A topically arranged historical overview of the execution of CO article 50 by the Canadian Reformed Churches

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Already at their first synod, GS 1954[[1]](#footnote-1), the CanRC reflected on the calling to engage in relationships with churches abroad, as articulated in the current church order under article 50.[[2]](#endnote-1) Since 1980 synods have frequently been asked to reflect on how CO 50 is executed.[[3]](#endnote-2) This process often included reflection on the structure of committees appointed by synod. In 2019 the two committees appointed with a view to executing CO 50 were mandated to review current practice. As part of the execution of that mandate, the following document was prepared. It presents a topically arranged overview of the execution of CO 50 by the CanRC since 1954.

This overview is not intended to be exhaustive. It aims to describe procedures and especially highlight those areas where challenges have been encountered and/or where the CanRC have spoken or acted inconsistently. This overview serves as a background for the recommendations that are being made to GS 2022.

This document uses footnotes to explain or comment on matters, and endnotes to reference Acts of Synod (and sometimes provide full(er) quotes from the acts).

# Reasons for Inter-Church Relations

EF[[4]](#footnote-2) with Reformed Churches globally is considered a “desirable thing”.[[5]](#footnote-3) GS 1980 said: “The oneness and unicity of the Catholic Church implies the calling of the Churches … to support one another mutually [and] … must find Scriptural expression in the common proclamation of the death of the Lord at the Lord’s Supper.” GS 1992 repeatedly stated that “true believers and churches have the calling to seek [EF] with all those who confess the same faith and maintain and practice it in preaching, worship, discipline, and government.” The “same faith” is not restricted to the Reformed confessions (Three Forms of Unity) and EF is to be extended only to churches where the marks of the true church are found.[[6]](#endnote-3)

# Purpose or Goal(s) of Inter-Church Relations

Contact with another church[[7]](#footnote-4) was with a view to establishing EF, though not necessarily unification into a single federation of churches.[[8]](#endnote-4) EF can be implemented even when the desired goal is merging[[9]](#footnote-5), although EF is not necessarily a step towards merging.[[10]](#endnote-5) A decision as to whether EF in a specific relationship (URCNA) had to be a means to an end and not an end in itself was considered premature in 2007.[[11]](#endnote-6)

Entering into EF does not mean adopting another church’s confessions or polity.[[12]](#endnote-7) However it does imply working toward a more unified position on sufficiently important matters.[[13]](#endnote-8)

There has been discussion on what makes another church “abroad”. The question has recently been raised whether the reality of ethnic or culturally defined churches in a same region should be considered as part of CO article 50.[[14]](#endnote-9)

# Ecclesiastical Assemblies and the Execution of CO 50

In what ways should the exercise of inter-church relations involve the various types of ecclesiastical assemblies: consistory/council, classis, regional synod, and general synod? Initially it was simply a matter of the churches together via general synod, as CO 50 prescribed. The emergence of Independent CRCs in the early 1990s changed that. Synods considered it “desirable” that the churches have a common approach, inform the committee of positive and negative experiences, and use the advice of the synod appointed committee (which was mandated to give such advice).[[15]](#endnote-10) Sometimes synods directly urged churches to interact with other churches, sometimes the mandate was given to the committee to urge churches to this, the committee was very careful about involving itself only if advice was sought.[[16]](#endnote-11) Sometimes synods mandated the CRCA to maintain a relationship directly or via a mission church.[[17]](#endnote-12) However, it was not considered proper to require mission churches to apprise the CRCA of their activities.[[18]](#endnote-13)

While one synod directly encouraged classes to interact with a bordering RCUS classis the next synod mandated the CPEU to encourage classes to interact with FRCNA and the CRCNA to encourage classes to interact with an OPC presbytery in Canada once formed.[[19]](#endnote-14)

Hence the study mandate given in 2019 included the question, to what extent should the practice of inter-church relations be a local or classis matter, and to what extent a federational matter.[[20]](#endnote-15)

