

Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance

FROM THE REPORT OF THE RESTRUCTURING TEAM

RF 24-1 (New Assembly Name, [Workbook pp. 115-116](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of RF 24-1.

RF 24-7 (Elders as Supervisors of Vacant Churches, [Workbook p. 137](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to amend RF 24-7 (the committee's amendment is indicated with double underline and highlight):

RF 24-7 (amendment)

To adopt the following amendments to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 3 (2023 edition, p. 36), for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are double-underlined and highlighted):

Sec. 3. The classis shall appoint a minister or elder as supervisor of all proceedings of the consistory of a church without an installed minister. If the minister or elder to be appointed as supervisor is a member of another classis, then the classis shall consult with the **minister's** other classis ~~of membership~~ prior to making such appointment. The classis shall determine the appropriate training and responsibilities for the supervisor.

Reason:

1. Appropriate training for ministers or elders supervising churches will better serve the churches.

FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON CHURCH ORDER

CO 24-1 (Delegates to Classis Meetings, [Workbook p. 240](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of CO 24-1.

CO 24-2 (RCA College Affiliation, [Workbook pp. 241-242](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of CO 24-2.

CO 24-3 (Plan of Union Document, [Workbook pp. 242-246](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of CO 24-3.

CO 24-4 (Elimination of Level of Assembly and Creation of New Judicatories, [Workbook pp. 247-281](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of CO 24-4.

Conditional Additional Recommendation

If CO 24-4 is adopted, the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance recommends that General Synod take the following further action:

OG 24-1

To direct the Commission on Church Order, in consultation with the Commission on Race and Ethnicity and the Commission for Women, to propose how the General Synod Commission on Judicial Business will include sufficient diversity and to present recommendations to General Synod 2025.

Reasons:

1. Each classis (or middle assembly) will send one delegate to make up the Commission on Judicial Business without reference to the composition of the commission. This could result in a commission that lacks diversity.
2. Diverse perspectives are required for fairness, cultural understanding, wisdom, and justice, especially if the parties are members of an underrepresented group.
3. The General Synod Commission on Judicial Business is authoritative. No appeal can be made on its decisions.
4. The committee does not want to infringe on the rights and authority of the classis (or middle assembly) as it determines nominees. The committee also wants to assure equitable representation on the General Synod Commission on Judicial Business.

***Note: similar to RF 24-1, OG 24-1 will only come to the floor if CO 24-4 is adopted.*

FROM THE REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN BLACK COUNCIL

EC 24-10 (Amendment to *BCO* Preamble, [Workbook pp. 79-80](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of EC 24-10.

EC 24-11 (Addition to Classis Responsibilities, [Workbook p. 81](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to amend EC 24-11 (the committee's amendments are indicated with double underline and double strikethrough, and are highlighted):

EC 24-11 (amendment)

To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2, Section 1 (2023 edition, p. 31) for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

Article 2. Responsibilities of the Classis

Sec. 1. The classis, in consultation with its congregations and its partners in mission, shall regularly consider the nature and extent of ministry within classis bounds in obedience to Holy Scripture and in response to the needs of the world within which the classis ministers. The classis may form such entities as may be needed for the ministry of the church, provided such bodies do not infringe upon the prerogatives of other classes, consistories, or synods. ~~To the extent possible, t~~The ministries of the classis shall strive to reflect the racial-ethnic and socio-economic diversity found within the classis bounds.

Reasons:

1. The proposed change better reflects the denomination's vision of a multicultural future free from racism.
2. "To the extent possible" has been used to excuse inaction.
3. While there may be extenuating reasons that a classis's ministry cannot always fully reflect such diversity, the work of the classis must continually strive to reflect the Holy Spirit's interest in all populations within their communities.

EC 24-12 (Amendment to Responsibilities of the Consistory, [Workbook pp. 81-82](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to amend EC 24-12 (the committee's amendments are indicated with double underline and double strikethrough, and are highlighted):

EC 24-12 (amendment)

To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 11f (2023 edition, p. 16) for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

- f. The points of doctrine contained in the ~~Heidelberg Catechism~~ Heidelberg Catechism and Doctrinal Standards

the Belhar Confession shall be explained by the minister **at regular services of worship on the Lord's Day, so that** the exposition of them is completed within a period of four years.

Reasons:

1. The original AABC recommendation better captures the need for our churches to be disciplined into the principles of the Belhar Confession.
2. The committee agrees with the rationale from the AABC's original recommendation that "the Belhar Confession is the backbone confession supporting antiracism. It is the RCA's only Standard of Unity that clearly and directly guides us toward a future freed from racism and culturalism."
3. The Belhar Confession speaks to our current historical and denominational context and our commitment to a multiracial future free from racism.
4. The Belhar Confession is less well known than the other doctrinal standards. It was only adopted at General Synod 2009.

EC 24-13 (Classis Responsibilities with Regard to Training of Ministers, [Workbook p. 82](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of EC 24-13.

EC 24-14 (Classis Responsibilities with Regard to Training of Commissioned Pastors, [Workbook pp. 83-84](#))

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of EC 24-14.