



VOLUME 2
SPECIAL GA EDITION

THE PRESBYTERIAN
PLUMB LINE

The Presbyterian Plumb Line is an online journal published four times a year and designed to biblically inform the Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church about issues that impact our ability to govern under Christ’s authority and faithfully shepherd the flock.

We strive to provide content that is accessible, firmly rooted in God’s Word, spiritually guided, and committed to the highest standards of truth. Through viewpoint and observation, news items, sermons, book reviews, and other material, we seek to lead our denomination toward a more biblical expression of our Presbyterian conviction: that biblically informed elders, seeking the mind of Christ in the courts of the Church, is the most faithful way to align with God’s plumb line.

The editors welcome all inquiries to info@presbyterianplumbline.org.

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46th General Assembly Voter's Guide to AIC Report

By the Plumb Line Editorial Board

The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) has announced that the Ad Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination (AIC) report will come to the floor on Thursday, June 18. The AIC's proposed amendments to the Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality and the Position Paper on Human Sexuality will be presented in the morning business session. The AIC's proposed Book of Government Amendment (46-28) will be presented at the beginning of the afternoon session.

Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality

Motion [GA46-27](#)¹ recommends amending the EPC's Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality to open the door to the ordination of celibate homosexuals.

Recommendation: Vote against this recommendation; **Vote NO to GA46-27.**

Position Paper on Human Sexuality

Motion [GA46-26](#)² recommends amending the EPC Position Paper on Human Sexuality so that the position of the EPC opens the door to the ordination of celibate homosexuals. Approving the AIC amendment to Position Paper on Human Sexuality *will also* revise and replace the current Position Papers on Homosexuality and on the Sanctity of Marriage

Recommendation: Vote against this recommendation; **Vote NO to GA46-26.**

Book of Government

Motions [GA46-28](#)³ and [GA46-30](#)⁴ recommend amending sections 9.3.A. and 9.3.B., and 12.2, 12.3, and 12.6 (respectively) of the EPC's Book of Government.

Recommendation: Vote against the approval of both **GA46-28 and GA46-30; Vote NO.**

Explanation and Procedure to accomplish this result:

- EXPLANATION: Five Presbyteries' overtures amending Book of Government 9-3.A. to close the door on the ordination of celibate homosexuals are [GA46-41](#),⁵ [GA46-43](#),⁶ [GA46-45](#),⁷ [GA46-47](#),⁸ and [GA46-49](#).⁹
- PROCEDURE: When GA46-28 is presented (the AIC amendment to Book of Government 9-3), [GA46-41](#)¹⁰ will be moved as a substitute motion.

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Recommendations:

1. Vote to approve an unamended GA46-41 (or any unamended consolidation of GA46-41, GA46-43, GA46-45 and GA46-47). **Vote YES to GA46-41.**
2. Should any unfriendly substitution or amendment be attached to GA46-41, vote against that substitute or amendment.
3. In the event that GA46-41 is not approved, Vote against the approval of GA46-28; **Vote NO to GA46-28.**

Recommendation: Vote against the approval of AIC Amendment to Book of Government 12, GA46-30; **Vote NO to GA46-30.**

Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) Rulings Against the Five Overtures

Note that the PJC report may come to the floor *before* the AIC report.

The PJC will ask the GA to consider its Majority Report finding that the five overtures to amend BoG 9-3A (GA46-41, GA46-43, GA46-45, GA46-47 and GA46-49) are not constitutional in that they do not pass the “3 C’s test” of clarity, consistency, and compatibility.

Recommendations: Support the PJC Minority report that will be moved as a substitute when the PJC report is presented to the floor. The PJC Minority report finds that the five overtures are constitutional and do pass the “3 C’s test.” **Vote YES to the PJC Minority Report** that begins on page 15 within GA 46-40.¹¹

Recommendations: Should the Minority report not be approved, Vote against approval of the PJC Majority reports (GA46-40, GA46-42, GA46-44, GA46-46 and GA 46-48); **Vote NO to the PJC Majority Reports** concerning G.9-3A.

Position Papers on Homosexuality and The Sanctity of Marriage

Motion GA46-32¹² is the overture from Pacific Northwest Presbytery to re-affirm the Position Papers on Homosexuality and on the Sanctity of Marriage and restore them on the EPC website.

