

Classifications of Materials Legally Before Synod

Following is a list of **definitions** of matters legally before synod (see *Rules for Synodical Procedure 2019*, p. 9, downloadable at: www.crcna.org/SynodResources).

1. Appeal

An appeal is a procedure by which a decision or action of an assembly, board, agency, or committee is brought to the appropriate assembly for review in light of existing policies and standards of the church.

2. Communication

A communication is a document presenting information, ideas, thoughts, opinions, complaints, or objections for consideration of the assemblies. A communication is distinguished from an overture in that an overture proposes specific action, and a communication does not. One type of communication is a protest, which expresses a complaint or objection to a decision or course of action followed by an assembly. An assembly is not required to take any action with respect to a communication.

3. Overture

An overture is a formal written proposal sent to an assembly requesting adoption or amendment of a policy or other legislative action by the assembly.

4. Report

A report is a document of a board, committee, or agency of an assembly indicating the work performed in response to assembly mandates and presenting recommendations for assembly action.

Following is a list of "Matters Legally before Synod," including the deadline for overtures in section 8 below. (See *Rules for Synodical Procedure 2019*, pp. 8-12.)

1. Gravamina

(For guidelines and regulations see Supplement, Article 5.)

2. Reports

Reports of committees, including boards, appointed by previous synods.

3. Overtures and Communications to Synod

- a. Overtures and communications from a classis (whether originated by or adopted by a classis) or from an assembly organized according to Article 44-b of the Church Order.
(*Acts of Synod 1993*, p. 574)
- b. Overtures and communications which have failed to gain adoption of a council and/or classis but which an individual or council desire to submit for synod's consideration:

- 1) Overtures and communications from a council (whether originated by or adopted by council) which have been submitted to classis but not adopted by classis as its own.
 - 2) Overtures and communications of an individual which have been submitted to council and classis but which have not been adopted by either council or classis.
 - 3) Overtures and communications of an individual which were submitted to council, adopted by council as its own, and submitted to classis by council, but which classis has not adopted as its own, which council has not submitted to synod, and which the initiating individual submits to synod.
- c. Assemblies and members should refrain from overtures, appeals, or communications which are repetitious or mere expressions of agreement or disagreement with matters already on the agenda of synod.

The executive director is authorized to omit such items from the printed *Agenda*. In such cases they shall merely be listed and accepted as communications. The senders shall be notified, and their materials shall be given to one of the advisory committees of synod to be received as information. Matters received as information will not ordinarily be mentioned in advisory committee reports or the *Acts of Synod*.

4. Appeals in Which the Judicial Code Has Not Been Invoked
(For procedural rules governing appeals, see Supplement, Article 30-a- 30-b, Part B.)
5. Appeals and Other Matters Properly Presented to Synod under the Provisions of the Judicial Code
(See Supplement, Article 30-c for the Judicial Code.)
6. Application for Candidacy by Persons Not Recommended by the Candidacy Committee
(For the applicable procedural rules see Supplement, Article 30-b, Part A.)
7. Unprocessed Overtures or Communications
Overtures or communications of an individual when such a person has been unable first to present such to council and classis. Such matters shall be received as information, provided that the executive director receives evidence that it was impossible for the communicant to present the matter to council and classis. Synod shall decide whether to act upon such matters received as information.
8. Late Reports and Overtures
No study reports or recommendations from boards or standing committees which affect doctrinal or ethical statements or Church Order provisions received by the executive director after September 15 or overtures received after March 15 shall be considered by synod, with the exception of overtures which deal with matters relevant to reports found in the printed *Agenda*. Any other overture or study report shall be considered only by special decision of synod on the basis of most weighty grounds.
9. The Printed *Agenda* and Study Committee Reports
Study committee reports shall be filed with the executive director on or before September 15, and the executive director shall distribute them to the churches no later

than November 1. The *Agenda* shall be published not later than early April. It shall include reports of standing, study, and special committees; overtures of classes, councils, or individuals; printed appeals; notices of non-printed appeals; a list of communications; the name of the delegates; and pertinent announcements, with the understanding, however, that the Council of Delegates, upon recommendation of the executive director, may, for good cause, determine not to print an item or to print an abbreviated version. If an abbreviated version is printed, the entire item shall be forwarded to the appropriate advisory committee of synod. Items not printed shall be listed in the *Agenda*. All such material shall be in the hands of the executive director not later than the following deadlines: September 15 for study committee reports; February 15 for the reports of standing committees and authorized representatives; ten days after conclusion of board meetings for board reports, but not later than March 1; and March 15 for overtures and appeals.

10. Supplementary Reports

The Council of Delegates of the CRCNA, including reports by Back to God Ministries International and Resonate Global Mission; the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary; the Board of Trustees of Calvin University; the Board of World Renew; the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee; the Historical Committee; and the Candidacy Committee are permitted to file a supplementary report after March 15. These boards and standing committees are expected to incorporate as much of their materials as possible in the printed *Agenda*, and matters for the supplementary reports must be kept to a minimum.

11. Confidential Matters

Non-printed appeals, communications, or other materials legally before synod judged by the ED, in consultation with the Program Committee or Council of Delegates, to be confidential in nature, will be distributed only to the advisory committee to which they are assigned. Any disclosure of names in cases where such disclosure is judged to be potentially damaging to their reputation will be removed from the document, and the matter will be dealt with by the advisory committee in executive session.

(Acts of Synod 2013, p. 549; 2017, p. 641)

12. Other Matters

All other matters may be considered which synod by a majority vote declares acceptable.

13. Nondenominational Organizations

Nondenominational organizations receiving denominational support shall not ordinarily send speakers to synod. They may place displays at synod in designated areas.