

1 **OVERTURE 4** from Missouri Presbytery (to OC)
2 “Confession of Sin and Commitment to Racial and Ethnic Diversity”
3

4 **Whereas**, the 43rd General Assembly considered a personal resolution on Civil Rights
5 Remembrance and deferred action on it until the 44th General Assembly meeting in
6 Mobile, Alabama; and
7

8 **Whereas**, in the 1973 “Message to All the Churches,” the founding generation of the
9 Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) expressly declared our denomination to be
10 the “continuing church” of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS),
11 saying, “We have called ourselves ‘Continuing’ Presbyterians because we seek to
12 continue the faith of the founding fathers of that Church”; and
13

14 **Whereas**, a “continuing church” inherits not only the faith of the predecessor organization,
15 but also the larger history of the Church from which its descends, whether that
16 history is honorable or dishonorable; and
17

18 **Whereas**, the members of the PCA are increasingly aware that during the Civil Rights
19 period, many of our founding denominational leaders and churches not only failed to
20 support, but also actively worked against racial reconciliation in both church and
21 society through sins of commission and omission, including: barring African
22 Americans from worship services; misusing and twisting the Bible to support racial
23 segregation; participating in and defending white supremacist organizations; and
24 failing to speak out against state-supported segregation and to support efforts to
25 secure access to basic human and civil rights; and
26

27 **Whereas**, the 30th General Assembly adopted a resolution on racial reconciliation that
28 confessed “covenantal, generational, heinous sins” connected with unbiblical forms
29 of servitude, but did not deal specifically with the covenantal, generational, heinous
30 sins committed during the much more recent Civil Rights period, which betrayed the
31 visible unity of all believers in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22), the command to love our
32 neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31), and the image of God in all people (Genesis
33 1:27); and
34

35 **Whereas**, the 32nd General Assembly adopted a pastoral letter on “the Gospel and Race,”
36 but in doing so, adopted a statement that did not directly acknowledge our sins
37 against African Americans that many of our founding leaders and churches displayed
38 during the Civil Rights period; and
39

40 **Whereas**, our denomination’s unwillingness to speak truthfully about our failure to seek
41 justice and to love mercy during the Civil Rights period significantly hinders
42 present-day efforts for reconciliation with our African American brothers and sisters
43 and their participation in the PCA; and

1 **Whereas**, the General Assembly recognizes that the sins of racism and racial injustice—not
2 only toward African Americans, but also toward other racial minorities—are not
3 simply past sins, but continue to be sins with which our churches and congregants
4 wrestle; and
5

6 **Whereas**, God has once more given the PCA a gracious opportunity to show the beauty,
7 grace, and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through confession and through the
8 fruits of repentance: such as, clarity that racism is a sin requiring formative and
9 corrective discipline; growing into cultural intelligence regarding minority cultures;
10 establishing interracial friendships and partnerships inside and outside our
11 denomination; renewing our church’s commitment to develop minority leadership at
12 the congregational, presbytery, and denominational levels; and encouraging a
13 denomination-wide vision for and commitment to a more racially and ethnically
14 diverse church in the next twenty years;
15

16 **Be it therefore resolved**, that the 44th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in
17 America does recognize and confess our church’s covenantal and generational
18 involvement in and complicity with racial injustice inside and outside of our
19 churches during the Civil Rights period; and
20

21 **Be it further resolved**, that this General Assembly also confesses our continued sins of
22 racism and failure to love brothers and sisters from minority cultures in accordance
23 with what the Gospel requires; and
24

25 **Be it further resolved**, that this General Assembly recommits itself to bear fruit in keeping
26 with our repentance, seeking appropriate courses of action and reconciliation
27 humbly, sincerely, and expeditiously, for the glory of God and the furtherance of the
28 Gospel; and
29

30 **Be it finally resolved**, that the General Assembly urges the congregations and presbyteries
31 of the Presbyterian Church in America to study this action as well as the PCA
32 position paper on the Gospel and Race, to confess their own particular sins and
33 failures regarding racial injustice as may be appropriate, and to seek to bring forth
34 fruits of repentance for the Gospel’s sake within their own local communities.
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36 *Adopted by Missouri Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 20, 2015.*

37 *Attested by /s/ TE David R. Stain, stated clerk*