Recommendation: Vote to approve Ascending Overture (GA46-32); **Vote YES.**

¹ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/IndividualPagesMattersReceivedReferred/36-46-27-SSA-Recommendation-Pastoral-Letter-Edits-Comparisson-zb2-6-4-2026.pdf>

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² <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/IndividualPagesMattersReceivedReferred/35-46-26-SSA-Recommendation-Position-Paper-Edits-Comparisson-zb-3-6-5-2026.pdf>

³ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/CommitteeReportAttachments/37-46-28-SSA-Recommendation-BOG-9-3-zb-6-5-2026.pdf>

⁴ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/CommitteeReportAttachments/SSA-Recommendation-BOG-12-22.pdf>

⁵ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/IndividualPagesMattersReceivedReferred/50-46-41-PNW-Overture-G.9-3A-zb.pdf>

⁶ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/IndividualPagesMattersReceivedReferred/52-46-43-CCP-Overture-G.9-3A-zb.pdf>

⁷ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/IndividualPagesMattersReceivedReferred/54-46-45-FCP-Overture-G.9-3A-zb.pdf>

⁸ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/IndividualPagesMattersReceivedReferred/56-46-47-NRP-Overture-G.9-3A-zb.pdf>

⁹ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/IndividualPagesMattersReceivedReferred/58-46-49-West-Overture-G.9-3A-zb.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/Ascending-Overtures/PNW-Overture-to-the-46th-GA.pdf>

¹¹ <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/CommitteeReportAttachments/PJC-Report-PNW-9-3A-Overture-for-publication-FINAL.pdf>

¹² <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/2-What-We-Do/2-General-Assembly-Meeting/2026/Ascending-Overtures/PNW-Ascending-Overture.pdf>

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Clarity not Compromise: 7 Reasons to Vote Against the AIC Report

By the Plumb Line Editorial Board

Should the EPC ordain celibate homosexuals? Instead of resolving this issue, the AIC report has created confusion, discord, and division. Despite mountains of feedback imploring them to align this report with Scripture and our doctrinal and constitution standards, the AIC has given us a report that opens the door to celibate homosexual ordination. For this reason, we recommend that the report be rejected in all its parts: the revised Position Paper on Human Sexuality, the revised Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality, and the recommended Book of Government amendments.

If the AIC Report is adopted, the EPC will be headed down the path of compromise on homosexuality that has led to the ruin of all the mainline Protestant denominations. Instead of compromise and confusion, the church needs to speak clearly and say “no” to any form of homosexual ordination.

In good conscience, faithfulness to Christ, and obedience to Scripture, we urge you to vote down the AIC report. Below, we offer seven reasons why the AIC report should be rejected:

1. The AIC Report Rejects the Use of Biblical Language

Instead of using Biblical terms for homosexuality such as sodomy, unnatural desire, and dishonorable passions, the AIC report uses the term “Same-Sex Attraction” which comes not from the Bible but from our contemporary culture. The AIC report attempts to distinguish homosexuality from same-sex attraction. However, the Bible recognizes no such distinction. For the AIC to claim that same-sex attraction and homosexuality are not the same thing is deceptive, and invents a distinction that is not valid biblically, confessionally or legally. Instead of using clear Biblical language, the AIC report resorts to false and misleading euphemisms. Once you substitute the word “homosexual” for “same-sex attraction,” the AIC report is exposed as unbiblical and unorthodox.

The AIC employs similar verbal sleight of hand by using phrases such as “latent propensity” and “proclivity” to argue that same sex attraction is not sin. The Bible makes no room for such sophistry. All desire for sexual relations outside of biblical marriage is sin and immoral according to Scripture. Sexual lusts and acts are equally sinful in Jesus’ ethic (Matthew 5:27-30). When we use unbiblical language, it leads to unbiblical conclusions, as we see with the AIC report.

2. The AIC Report Misinterprets Romans 1:26-27

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Romans 1:26-27 is the most clear and transparent passage on homosexuality in the entire Bible. The gay Christian movement has been trying to explain away these verses for 50 years, and it is tragic to observe the AIC also attempting to do this.

The Westminster Larger Catechism asserts that “sodomy and all unnatural lusts” are sins forbidden in the seventh commandment (L.C. Q. 139). The Biblical proof texts for “sodomy and all unnatural lusts” are Romans 1:24 and 26-27, and Leviticus 20:15-16. Clearly, in the minds of the Westminster Divines “unnatural lusts” only refers to both homosexual lusts and bestiality. This is undoubtedly the case, since the language of “contrary to nature” (i.e., “unnatural”) comes directly from Romans 1:26. And yet, the AIC claims that “unnatural” refers to all the sins listed in Romans Chapter 1. In this misinterpretation, the AIC is going against 2,000 years of Biblical scholarship and orthodox belief.

3. The AIC Report Violates the Westminster Larger Catechism

The AIC argues that all sins are equal, that homosexuality is no more evil than other sins. However, this is contradicted in the Westminster Standards. The Westminster Larger Catechism addresses this issue in L.C.Q. 150:

“Are all transgressions of the law of God equally heinous in themselves, and in the sight of God?”

Answer:

“All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.”

