and counsel for those overtaken by these sins.
- b. The Committee shall report regarding best practices and guidelines that could be helpful for elders, Sessions, Presbyteries, and agencies for protecting against these sins and for responding to them. However, no practice, policy, or guideline will be proposed for adoption or approval. It is simply information, which shall not be binding or obligatory in any sense.
- c. The Committee may recommend to the 48th GA any statement(s) it believes would be prudent and warranted for the Assembly to adopt.

APPENDIX 3: On anti-Asian Racism

Overture 48 calling for the repudiation of anti-Asian racism was answered by the adoption of the following declaration:

The Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Racial and Ethnic Reconciliation to the 46th General Assembly speaks clearly both to the reality of the *Imago Dei* in all people and to the sin of racism, particularly when it affirms:

- a) the vision of the redeemed in Revelation 7:9-11, where all nations and ethnicities are fulfilled in Christ;
- b) the image of God reflected in all people; and
- c) the image of Christ reflected in His body. (*M46GA*, Appendix V *passim*, but especially p. 599.)

At the same time, we recognize the pain, and, at times, violence, that the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community has experienced, particularly due to events of the past year. We express our grief together with our AAPI brothers and sisters over the pain and suffering that has occurred, whether this has happened due to unbiblical religious claims, racist pride, or any other cause.

We, finally, assure our AAPI brothers and sisters of our love and support, and of our desire to walk together in ways that reflect the commitments of the Racial Reconciliation Report.