

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Chair: Scott Vander Ploeg
Reporter: John R. Lee

Response to Overture 4 (deferred from 2020): Amend Church Order Articles 12, 13, 14, and 17 with Respect to Supervision and Transition of Ministers; Overture 5 (deferred from 2020): Appoint a Study Committee to Review Church Order Articles 12-17; Overture 6 (deferred from 2020): Revise Church Order Article 16 to Provide for a Terminal Leave of Absence and Avoid Unnecessary Stigma of Article 17 Separation; Overture 10 (2022): Clarify Process for Reinstatement of Pastors Who Resigned to Serve in Other Denominations

A. *Materials:* Overtures 4-6 (Deferred Agenda), pp. 434-48; Overture 10, pp. 514-15

B. *Recommendation*

That synod direct the COD to form a task force to conduct a comprehensive review of Church Order Articles 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17 and their supplements in conversation with Pastor Church Resources and relevant voices, and bring an interim report to Synod 2023 through the COD and a final report to Synod 2024.

The task force shall develop suggestions for clearer guidelines to pastors and churches in times of conflict as well as assistance for positive pastoral transitions and more effective oversight of individuals in specialized ministries, and attention to the readmission of pastors via Article 8.

Grounds:

1. Overtures 4, 5, 6 (Deferred Agenda) and 10 (2022) raise important issues in the application of these articles in the life of the CRCNA.
2. The increasing use of Article 17 and its often perceived stigma underlies the importance of clarifying and strengthening guidance for the multifaceted situations of pastor-church separations.
3. The task force can address occasions of inappropriate avoidance of Articles 82, 83, and 84.
4. A review of the data of *Acts of Synod*, the *Manual for Synodical Deputies*, and memos to stated clerks from 1972 to the present indicates that the best synodical advice for congregations unhelpfully lies in synodical supplements and board/committee memos and not in Church Order.