The following question (L.Q.151) addresses aggravations which make some sins more evil in the sight of God. One aggravation is “from the nature and quality of the offence” and under this category the catechism has a list of offenses including those “against the light of nature” (L.C.Q.151.3). The lone proof text for “against the light of nature” is Romans 1:26-27 — homosexuality. In other words, homosexuality is a heinous sin.

Homosexual lusts are more grievous than heterosexual lusts because they violate God’s created order. God has ordained only one expression of sexual desire and that is between married men and women. Homosexuality is not only evil and immoral, but contrary to God’s design for creation. And yet, the AIC report makes no reference to L.C.Q. 151 anywhere in its report.

Apparently, the AIC was not interested in what the constitution has to say about homosexuality when it would prevent the goal of ordaining celibate homosexuals. While heterosexual desire has

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the capacity to be stewarded faithfully; same sex desires can never be stewarded faithfully; homosexual desire is always grievous sin and never has any godly purpose.

4. The AIC Report Distorts the Doctrine of Sanctification

The Westminster Confession chapter 13 contains this climatic final paragraph:

“Although the old nature temporarily wins battles in this warfare, the continual strengthening of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables the regenerate nature in each believer to overcome. And so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (WCF. 13.3)

Growing in grace by the sanctifying Spirit of Christ would be an expectation of anyone aspiring to be a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Teaching Elder in a Presbyterian congregation. How could a professing Christian claiming a gay identity and/or ongoing unnatural sexual desires claim to be experiencing *“true wholeness through the freeing, renewing grace of God in Jesus Christ”*? Christ indeed sets us free, which is what the new birth is all about. A Christian brother or sister with continuing struggles in understanding their sexuality biblically is not suitable to be a Deacon, Elder, or Pastor. Members of our Christian family with persistent sexual confusion need love and discipleship, not the recklessness of ordination for leadership.

The AIC response to this critique is to cry “Perfectionism!” This is a diversion to obfuscate the issue. No one has ever claimed perfection is a requirement for ordination. Here is the answer provided by *A Red Line on Ordination and Same-Sex Attraction in the EPC*:¹

“... spiritual leadership in Christ’s church must not only affirm sound doctrine but also embody it. Their lives are to be shaped by increasing conformity to Christ and maturity in godliness (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1).”

“We acknowledge that believers come from many backgrounds, including sexual brokenness, and we rejoice in the sanctifying work of the Spirit that brings genuine healing over time. However, ordination demands evidence of progress in sanctification and the ability to serve as a model for the flock.”

“But ordination must be reserved for those who have borne fruit in keeping with repentance and who exhibit maturity in sexual holiness. This includes those who, if they once struggled with SSA, now enjoy marked freedom from its power and no longer claim it as part of their identity.”

“We affirm that God can and does deliver His people from every form of sin and disordered desire, including those of a sexual nature. And we expect that those who lead His church will be living testimonies to that redeeming and renewing grace.”

5. The AIC Report Ignores and Contradicts the Position Paper on Homosexuality

In 2016, the General Assembly approved the preliminary Position Paper on Human Sexuality and agreed “that the current Position Paper on Homosexuality be removed from our EPC website and *made available upon request*.” (See Minutes of the 36th General Assembly motions 36-28 and 36-31, p. 53-54.²) Despite the claims of some AIC members, the Position Paper on Homosexuality (PPH) was never rescinded by the General Assembly and still serves as a guiding document for the EPC. And yet, the PPH is not referenced in the AIC report. Indeed, the AIC report is clearly contradicted by the Position Paper on Homosexuality, which states:

“... redemption from homosexuality is mercifully offered in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. The word of hope that the church presents is that through the death and resurrection of Christ, God offers sinners both the forgiveness of sin and the power to live a life pleasing to him (Romans 8:1-4).”

“As Christians who are ourselves sinners redeemed by the grace of God, we must reach out to those persons who are struggling with homosexuality, offering them the word of hope that is the Gospel to the end that they may experience true wholeness through the freeing, renewing grace of God in Jesus Christ. ‘So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’ (John 8:36).”

At the end of the PPH is a summary of Biblical teaching on homosexuality:

“The witness of God’s Word in both the Old and New Testaments is clear, declaring that the practice of homosexual behavior, including lust, is a grievous sin, and that any who continue to engage in such activity face the consequences of God’s condemning judgment.”

6. The AIC Report Threatens to Cause Great Harm and Damage to the Church

What is the harm of ordaining celibate homosexuals? One need only look at the Roman Catholic Church, where numerous priests who vowed celibacy turned out to be pedophiles and homosexuals — see the 2004 John Jay College of Criminal Justice study,³ which found that in 81% of sexual abuse cases involving priests and deacons, the victims were boys ages 11-17. As a result of this damning report, the Roman Catholic Church issued a statement: “Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and Holy Orders” (2005).⁴ This document stated:

“One must in no way overlook the negative consequences that can derive from the ordination of persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies.”

