

Advisory Committee 1, Synodical Services and Structure I, Rev. Henry Kranenburg reporting, presents the following:

I. Response to Overtures 28 and 29 (Minority)

A. Materials:

1. Overture 28, pp. 489-92
2. Overture 29, pp. 493-95

B. Recommendations:

1. That synod not accede to Overture 29.

Grounds:

- a. Scripture is already clear that all sin, including unrepentant sin, is a “salvation issue” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21) as is reflected in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 87 and therefore does not need a statement to declare that.
- b. The term ‘salvation issue’ is not a clearly defined term. When linked to a particular ‘unrepentant sin’ it is understood by some to mean that such sin is equally in need of the saving grace of Christ (hence “any and all”). Others hear it saying that this particular unrepentant sin is more worthy of eternal damnation than other unrepentant sins. This lack of clarity is unhelpful and open to misinterpretation, especially to those struggling with sin.
- c. The Covenant for Officebearers already makes clear that office bearers will be formed by, governed by and shaped by the confessions, and that confessional difficulty gravamina do not give permission to teach or deny what has been subscribed to.
- d. Synod has already addressed classes and Church Visitors on matters of bringing office bearers into compliance and is currently working through matters of discipline and gravamina and therefore does not need an additional statement of compliance and discipline.
- e. Synod in its decisions of 2022 and 2023 clearly defined unchastity and declared that definition to have confessional status, calling churches to minister to those who wrestle with that decision or the ethics it addresses; it is not pastorally helpful or necessary to declare again what is already clear while churches are ministering to their members, including office bearers.
- f. Overture 29, while wanting to affirm and apply decisions the denomination has already made, does not consider how dealing with sin might incorporate scriptural instruction such as Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:15ff dealing with a brother or sister who sins, or the instruction of Galatians 6:1 to ‘gently restore’ the sinner which need to be considered in the discussion.

2. That synod not accede to Overture 28.

Grounds:

- a. Overture 28 as presented does not meet the high standards of definition and articulation needed for declaring a heresy as outlined by *Acts of Synod 2022* (pp. 843-44).
- b. This is consistent with the majority report recommendation re: Overture 28.

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