

1 **OVERTURE 24** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery
2 “A Call for PCA Renewal”
3

(to AC)

4 **Whereas**, the “PCA Strategic Plan” is a well-intentioned effort by the Cooperative Ministries
5 Committee to address some of the perceived downward trends in the *Presbyterian*
6 *Church in America*; and
7

8 **Whereas**, these apparent problems include a decline in membership, disunity and non-
9 cooperation, and a lack of vision for twenty-first century missions; and
10

11 **Whereas**, the framers of this “Strategic Plan” have worked diligently to set forth a proposal
12 that they believe will make the PCA a stronger, healthier denomination; and
13

14 **Whereas**, many will join with us in believing that the “PCA Strategic Plan” is misguided in
15 its program for spiritual renewal, and view the downward trends in our denomination
16 as having less to do with the various factors described in the “Strategic Plan,” and
17 more a consequence of our unwillingness, as elders, to give ourselves wholeheartedly
18 to what God, in His Word, has promised to bless for the health and extension of His
19 kingdom; and
20

21 **Whereas**, while some may view these strategic proposals as leading the PCA towards a
22 stronger future, many others will be uncomfortable with this strategy, believing that
23 lasting spiritual renewal can come only through the outwardly foolish and weak
24 means to which God has attached His saving promises; and
25

26 **Whereas**, the “PCA Strategic Plan,” among others things, seeks to cultivate spiritual
27 renewal in the PCA by promoting “safe places” for theological discussion, “more
28 seats at the table” of denominational development for women, young people, and
29 minorities, and a closer working relationship with the “Global Church” in the area of
30 missions; and
31

32 **Whereas**, the various committees already have the ability to sponsor “safe” discussions
33 (these have been occurring for years in General Assembly and presbytery forums and
34 seminars), and the nominating process has an adequate method of recommending
35 seats at various tables; thus, short of specific *BCO* amendments, any merited aspects
36 of these targets may already be pursued; and
37

38 **Whereas**, presbyteries, sessions, and other regional conferences—instead of by a top-down
39 committee process—are the prime places for healthy discussion and for the
40 generation of methods to improve our corporate life, and frequently do so with less
41 vested interests; and
42

43 **Whereas**, some believe this “Strategic Plan” will create even further division in the PCA;
44 and

1 **Whereas**, the greatest and most urgent need of the *Presbyterian Church in America* is not a
2 complex strategy, but a clarion call to renew our avowed commitment to the Biblical,
3 Reformed, Confessional, and Presbyterian Faith - a system of doctrine which has, for
4 centuries, cultivated God-glorifying unity, humility, worship, spiritual/numerical
5 growth, mission, service, sacrifice, giving, and cooperation all over the world; and
6

7 **Whereas**, our present need as a denomination is to rekindle our commitment to foundational
8 Reformed doctrine *and* practice, reflected, in part, in the seventeen points listed
9 below; and
10

11 **Whereas**, it is our conviction that a faithful implementation of these biblical doctrines *and*
12 practices into the life and ministry of our presbyteries and churches will yield an
13 abundance of spiritual fruit; and
14

15 **Whereas**, renewal *on God's terms* cannot - and will not - fail;

16
17 **Therefore**, the Northwest Georgia Presbytery, meeting on May 22, 2010, overtures the 38th
18 General Assembly to call all its congregations and presbyteries to this simple,
19 straightforward, unambiguously biblical call for renewal as an alternative to the
20 complex and potentially divisive "PCA Strategic Plan," except for the funding
21 proposal already presented by the Administrative Committee, which this overture
22 wishes neither to condemn nor support. And let us trust that in the coming years God
23 will enable us, by His Spirit, to faithfully employ the spiritual means that He Himself
24 has already provided us.
25

26 **17 Points for PCA Renewal**

27

28 A renewed commitment to the centrality of the God-ordained, efficacious means of exegetical,
29 Christ-centered, application-filled, expository preaching (Is. 55:10-11; Ez. 37:1-10; Jn.
30 21:15-17 Mk. 1:38; Acts 2:42; 20:26-27; I Cor. 1:22-25; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; WLC 67, 154-5).
31

32 A renewed commitment to the centrality of the God-ordained, efficacious means of baptism
33 and the Lord's Supper (Gen. 17:9-11; Ex. 12; Mt. 26:26-29; 28:19; I Cor. 10:16-17; 11:17-34;
34 Col. 2:11-15; I Pet. 3:21; Rev. 19:6-9; WLC 154; 161-177).
35