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As Catholics figured out, anyone with ongoing SSA (i.e., homosexual tendencies) is an unacceptable candidate for ministry.

With precedent as a warning, here are ten ways the AIC threatens the EPC:

- We will have to protect children and youth from homosexual church leaders; it's never worth the risk of sexual abuse.
- A person experiencing ongoing SSA has no God-honoring sexual outlet. This is an accident waiting to happen. The recent fall of Sam Allberry, removed from ministry after disclosing a homosexual relationship, is yet another warning that ordaining SSA persons is terribly unwise and dangerous.
- Because they are struggling with their own sexuality, homosexuals cannot relate correctly to men or women in congregations or be expected to counsel and guide the flock of Christ. To lead God's church, an elder must be spiritually healthy.
- If the EPC approves the ordination of celibate homosexuals, we will be doing them a disservice. If we affirm them in their sin, they will have no reason to seek the freedom and deliverance offered in the Gospel. For the church to ordain homosexuals is not loving or compassionate, it is pastoral malpractice, causing damage to their souls.
- The church will open itself up to the hidden consequences of potential lawsuits. See "[AIC Recommendations Create Hidden Legal and Financial Risks](#)"⁵ in Volume 2, Issue 4 of the Presbyterian Plumb Line.
- There will be severe division throughout the EPC; some churches will leave immediately; others will begin plans for departure.
- Trust within the EPC will further dissipate; presbyteries will be suspicious of one another and will initiate overtures and/or disciplinary proceedings when homosexuals are ordained.
- The EPC will have opened the door to the LGBTQ+ invasion of the church. The past 50 years in the mainline churches has shown what happens when biblical sexuality is abandoned. In the PC(USA), polyamory — having multiple sexual partners — is now being debated as acceptable behavior for those being ordained to leadership.
- It will tarnish our Gospel witness to the world; we will be bearing false witness by ordaining homosexual persons.
- Ordaining celibate homosexual persons will damage our reputation — the EPC will become known as a denomination that ordains homosexuals. Fraternal partnerships will be threatened; World Outreach missionaries will be at risk for backlash from supporters, mission agencies, and certain countries where they serve; and our military chaplains will be put at risk.

7. The AIC Report Forsakes Historic Christian Teaching

In a pagan world that glorified sexual immorality, lust, and promiscuity, Christians were distinguished by their sexual ethic. The Church Fathers were aware of homosexuality in their

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societies; they wrote about and condemned it as unfitting for followers of Christ. St. Paul indicates that homosexuals were converted and experienced life change (1 Corinthians 6:11). The Medieval church likewise spoke about homosexuality, which was prevalent in parts of Italy — and a big problem among monks and priests (see *The Book of Gomorrah*⁶). The Reformers also mentioned the evils of homosexuality; Luther believed homosexuality was inspired by Satan. The idea of knowingly ordaining a person who battled homosexual lust was inconceivable for Protestants.

Beginning in the 1970s, mainline Protestants began to depart from Biblical standards of sexuality. Homosexuality was normalized through support of gay ordination and eventually gay marriage. In response to this creeping moral drift, the EPC was founded by churches who were compelled by conscience to leave the UPCUSA and the PCUS and establish a new Presbyterian body that would be faithful to Scripture and the Reformed faith. One of its first position papers was on homosexuality; that statement firmly rejected homosexual ordination. The Position Paper on Homosexuality did not address celibate homosexuality, as it was just assumed Scripture condemns all homosexuality — celibate or not. Those who founded the EPC (some of whom are still alive) are deeply distressed by our current discussion of celibate homosexual ordination. They cannot believe we are even having this conversation.

The unanimous testimony of the Church (before the madness of the 20th Century) has been to condemn all forms of homosexuality as evil, unnatural, and perverse: an abomination. History has also revealed how compromise in sexual ethics goes hand in glove with other doctrinal aberrations. The AIC has offered no historical witnesses for its cavalier interpretation of Scripture and the Confession and Catechisms; it is because there are no witnesses. For the AIC to suggest that 17th Century Puritans who wrote the Westminster Standards would approve of celibate homosexual ordination is false and preposterous, and they must surely know it.

