

1 **OVERTURE 32** from Central Indiana Presbytery (to OC, AC)
2 “Form Study Committee for Biblical Ethics in Digital Media”
3

4 **Whereas**, Jesus desires his church to be “sanctified in the truth” (John 17:17); and
5

6 **Whereas**, the ninth commandment forbids bearing false witness against another (Exodus
7 20:13); and
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9 **Whereas**, our confessional standards thoroughly outline what is required (WLC 144) and
10 forbidden (WLC 145) by the ninth commandment; and
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12 **Whereas**, the Westminster divines wrote before the age of the internet, social media, and
13 other forms of rapid digital communication; and
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15 **Whereas**, these forms of communication are increasingly prevalent in our churches; and
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17 **Whereas**, new forms of communication create new opportunities both to advance the
18 Kingdom of God and to violate God’s commandments; and
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20 **Whereas**, there has been growing concern among PCA elders regarding online gossip and
21 slander, especially in areas of controversy and debate; and
22

23 **Whereas**, pastors, elders, and those they shepherd need wisdom to apply God’s eternal word
24 to contemporary questions about digital speech and communication;
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26 **Therefore, be it resolved** that Central Indiana Presbytery hereby overtures the 48th General
27 Assembly of the PCA to form an Ad-Interim Committee to study and report on:

- 28 1) How the ninth commandment applies to digital forms of communication (such as
29 blogs, social media, public and private online groups, and other developing
30 technologies).
- 31 2) Biblical and confessional teaching regarding godly speech, charitable debate, and
32 wisdom in discerning truth from falsehood.
- 33 3) Pastoral guidance on how to address questions of public concern without
34 unintentionally spreading false or misleading information, or disparaging the
35 good name of others.
- 36 4) Distinctions between private and public offenses (BCO 29-2, 29-4, 34-3), when
37 private online groups with substantial membership are increasingly common.
- 38 5) Practical steps for accountability and discipline; that our members might be
39 edified, and our officers remain “above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:2).
- 40 5) Should the findings of the study committee warrant BCO changes, the study
41 committee will propose such changes for the General Assembly to consider.
42

43 **Be it further resolved** that the moderator of the 48th General Assembly appoint the seven
44 voting members who shall be either PCA teaching or PCA ruling elders; and

1 **Be it further resolved** that the Committee be permitted to recruit others, within the confines
2 of its budget, to serve as its advisors, regardless of denomination or gender; and

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4 **Be it further resolved** that the budget for the study committee be set at \$15,000 and that
5 funds be derived from gifts to the AC designated for that purpose; and

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7 **Be it further resolved** that the committee shall present their findings and recommendations
8 to the 49th General Assembly.

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10 *Adopted by Central Indiana Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 12, 2021*

11 *Attested by /s/ TE Ben Reed, stated clerk*