In cross-cultural situations and where concerns existed, committees were mandated to cooperate with same-culture EF churches in maintaining a relationship with a common EF church.[[21]](#endnote-16)

# Categories of Relationships

Strictly speaking there is just one category of relationship, which the CO refers to as “sister church” and synod documents refer to as “ecclesiastical fellowship” (EF). Though there has been confusion at times over the two terms, these are synonymous.[[22]](#endnote-17)

In principle all EF relationships are the same even if application may see differences; thus there is no reason to establish a different form of permanent ecclesiastical relationship with churches elsewhere other than the existing EF.[[23]](#endnote-18)

In practice there were initially three categories: “EF”, “seeking EF”, and “none”[[24]](#footnote-6).[[25]](#endnote-19) The second category was loosely referred to as “contact church”.[[26]](#endnote-20) In 1977 one such “contact church”, the OPC, was declared to be considered a “true church of our Lord Jesus Christ”, creating a “temporary relationship called ecclesiastical contact” (TREC).[[27]](#endnote-21) The fear existed that EC was the equivalent of the “Fraternal Relations” category used by the OPC. GS 1980 indicated it did not, rather, TREC is no more than a step closer towards EF and does not imply intercommunion.[[28]](#endnote-22)

A further subcategory of “contact church” was implicitly created when the CanRC joined the ICRC which, among its members, counted two churches with whom the CanRC had no contact. Empirically the CanRC had a category “contact church” which included a subcategory “TREC” and a subcategory “ICRC member church”. However, there was no clarity on what these subcategories implied in practice.[[29]](#endnote-23) It has been specified that “TREC” only exists when EF is possible and that ICRC membership did not make a church EF or TREC.[[30]](#endnote-24)

A complicating factor has been that other churches had multiple categories for inter-church relations while the CanRC persisted with one permanent one and one temporary one.[[31]](#endnote-25) A request from churches to create other categories was denied for “unfortunately” not interacting with a previous synod decision.[[32]](#endnote-26) A request from the CRCA was denied for proposing what was not deemed necessary and for not having the support of the CCCNA; the ten churches that submitted considerations on this request were all opposed to the request.[[33]](#endnote-27) The following synod denied a request for naming the categories that existed in practice as the request had not gone the ecclesiastical route.[[34]](#endnote-28) Most recently GS 2019 decided that a category used by other churches equated to the CanRC “contact and dialogue”.[[35]](#endnote-29) GS 2019 also received the request from the CRCA and CCCNA together to reflect on the issue of categories, and many churches in response pointed to the categories used by other churches.[[36]](#endnote-30) There is a remarkable difference between the situations at GS 2010 and GS 2019.[[37]](#footnote-7)

# New Contacts / Relationships

The feasibility of a contact or relationships has frequently been a factor of consideration[[38]](#footnote-8).[[39]](#endnote-31)

Before EF is entered into there must be a “careful and serious”[[40]](#footnote-9) investigation that a church has adopted Reformed confessions and polity and maintains it.[[41]](#endnote-32) In one instance, EF was decided to since the committee and some local churches were interacting with another church in a way consistent with EF.[[42]](#endnote-33)

Initially requests to establish a contact and work towards EF would come from local churches,[[43]](#endnote-34) from broader assemblies,[[44]](#endnote-35) or from a synod appointed committee.[[45]](#endnote-36) More recently it has been determined that such requests should come via the ecclesiastical route,[[46]](#endnote-37) though there has been inconsistency.[[47]](#endnote-38) Contact may also be initiated by the committee if it arises out of multilateral relations though multilateral relations do not necessarily obligate the creation of contact.[[48]](#endnote-39) If the request comes from another church, it may run via the committee.[[49]](#endnote-40)