¹ <https://sites.google.com/view/epcopenletter/redlinestatement>

² <https://epconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/4-Resources/5-Downloadable-EPC-Resources/J-GAMinutes/GAMinutes36.pdf>

³ https://www.bishopaccountability.org/reports/2004_02_27_JohnJay_revised/2004_02_27_John_Jay_Main_Report_Optimized.pdf

⁴ https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20051104_istruzione_en.html

⁵ <https://presbyterianplumbline.org/aic-recommendations-create-hidden-legal-and-financial-risks/>

⁶ <https://www.amazon.com/Gomorrah-Damians-Struggle-Ecclesiastical-Corruption/dp/0996704205>

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Why You Should Support the PNW Overture

By the Plumb Line Editorial Board

Five Presbyteries have sent overtures to General Assembly that would amend our constitution to forbid the ordination of homosexual clergy, whether they are celibate or not. You may be wondering, why is this overture needed? However, even if the AIC report is defeated at General Assembly, the issue is still unresolved. Basically, we would be back to square one where we were two years ago when all the controversy started.

For this reason, we need a clear constitutional standard that applies to all the churches in the EPC. In the absence of such a standard, we will be in the position of each presbytery setting its own standard — what has been called “local option.” Of course, this will only set us up for more conflict and chaos, as presbyteries clash over different ordination standards. What we need is clarity, not confusion. For this reason, we ask you to support the Pacific Northwest Presbytery Overture.¹

We believe the PNW overture will close the door for ordination of those who are still struggling with homosexual desire. While these individuals deserve our love and support, they should not be ordained to church leadership. Below is the PNW overture’s proposal for amending BoG 9-3.A. which is followed by answers to questions about the proposed amendment.

Pacific Northwest Presbytery’s Proposed Amendment to BoG 9-3.A.:

“Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.

See Romans 1:26–27 on desires contrary to God’s created order; Genesis 1–2 on the creation of male and female; Westminster Larger Catechism Q.139 on the moral duties of Christians and the proper ordering of affection.”

Answers to Questions about the PNW Overture

1. Why does the amendment begin with conforming to God’s design for marriage and singleness?

The pastoral epistles connect the government of the church with the government of the household (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). Scripture teaches that the church is “the household of

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God,” and therefore a candidate’s conformity to God’s created order in the most fundamental human relationships bears directly upon his fitness for ordained office.

The amendment therefore begins positively by affirming God’s design for human sexuality: chastity in singleness and fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman.

In relation to homosexual desires, the concern is not merely outward conduct, but inward affections and inclinations. A person who continues to experience persistent homosexual desire is experiencing disorder in relation to the created order of the household. While such a struggle may be sincerely resisted, the church must still ask whether a person whose desires remain disordered in this foundational area is qualified to bring order to the family of God.

2. What does “profess unnatural desires or affections” mean?

To “profess” unnatural desires or affections means to publicly acknowledge or openly describe oneself as experiencing such desires.

This language addresses situations in which a candidate openly states that he experiences ongoing same-sex attraction or describes himself in terms connected to homosexual desire, even if he also affirms celibacy or repentance.

3. What does “persist in unnatural desires or affections” mean?

To “persist” means to continue over time despite opposition, repentance, prayer, and efforts toward mortification.

The amendment recognizes that Christians may sincerely repent of sin while still experiencing ongoing temptation and corruption. Nevertheless, persistent unnatural desire remains significant when considering fitness for ordained office.

The issue is not whether one is repentant, but whether the continued presence of such desires bears upon the qualifications required for shepherding Christ’s church. The overture argues that it does.

4. What does “identify with unnatural desires or affections” mean?

This refers to making disordered sexual desire part of one’s personal identity or self-conception.

For example, a person may reject homosexual behavior while still describing himself as a “gay Christian” or understanding homosexuality to be a defining aspect of who he is. The overture rejects such identity language because Christians are to understand themselves fundamentally in union with Christ rather than in terms of sinful desires.

5. What are “unnatural desires or affections”?

This language is drawn from Scripture itself, especially Romans 1:24–27 and Jude 7, as well as the teaching of the Westminster Larger Catechism 139.

Scripture describes homosexual practice and desire as “against nature” because they violate God’s created order for human sexuality. Romans 1 particularly emphasizes “dishonorable passions” and desires “contrary to nature.”

The overture therefore uses biblical and confessional language rather than modern psychological categories such as “sexual orientation” or even “same-sex attraction.” The goal is to speak as closely as possible in the language of Scripture.

6. Is not all sin “unnatural” in some sense?

In one sense, all sin is contrary to God’s will and therefore contrary to humanity’s created purpose. However, Scripture itself distinguishes sins that are specifically “against nature” from other forms of sin.

Romans 1 treats homosexual desire and conduct as especially significant because they involve a rejection of the created order revealed in nature itself. The unnaturalness of the sin described in Romans 1:24-27 does not categorize all sins, but rather those that uniquely transgress the natural order established by God in creation.

The overture therefore does not claim that homosexuality is the only sin, nor that Christians struggling against it are beyond God’s grace. Rather, it recognizes the particular Biblical category Scripture itself assigns to unnatural sexual sin.

