

## Church Order

Chair: Mr. Michael Santarosa  
Reporter: Rev. K. C. Vande Streek

### **I. Response to Overture 12: Remove the Word ‘fully’ front he Phrase ‘fully agree with the Word of God’ in the Covenant for Officebearers**

#### *A. Materials*

Overture 12, pp. 364-366

#### *B. Preamble:*

The advisory committee expresses deep appreciation for the spirit and intent behind Overture 12 from Classis Arizona. We recognize and affirm the important, often difficult work being done by churches laboring in missionally challenging and post-Christian contexts. We commend the desire to raise up faithful leaders from within these communities and understand the concern that the current wording of the Covenant for Officebearers may pose a hurdle for emerging leaders who are growing in their understanding of the Reformed tradition.

At the same time, while the overture raises important questions about how the church supports and disciples new leaders, especially in culturally diverse and developing ministry contexts, we believe the proposed change would introduce significant theological and ecclesiastical concerns that would weaken our covenantal unity and doctrinal clarity.

#### *C. Recommendation:*

That synod not accede to overture 12.

##### *Grounds:*

1. The Guidelines as to the meaning of affirming the confessions by means of the Covenant of Officebearers already clarify the meaning of fully affirming our doctrines (Supplement, Church Order Article 5, A).
2. The development of local leaders in new or missional contexts does not necessitate immediate subscription to the Covenant for Officebearers. Instead, these individuals can be nurtured through a process of discipleship and theological formation, with the aim of eventually meeting the confessional and ecclesial expectations of officebearing in the CRC.
3. The question of whether to add the phrase "fully agrees with the Word of God" to the Covenant for Officebearers was given far more than due deliberation by Synods 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012.