

Overture Committee May 2023

Preamble: First, we want to recognize the work of the Waterloo council in writing this overture. Obviously, a lot of thought and study was put into it. Furthermore, the overture committee does not disagree that the matter is weighty. A look at the Synodical agenda quickly tells us that this topic will again dominate the preparation and much of the work of Synod 2023, especially the question of what “confessional status” actually means, and its connection to ordination, past subscription, and objections of conscience.

However, it is our recommendation that we do not take up this overture, for the following reasons:

- a. The overture is late. By the time of our classis meeting Synod will be a month away. There are already 75 overtures sent to Synod, many of them dealing with the HSR report and the question of “Confessional Status”. The task of preparing for a synod, especially one with this level of tension (best word?) around it, is Herculean. Adding new material so close to the meeting makes it difficult for delegates to properly prepare. The time for this overture was in February, if not earlier.
- b. While this overture is “weighty” in that it deals with weighty matters, including what it means to subscribe to the confessions, we are not convinced that the information is “new”. There are at least 3 overtures already in the Synodical agenda (see Overtures 18.19, and 23) that with the primary argument made by Waterloo regarding 1975 and its alleged misapplication in 2023. From our reading of the overture and the other overtures that relate to the 1975 report, it does not appear to advance any arguments that the other overtures don’t already cover.

In Summary: we feel like the synodical delegates and the subcommittee assigned to this topic have more than enough arguments to sift through, and another late addition that covers the same ground would not serve them well.

Humbly submitted: Stratford and Palmerston delegates.