7. Does this overture deny progressive sanctification or the reality of indwelling sin?

No. The overture fully affirms the biblical doctrine of progressive sanctification and acknowledges that believers continue to battle indwelling sin throughout this life. Christians are not perfected in holiness before glorification.

However, acknowledging indwelling sin does not mean every form of remaining corruption is equally compatible with ordained office. Scripture recognizes that certain patterns of sin, weakness, or disorder may bear directly upon a candidate’s qualifications for leadership in the church.

The question is therefore not whether one still battles sin, but whether persistent unnatural sexual desire is compatible with the moral and spiritual qualifications required for ordained office. The overture argues that it is not.

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8. Does this overture make ordination impossible for everyone because everyone is tempted in some manner?

No. The overture does not teach sinless perfection, nor does it require freedom from all types of temptation. Rather, it addresses a particular category of disordered desire that Scripture identifies as contrary to nature.

Most Christians do not and have not experienced ongoing homosexual desire. While all believers battle sin in various ways, Scripture and the church have historically recognized that *not all forms of temptation bear equally upon qualification for ordained ministry*. This overture argues that the presence of unnatural desire, as defined above, is disqualifying.

9. Does this overture mean that someone who experienced unnatural desires in the past can never be ordained?

No. The gospel of Jesus Christ brings true cleansing and transformation. Christians may be delivered from all forms of sinful desire and corruption through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

The overture is concerned with present qualification for office, not with permanently excluding all who have struggled in the past. A candidate who formerly experienced unnatural desires but by God's grace no longer does so would not necessarily be disqualified on that basis alone.

10. Is this overture singling out one category of sinners?

The overture addresses a specific issue because the denomination is currently debating whether candidates who openly acknowledge ongoing same-sex attraction may be ordained. Addressing a particular controversy does not imply that other sins are unimportant.

Current Book of Government 9-3.A.	Proposed Book of Government 9-3.A.
According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of	According to Scripture, those who bear office in the church shall exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill these offices shall exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God's design

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<p>Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.</p>	<p>for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.¹ A presbytery or congregation preparing to elect persons to these holy offices shall carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon, and be very prayerful in electing persons to these offices.</p> <p><i>¹ See Romans 1:26–27 on desires contrary to God’s created order; Genesis 1–2 on the creation of male and female; Westminster Larger Catechism Q.139 on the moral duties of Christians and the proper ordering of affections.</i></p>
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¹ <https://presbyterianplumbline.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/PNW-Overture-to-the-46th-GA.pdf>

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Will Homosexual Ordination Bring Disorder to God's Family?

*By David Weber
TE, New River Presbytery*

The current debate in the EPC concerning the ordination of same-sex attracted individuals is often framed in terms of personal holiness, repentance, and the ongoing struggle with indwelling sin. These are weighty concerns. And yet, Scripture presses us to a more foundational question, one that concerns not only the character of the individual but also the nature of the office itself. The New Testament consistently presents ordained leadership as a charge entrusted with the ordering of God's household, the church. Elders are called not only to be men of personal integrity, but to embody and model that divinely given order.

The question, then, is not merely whether a candidate is chaste or sincere in repentance, but whether his life is fitting for an office designed to reflect and uphold God's ordered design for His church. Therefore, we must ask whether a persistent pattern of disordered desire is compatible with the kind of ordered life that the Scriptures present as essential to those who shepherd God's people.

Two major positions have emerged in the EPC concerning the question of SSA ordination. The first, represented by the AIC report, argues that the presence of homosexual desire is not in itself disqualifying for office, provided the candidate is repentant of these desires and has demonstrated a long pattern of chastity. The second position, represented by the Redline statement and the Pacific Northwest Presbytery (PNW) overture, argues that the presence of such unnatural desires is itself disqualifying for ordination.

Critics of the PNW overture contend that this standard is excessively stringent and inconsistent with how the church treats other ongoing struggles with indwelling sin, such as anger or alcoholism. A candidate is not ordinarily disqualified simply because he experiences temptations toward sinful anger, so long as he does not yield to them. Why, then, should homosexual desire be treated differently? Does such a distinction undermine our doctrine of progressive sanctification or imply a demand for perfection in one area that we do not require in others?

Yet this objection misunderstands the argument. The issue is not a denial of progressive sanctification or the continuing presence of indwelling sin in the believer. *Rather, the argument is that certain forms of indwelling sin bear directly upon a candidate's fitness for ordained office.* In particular, homosexual desire is understood to belong to the category of disordered desires. This is not a novel category but one rooted in the language of Romans 1 and long recognized within the Christian moral tradition. Historically, this category has included sins such as lesbianism, sodomy, and bestiality as reflected in Westminster Larger Catechism 139.

