

Committee of Reference Report on New Business

Note: because the Committee of Reference's recommendations relate only to the acceptance of new business as new business, reasons submitted for the substance of the new business are not included here; only the committee's reasons for its recommendations to the General Synod to accept or not accept the new business are included.

New Business Item #1: Stance on Russia's and Belarus's War Against Ukraine

Wording of new business submitted:

To instruct the general secretary to convene a meeting with other appropriate RCA ecumenical officers and at least two representatives from the Commission on Christian Unity to craft a resolution to be brought to the World Council of Churches (WCC), calling for the dismissal of the Russian Orthodox Church from WCC membership until it repents of and retracts its support for Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable and brutally inhumane war against Ukraine; and further,

To instruct the Commission on Theology and the General Synod Professorate to examine whether the conditions surrounding Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine meet the criteria for a declaration of *status confessionis*, a full break in communion due to the gravity of the breach of faithfulness to the gospel by any Christian communion supporting Russia's (and Belarus') war against Ukraine.

The recommendation of the Committee of Reference in regard to item #1 of new business is:

EC 22-12

To accept item #1 as new business and refer it to the Special Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business for report and recommendation back to this session of the General Synod.

Reason:

The situation in Ukraine has been changing rapidly, and the response of the Russian Orthodox Church has become more apparent since the deadlines for submission of classical or regional synod overtures have passed, which supports that this could not have been submitted through regular channels.

New Business Item #2: Shareholder Resolution in View of Energy Price Spikes

Wording of new business submitted:

To instruct the General Synod Council, the Board of Benefits Services, the Church Growth Fund and any other appropriate agent of the General Synod, in consultation with the Commission on Christian Action, to introduce shareholder resolutions for any investments owned by said agents in gas and oil companies, for those companies to lower their profit share by 50% to help reduce the price of gas and ease the economic burden particularly for low-income wage earners; and further,

to encourage RCA regional synods, classes, congregations, officially related institutions and other appropriate parties to do the same.

The recommendation of the Committee of Reference in regard to item #2 of new business is:

EC 22-13

To accept item #2 as new business and refer it to the Special Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business for report and recommendation back to this session of the General Synod.

Reason:

The recent spike in prices of gasoline occurred after the deadlines for submission of this concern through the regular channels of the church, which supports that this could not have been submitted through regular channels.

New Business Item #3: Sign Open Letter to Lawmakers

Wording of new business submitted:

To direct the General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America to sign the “Open Letter to State Lawmakers from America’s Pro-Life Organizations” by June 30, 2022 (<https://www.nrlc.org/uploads/communications/051222coalitionlettertostates.pdf>).

The recommendation of the Committee of Reference in regard to item #3 of new business is:

EC 22-14

To accept item #3 as new business and refer it to the Special Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business for report and recommendation back to this session of the General Synod.

Reason:

The letter was not published until May 12, 2022, which supports that this could not have been submitted through regular channels.