

Congregational Care and Justice

Chair: Tim Kuperus
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I. Response to Overture 9: Update the Covenant for Officebearers

A. Materials

Overture 9, pp. 356-357

B. Recommendation

1. That synod propose to Synod 2026 that Belhar Confession be added to the Covenant for Officebearers, so that the new sentence would read, “we also recognize the witness of Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony and the Belhar Confession as a current Reformed expression of the Christian faith that forms and guides us in our present context.”

Grounds:

1. The Belhar Confession was placed “in the newly defined category of contemporary testimony (Acts of Synod, 2017)” alongside Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony. In so doing, synod declared both to be “dynamic statements of faith that serve the CRCNA—its congregations and members—and speak to essential matters in a given time period. A contemporary testimony is useful for study, faith formation, teaching, and worship” (<https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/contemporary-testimony>).
 2. Synod 2017 did not give grounds as to why it chose not to include the Belhar Confession in the Covenant for Officebearers.
 3. Since Synod 2017 affirmed that the Belhar Confession is “useful for study, faith formation, teaching, and worship” (<https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/contemporary-testimony>), it ought to be included in the Covenant for Officebearers alongside Our World Belongs to God, as a “current Reformed expression of the Christian faith that forms and guides us in our present context” (Covenant for Officebearers).
 4. Adding the Belhar Confession to the Covenant for Officebearers would strengthen the CRCNA’s witness to biblical justice, promote confessional engagement with present realities, and express solidarity with the global Reformed body.
 5. Since the Belhar Confession is a contemporary testimony, assent to all of its content is not required.
 6. An addition to the Covenant for Officebearers requires that the churches have opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes (CO Art. 47).
2. That this be synod’s response to Overture 9.

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