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Why does unnatural desire specifically affect one's fitness for ordained office in the church? Very simply, it is because homosexual desire strikes at the very foundation of the familial relationships that bring order to the church and therefore to ordain such candidates would bring harmful disorder to the family of God.

The Household of God

The New Testament teaches that the order of the family is to shape the life of the church. When Paul writes to Titus, he explains:

“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you” (Titus 1:5).

The church is “put into order” through the appointment of qualified elders. Elders are not merely administrators or teachers. They are shepherds entrusted with the right ordering of the household of God. The church's order is not arbitrary but patterned in significant ways after the household.

Therefore, Paul immediately connects the qualifications for eldership to the order of a man's own home:

“If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers...” (Titus 1:6).

Paul develops this same principle further in 1 Timothy 3:

“Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife... He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?” (1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5)

The proper ordering of the home is the most basic test for eldership. Why? Because the order in the home is the same order upon which the relational dynamics of the church are built. If the home is healthy there is reason to believe that the same healthy order will be established in the church. However, if one's home is out of order, it would be foolish to put such a person in the position of greater responsibility managing God's household.

This principle should not be understood to mean that marriage is a prerequisite for ordained ministry. Both Jesus and Paul were unmarried, yet each modeled and established the order of God's household. The issue is not whether a man is married, but whether his life, desires, and relationships reflect and uphold the creational pattern upon which the family is built. To be single and celibate is not inherently sinful, but to be attracted to the same sex is unnatural, sinful, and not consistent with God's created design and order for His creation.

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This creational pattern affects how one behaves within the Church. As Paul explains:

“Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.” (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

The relationships within the body of Christ are to be ordered according to those of a family — fathers, brothers, mothers, sisters — and the elders in particular are called upon to establish this familiar order.

It is widely recognized that stable households are of utmost importance to human flourishing. Children raised within healthy and intact homes generally experience greater stability, emotional health, and social well-being. Scripture teaches that this is not accidental. God created the family with a particular order and purpose (Ephesians 5:31-6:4).

This relational order has direct implications for the current debate concerning the ordination of same-sex attracted individuals. Those under consideration for ordination are not merely private candidates, but members of the family of God. If ordained, they will be entrusted with its care and ordering. Ordination standards, therefore, are not only about personal integrity, but about raising up leaders fitted to cultivate that order within God’s household. It is therefore difficult to see how one whose sexual desires remain fundamentally disordered can faithfully serve in an office whose charge is the ordering and the health of the church.

Christ and His Bride

To further strengthen the understanding of the church as the household of God, Ephesians 5 presents the marriage relationship as a living picture of the union between Christ and His church. In this passage, Christ is revealed as the faithful and self-giving husband who lays down His life for His bride, cleansing and sanctifying her (v. 25-27). The church, in turn, is portrayed as the bride who receives His love and responds in faithful submission to Him as Lord (v. 24).

In this way, marriage is not merely a social institution but a divinely appointed image and reflection of the gospel itself. At the foundation of the church’s life together is this covenantal pattern of sacrificial love and faithful response between one man and one woman. When that pattern is distorted, the clarity of the gospel is also obscured.

For this reason, Scripture places great weight on marital faithfulness in those who hold ordained office. The qualifications for elders and deacons, including being “the husband of one wife,” underscore the importance of integrity and stability in this foundational relationship. The domestic life of church leadership is not incidental to the ministry; it is part of the public witness to the order of God’s household.

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Within that framework, it is also necessary to guard ordained leadership from a more fundamental distortion of this creational pattern — unnatural sexual desires. If the relational desires and affections of an elder are at odds with the foundational dynamic of the union of Christ and His church, then the gospel itself is obscured. The church, therefore, must not place into leadership those whose relational desires are contrary to the biblical order of covenant union.

The issue of SSA ordination, at its core, is not merely about a private struggle with unnatural sexual desires but about the public relational implications of allowing someone with disordered desires into ordained ministry. When the created order of husband and wife is set aside, the symbolism intended to point to Christ and His Church is upended and the relational dynamics of the family of God distorted. Seen in this light, homosexual desire is not just a departure from God's created order but a rebellion against it. For this reason, the church must preserve the clarity of the gospel testimony and the proper order within its ordained leadership.

Conclusion

Much of the current debate within the EPC has focused on the qualifications of the individual candidate. Can one who experiences ongoing same-sex attraction be ordained if he is celibate, repentant, and chaste? While these questions are of vital importance, they can unintentionally narrow the discussion. Scripture directs us to also ask a broader question: What is the purpose of ordained office itself?

