

Part II

Special Rules of Order of the General Synod

Article 1. Order of Business

Sec. 1. Formation of General Synod

- a. Call to Order
- b. Worship
- c. Presentation of Roll of General Synod
- d. Seating of Delegates
- e. Declaration Concerning a Quorum
- f. Reading of the Minutes by Title
- g. Procedure for Approving the Journal
- h. Presentation of the Rules of Order
- i. Appointment of Tellers
- j. Approval of the Agenda and Schedule
- k. Approval of Advisory Committee Appointments

Sec. 2. Agenda of General Synod

- a. Disposition of Communications
- b. Presentation and Referral of New Business
- c. Report of the General Secretary
- d. Report of the President

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- e. Report of the General Synod Council
- f. Report of the Board of Directors
- g. Report of the Commission on Judicial Business
- h. Reports of the Advisory Committees
- i. Election of Officers
- j. Report of the Corresponding Delegate from the Commission on Church Order
- k. Report of the Commission on Nominations
- l. Report of the Committee of Reference

Sec. 3. Close of General Synod

- a. Transfer of Presidential Office
- b. Celebration of the Lord's Supper
- c. Adjournment

Sec. 4. Prayer and Worship

Each meeting of the General Synod shall be opened and closed with prayer. The first meeting of each day shall begin with a worship service.

Article 2. Presentation of Business

Sec. 1. Objective of Reports

Reports to the General Synod shall be directed toward one or more of the following objectives:

- a. Inform General Synod of major policy and program developments in the past year's work of the reporting agency.

- b. Make recommendations for General Synod action.
- c. Raise issues for study and discussion in the church.

Sec. 2. Components of Reports

Reports to the General Synod shall contain the following components:

- a. Information on the general work of the reporting agency.
- b. Information on the agency's work related to current denominational priorities.
- c. Report on matters referred by the previous General Synod.
- d. Recommendations on all matters requiring General Synod action.

Sec. 3. Style of Reports

Reports should be written for the church at large.

Sec. 4. Length of Reports

Reports shall be as brief as comprehensive treatment allows. Recommendations shall be supported with brief background information. Study documents and policy papers shall be attached as appendices.

Reports and statements other than those prepared by RCA agencies but related to their work may be briefly summarized in appendices if references are not adequate. They shall not be appended in full unless they are being recommended as official position papers.

Sec. 5. Preparation of Reports

Reports shall ordinarily be reviewed by the reporting agency. If this has not taken place, a statement shall be appended to the end of the report, indicating: who wrote the report, who reviewed the report, and who approved the report. Reports to General Synod shall be submitted to the General Synod office three months before synod opens.

Sec. 6. Presentation of Reports

Advisory committees may supplement the printed reports with their own reports, but shall not repeat materials from the General Synod Workbook. Reports to General Synod may be commented upon, but shall not be read. The moderator of the advisory committee shall present the report to General Synod. All recommendations from the reports of commissions and agencies shall be received as motions. The advisory committee shall advise the General Synod concerning each recommendation after the recommendation has been presented by a representative of the permanent body. Representatives of reporting agencies may be invited to supplement reports orally in the meetings of the advisory committees but shall not address the General Synod.

Sec. 7. Submission of Overtures

The General Synod may receive overtures from a classis or a regional synod. It shall not receive overtures which deal with matters under adjudication or which make either direct or implied charges against persons. Overtures from classes shall be submitted to the General Synod office or postmarked not later than March 31. Overtures from regional synods shall be submitted to the General Synod office or postmarked within ten days of the close of the annual session of the regional synod.

Sec. 8. Presentation and Referral of New Business

The General Synod shall provide an opportunity for presenting new business in the first session of synod and immediately prior to the last scheduled meeting of advisory committees. The presentation shall include a well-defined statement of the nature and purpose of the proposed business and of the reasons for its presentation as new business rather than through the church's assemblies, agencies, or commissions. All new business shall automatically be referred to the Committee of Reference which shall make recommendation to the General Synod concerning the acceptance of it as new business and, if accepted, its disposition through referral or other appropriate action.

Sec. 9. Appointment of Special Committees

Any recommendation submitted to the General Synod that includes the establishment of a special committee, task force, or any other body (hereinafter "special committee") shall automatically be referred to the Committee of Reference.

The Committee of Reference shall determine whether the work falls within the responsibilities of an existing commission, committee, or agency of the General Synod. If the proposed task falls within the purview of an existing body, the Committee of Reference may recommend the appointment of the special committee provided it states clearly the reasons for doing so. In any case, it shall state the purpose of the special committee, the method of appointment, the length of service, and the means by which it shall report to the General Synod. Whenever appropriate, special committees shall work in conjunction with the relevant commissions and agencies of the General Synod.

Article 3. Transaction of Business

Sec. 1. Consultation

All agencies, commissions, and committees shall consult with other bodies affected by their recommendations before reporting to the General Synod. If such consultation has not taken place or if the body consulted has not concurred, the recommendations shall be referred to the Committee of Reference for report back to that session of synod.

Sec. 2. Proposed Amendments to the Book of Church Order

All proposed amendments to the *Book of Church Order* shall be referred to the Committee of Reference in consultation with the corresponding delegate from the Commission on Church Order for final wording and report back to the General Synod.

Sec. 3. Budget Changes

All proposed changes in the budget of General Synod shall automatically be referred to the Committee of Reference for review and report back to the synod.

Sec. 4. Roll Call Vote

A member of the General Synod shall have the right to require that the names of all members with their votes for or against an action of the synod be recorded in the minutes for the information of all; however, that request may be denied by a two-thirds majority of the synod.