36 A renewed commitment to the centrality of the God-ordained means of private, family and
37 corporate prayer (Ps. 63; Mt. 6:5-15; Mk. 1:35; Acts 6:4; Eph. 1:15-23; Phil. 1:9-11; I Thess.
38 5:17; I Tim. 2:1; WLC 154; 178-196).
39

40 A renewed commitment to - and delight in - the Lord's Day (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11;
41 Is. 58:13-14; Mk. 2:23-28; Jn. 20:1; 19; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10; WCF 21).
42

43 A renewed commitment to worship on God's terms, according to Scripture (Ex. 20:4-6;
44 Lev. 10:1-3; Deut. 12:32; Jn. 4:23-24; Acts 2:42; Col. 2:18-23; Heb. 10:24-25; 12:28-29;
45 WCF 21.1).
46

47 A renewed commitment to private, family, and public worship (Ps. 63; Mt. 6:6, 16-18;
48 Neh. 1:4-11; Dan. 9:3-4; Deut. 6:4-6; Eph. 6:1-4; Ps. 100:4; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10: 24-25;
49 WCF 21.5-6).

1 A renewed commitment to wed our missiology to Reformed ecclesiology (Mt. 28:18-20;
2 Acts 14:19-23; 15:1-41; 20:17, 28; I Cor. 11:17-34; The Pastoral Epistles; Titus 1:5; *WCF*
3 25; 30-31).
4

5 A renewed commitment to loving, Word-and-Spirit-dependent, prayerful, and courageous
6 evangelism (Mt. 5:13-16; 28:18-20; Acts 4:1-13; I Peter 3:15-16; WLC 154-7).
7

8 A renewed commitment to biblical church discipline (Mt. 18:15-20; I Cor. 5:1-13; 11:27-29;
9 II Thess. 3:6, 14-15; I Tim. 5:20; WLC 45; *WCF* 30).
10

11 A renewed commitment to biblical diaconal ministry (Acts 6:1-7; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8-13).
12

13 A renewed commitment to catechize our covenant children in our homes and churches
14 (Deut. 6:4-6; Prov. 22:6; Mk. 10:13-16; Eph. 4:12-13; 6:1-4; WSC).
15

16 A renewed commitment to biblical masculinity and femininity (Gen. 2:18-25; Deut. 31:6-7;
17 Prov. 31:10-31; I Cor. 16:13; I Peter 3:1-7; Eph. 5:22-33; I Tim. 2:11-15; WLC 17).
18

19 A renewed commitment to entrust the leadership of the Church into the hands of the ordained
20 leadership (Jn. 21:15-17; I Tim. 5:17; Heb.13:17; I Pet. 5:1-3; WLC 45).
21

22 A renewed commitment to the Reformed Confession which we have avowed, before God
23 and men, to promote and defend as our system of doctrine (I Tim. 6:12; Heb. 4:14; 10:23;
24 Jude 3; Westminster Standards).
25

26 A renewed commitment to the mortification of sin and worldliness (Rom. 6:11-14; 8:13;
27 12:1-2; I Cor. 6:12; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:20-24; I John 2:15-17; Gal. 6:14; WLC 76-7).
28

29 A renewed commitment to the doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith alone,
30 in Christ alone, apart from works of the law (Gen. 15:6; Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26;
31 4:1-5; 5:1; Gal. 2:15-16; 3:10-14; Phil. 3:1-11; *WCF* 11).
32

33 A renewed commitment to rest, by faith, in Christ alone for salvation, *without* minimizing
34 Gospel obedience (i.e. the third use of the law) / (Rom. 1:5; 6:1-2; 8:5-8; II Cor. 7:1; Col.
35 1:28; Eph. 4:1; 5:1-21; Phil. 3:12; I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 12:14; I John 5:3; *WCF* 19.5-7).
36

37 Furthermore, rather than having the Cooperative Ministries Committee propose additional
38 structural changes, let us adopt this plan for renewal (reflected in the seventeen points
39 above) asking our presbyteries and sessions, who are the best originators of denominational
40 change, to study, discuss and implement it. Accordingly, this overture asks our appropriate
41 elected leaders to represent and publicize this to our churches in writing or in counsel as the
42 action of the 38th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America. By taking this
43 action, we, as elders, intend to send a clear and simple message to our churches, presbyteries,
44 General Assembly, and the world, that the PCA will seek spiritual renewal on God's terms,
45 trusting solely in His sovereign wisdom and grace.
46

47 *Adopted by Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its called meeting, May 22, 2010*

48 *Attested by /s/ TE Michael Brock, stated clerk*