The New Testament presents elders as those entrusted with the ordering of God's household. The office exists not primarily for the benefit of the candidate but for the good of the church. Therefore, the question before the church is not merely whether a particular candidate meets a minimum standard of personal qualification, but whether his life and affections are suited to the task for which the office was established. It is clear that those who have a persistent experience of homosexual desire are not rightly suited for this office. *If a candidate's relational desires are not properly ordered at the most basic level of the family — one man and one woman — how can he be qualified to bring proper order to the household of God?* It is folly to believe such a candidate would be fit for this calling.

As a denomination, we cannot open the door of ordination to candidates who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections. To do so would introduce disorder into the very office established by God to bring order to His church.

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A Word from the EPC's First Stated Clerk L. Edward Davis, Stated Clerk 1981-2000

Dear Commissioners:

I begin by commending The Presbyterian Plumb Line for its stalwart appraisal and oversight of the “Johnson issue.” In particular, I commend the two men I know best: Drs. Fortson and Jeremiah. In today’s culture, these men exhibit courage.

I’ve known Memorial Church and its former godly pastor, the late Dr. George Scotchmer, for many years. I recall a letter he wrote in July 1980 to his beloved congregation concerning a similar issue — “the ordination of a homosexual elder as moderator represents a trend more and more offensive to evangelicals.” (Memorial Church was then a member of the PCUS.)

I’m dismayed that a historically evangelical church should now be caught in a somewhat similar issue. Should Memorial Church insist on a more “inclusive” denominational home, so be it. I might suggest the PC(USA). But regardless, leave the Evangelical Presbyterian Church alone!

The EPC’s posture on this particular issue knows no leniency.

Let me further add that this is not solely a theological issue, but also an ethical issue. One must ask the classic question, “what is the greatest good?” As one of the EPC founders and its first Stated Clerk for twenty years, I would answer this way: *Brothers and sisters in Christ, do not marginalize our historic conviction on this issue.*

Additionally, I take this opportunity to endorse Yvonne Chapman’s assessment of the Permanent Judicial Commission’s report on proposed overture G.3A. Having worked closely with the earliest PJC, I am disappointed with the present report. It falls short of what could be said on this matter. I strongly affirm the warning from the book of Jude regarding “unnatural desires.” Chapman’s observation concerning conflict of interest on the part of one individual is well spoken. That the current Stated Clerk failed to note such is disappointing.

Brothers and sisters, now is the moment to stand firm. As the esteemed church consultant Lyle Schaller said to me some years ago, “Ed, the EPC reflects a wonderful and healthy culture. But remember, sometimes it is better to simply say “no.”

In closing, one final word. *Stand firm!*

Dr. L. Edward Davis
EPC Stated Clerk Emeritus

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ARP Votes to Cut Fraternal Ties With EPC

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP) voted June 10 to end their fraternal relationship with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

During the 222nd meeting of the General Synod in Flat Rock, N.C., the Inter-Church Relations Committee recommended that the ARP sever its ties with the EPC amid growing concern about leadership and denominational structure, women in ministry, and the promotion of charismatic gifts in ministry. The recommendation was approved with no debate or discussion from the floor.

“The ARP Inter-Church committee has instructed our representatives to have open and frank discussions with their EPC brothers about the situation in the EPC and to be in prayer with them,” the committee reported to the Synod. “The reasons for this include concerns about the nature of how leadership is wielded in the denominational structure of the EPC, growing support and hardening of the promotion of women in ministerial and elder offices, and continued concerns with the likewise promotion and support of charismatic gifts. We continue to pray for renewal within the EPC.”

The Synod action ended a fraternal relationship that began in 1985 when the EPC and ARP established a fraternal relationship and exchanged delegates at annual meetings. In 1991 the two denominations considered union, but decided for committees of both bodies to continue meeting for exploring ministry collaboration — particularly fruitful was the shared Church Planter Assessment Center (CPAC) that evaluated church planter candidates for the ARP and EPC.

Rev. Ben Glaser, who served as chair of the Inter-Church Relations committee of the ARP, wrote on his June 12 blog commenting on the ARP Synod vote to cut ties with the EPC:

“The ARP was the first denomination to recognize the new EPC which had come out of the Northern Presbyterian Church before the merger of the UPCUSA and the PCUS in 1983. Our Synod had sent several letters of concern, and had met with representatives of the EPC, about the rising rigidity of the EPC on women’s ordination, charismatic gifts, centralizing of institutional authority, and the recent flirting with Side B Christianity. However, there was no discussion on the floor. Speaking to members of our Synod about it later it was evident that there was unanimity to the need for this action, that we had done what we could do as a body to witness to our concerns.”

Glaser noted that a member of Synod offered a prayer for the EPC.

The ARP currently maintains fraternal relationships with the Korean-American Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America; the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of

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England and Wales; the Free Church of Scotland, the United Reformed Churches, and the Canadian Reformed Churches.

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