

Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business

Part 1

Overture 1: Ensure Prayers Are Explicitly Christian (workbook pp. 110-111)

In response to Overture 1 from the Classis of Rocky Mountains, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommends the following:

**ONB 22-1
To deny Overture 1.**

Reasons:

1. While we understand the cultural concerns presented by the classis, it appears to the advisory committee that the prayer in question does address the Triune God revealed in Scripture.
2. As this is an isolated incident, it does not warrant action of the full General Synod.
3. The advisory committee suggests that the Classis of Rocky Mountains direct its concerns to the Commission on Christian Action.

Overture 2: Change Restructuring Team Reporting Date (workbook p. 111)

In response to Overture 2 from the Classis of Great Lakes City, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommends the following:

**ONB 22-2
To deny Overture 2.**

Reasons:

1. While we understand the frustration of uncertainty and the urgency of this issue, we also recognize the complexity of the work and the time needed to fulfill the mandate given to the Restructuring Team in a God-honoring and positive way.
2. Since the membership of the Restructuring Team was finalized at the end of March 2022 and the reports will be due in March 2023 for the 2023 General Synod, it would not be realistic to require the team to complete this important work in a 12-month period.
3. There is an expectation that the Restructuring Team will be giving reports and requesting feedback, and this shortened time frame does not allow appropriate time for this process.
4. We strongly encourage the Restructuring Team to give updates after each meeting, to help congregations to see a path forward and have a snapshot of the future God has planned for the RCA.

Overture 3: Add Posting Date to GSC Minutes and Adopt Additional Definition Around New Business (workbook p. 112)

In response to Overture 3 from the Classis of New Brunswick, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommends the following:

**ONB 22-3
To deny Overture 3.**

Reasons:

1. The first part of the overture has already been addressed by action of the GSC, as reported in the General Synod Council Serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod, on page 44 of the workbook (in the section titled “Change to Publication Schedule of GSC Minutes”).
2. For the second part, there is an adequate mechanism in place for dealing with this in the *Book of Church Order (BCO)*; the General Synod votes on a case-by-case basis whether or not to accept an item of new business that is presented (*BCO*, Chapter 3, Part II, Article 2, Section 8 [2021 edition, p. 130]).

Overture 4: General Synod to Approve Time and Place of General Synod Meetings (workbook p. 112)

In response to Overture 4 from the Classis of New Brunswick, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommends the following:

**ONB 22-4
To deny Overture 4.**

Reasons:

1. General Synod 2021 voted to empower the executive committee to make these decisions through its adoption of CO 21-4 (*MGS 2021*, p. 240); that amendment was overwhelmingly approved by the classes and does not need to be revisited (in the workbook, see the report of the classis votes on proposed amendments to the *Book of Church Order* on p. 39 in the Report of the General Synod Council Serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod).
2. Due to the fact that venue contracts for an event as large as General Synod need to be signed over a year in advance, the decision of the 2021 General Synod was practical and necessary.

Overture 5: Determine Equitable Assessment/Covenant Shares Formula for Dual-Affiliated Congregations (workbook pp. 112-113)

In response to Overture 5 from the Classis of New Brunswick, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommends the following:

ONB 22-5

To instruct the Commission on Church Order, meeting electronically with representatives of classes with dual-affiliated consistories, to develop a plan that accounts for an equitable payment of assessments/covenant shares without placing an undue burden on either classes or the denomination, for report to the 2023 General Synod.

Reason:

1. After talking with representatives from both the Commission on Church Order and the Classis of New Brunswick, this committee affirms that both parties are willing and open to this discussion, and some of this process is already underway.

Overture 6: Encourage Engagement in Cross-Cultural Mission (Supplemental Regional Synod Overtures report)

In response to Overture 6 from the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommends the following:

ONB 22-6

To strongly encourage all churches within the RCA to find fresh ways to engage at least 10 percent of their active membership in either a local or global cross-cultural mission by 2024; and further,

To direct the general secretary to promote this throughout the denomination.

Reason:

1. The committee supports the reasons provided by the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes.