

# **Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance**

## **Overture 1: Amend BCO Provision Regarding Elder Delegates to Classis ([workbook p. 99](#))**

In response to Overture 1 from the Classis of Holland, the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance recommends:

### **OG 23-1**

**To instruct the Commission on Church Order to consider the revision to the *Book of Church Order* requested in Overture 1, and report back to General Synod 2024.**

Reasons:

1. The committee affirms the spirit of the overture.
2. Clarity is needed as to whether the overture intends to include the commissioned pastor serving as presiding officer of consistory *or* as supervisor of consistory.
3. Clarity is needed as to whether the overture is specific to commissioned pastors, or whether contract pastors should also be included.

## **FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON CHURCH ORDER**

### **CO 23-1 (Covenant Shares and Union Churches, [workbook pp. 188-189](#))**

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of CO 23-1.

### **CO 23-2 (“Seminary” language in the *BCO* as it pertains to seminary student corresponding delegates to General Synod, [workbook p. 190](#))**

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of CO 23-2.

## **FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY**

### **TH 23-1 (Bylaws clarification regarding membership of Commission on Theology, [workbook p. 225](#))**

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to amend TH 23-1 (the committee’s amendment is indicated with double strikethrough and highlight):

**TH 23-1 (amendment)**

**To adopt the following amendment to the Bylaws of the General Synod, *BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 9a (2022 ed., p. 119), for recommendation to General Synod 2024 for final approval:**

**...The membership shall include two persons from among the Reformed Church seminary faculties, one General Synod professor, two persons from among the faculties of the Reformed church colleges, three ~~pastors~~ Ministers of Word and Sacrament (at least one of whom serves a local church, ~~when possible~~), and at least two ~~laypersons~~ people who do not hold the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.**

Reason:

1. The “when possible” clause negates the constitutional obligation.

**TH 23-2 (Inviting Responses to “Together in Difference,” [workbook p. 227](#))**

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to amend TH 23-2 (the committee’s amendment is indicated with strikethrough):

**TH 23-2 (amendment)**

**To instruct the general secretary to make the paper “Together in Difference” available to all classes, consistories, and assemblies of the RCA, and to invite them to hold discussions and write responses; and further,**

**To encourage church bodies to respond to the following question: “How do you live together in difference when it comes to questions of human sexuality?” In particular, the commission wishes to collect stories and organizing principles, such as bylaws, that promote unity, purity, and peace among classes, consistories, and assemblies who permit and enable differences in practices and interpretations; and further,**

**To request that such responses be sent via email to the next moderator of the Commission on Theology, ~~Rev. James Hart Brumm, at jhartbrumm@aol.com with the subject line: Together in Difference,~~ no later than January 1, 2024.**

Reasons:

1. It is not customary to name the person in office.
2. When distributing the paper, the general secretary will provide appropriate contact information for the moderator of the Commission on Theology.

**FROM THE REPORT OF NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**TE 23-1 (Changes to the Bylaws of NBTS, workbook [pp. 259-260](#))**

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of TE 23-1.