In 1992 the following was considered: *The following up of this calling [to pursue EF] lawfully belongs to the jurisdiction of the combined churches, on the ground that this calling has been accepted by the churches together in their confession (Art. 27, B.C.; Art. 50, C.O.), and should therefore not be made dependent on the initiative of a local church only.* … *Investigating requests and responding to invitations is the most efficient and responsible way of gathering the information needed for the churches in common to judge whether ecclesiastical fellowship ought to be pursued or not.*”[[50]](#endnote-41) However, deputies may not initiate a contact without an external request or a mandate from synod.[[51]](#endnote-42) Recently the CRCA mandate on how to respond to requests from another church for contacts has become more nuanced (since 2007) and limited (since 2013) than that of the CCCNA; in 2019 the CRCA mandate was more precisely defined.[[52]](#endnote-43)

A request to establish a contact and then work towards EF needs to be accompanied by sufficient information.[[53]](#endnote-44)

Before EF is established there must be proper consultation with other EF churches regarding the new relationship (EF Rule 3).[[54]](#endnote-45)

Maintaining EF with more than one church in a region is not accepting the doctrine of ecclesiastical pluriformity.[[55]](#endnote-46) In such situations unity is encouraged.[[56]](#endnote-47)

Synods have been imprecise when it comes the language used for establishing EF. For example, EF was “offered” to a church which was “offering” it to the CanRC.[[57]](#endnote-48)

# EF Rule 1 & 6: “Differences” (aka “Divergencies”)

The execution of CO 50 has been shaped by the question of differences between two churches. Initially these were referred to as “divergencies” / “divergences”, later as “concerns” or “differences”. Prior to EF being entered into, there would need to be a “careful and serious” investigation to determine that a church has not only adopted the Reformed Confession and Church Order, but also maintains it.[[58]](#endnote-49) Entering into EF at times stalled because there was insufficient certainty.[[59]](#endnote-50)

CO 50 indicates that “minor points of Church Order and practice” churches are not to be rejected. The question thus became whether specific differences could prevent TREC and EF and, even if they did not, whether they should continue to be discussed or not. It has been decided that existing differences did not prevent a “true church” declaration (implying a TREC relationship), but that further discussion of differences was desirable.[[60]](#endnote-51) These should not continue endlessly,[[61]](#endnote-52) though it must be clear that differences should not form an impediment for “unity”[[62]](#footnote-10).[[63]](#endnote-53) The mandate to discuss differences were “vigorously continued” even if their usefulness was doubted by the committee.[[64]](#endnote-54)

At one point it was considered that a particular difference might not be an impediment to TREC but could be to EF. This was rescinded at the next synod (1992), which decided that if something is not an impediment to TREC, it cannot be an impediment to EF.[[65]](#endnote-55) However, that same synod considered that there can be “certain hindrances to full fellowship”, preventing the transition from TREC to EF, and spoke of the need to continue “discussion of divergencies which are considered to be impediments to EF … with the purpose of having these impediments improved.”[[66]](#endnote-56) The following synod determined that local churches concerned about the differences “should give proof warranting the need for an investigation”. It further determined that differences with the OPC did not regard its confessional documents but its practices, and that the differences had been discussed sufficiently with a view to EF, and could continue within the context of EF.[[67]](#endnote-57) The next synod (1998) pointed out that, in view of EF Rule 1, local churches that have concerns about another church[[68]](#footnote-11) could express these concerns directly to the committee.[[69]](#endnote-58) In a concrete instance GS 1998 issued a statement regarding a difference, contrary to the recommendation of the committee, which the next synod deemed to have gone too far, but the synod thereafter assumed as still in force.[[70]](#endnote-59) GS 2001 considered that “permanent contact … and continual discussion … may express the catholicity of the Church of God and enrich Christ’s body by the grace of the Holy Spirit.”[[71]](#footnote-12) It further considered that the disagreement was not on principles but practice and that unity of faith “does not necessarily imply complete agreement on every point of doctrine or practice. The existing differences do warrant continued discussion to grow in the unity of faith Eph. 4:3-6, 13).” It finally considered that EF Rules do not presuppose complete unanimity on all points of confession and church polity.[[72]](#endnote-60) This same synod considered that not every change in church life carries the same weight.[[73]](#endnote-61)

GS 2004 considered the goal of discussions of differences to be whether unity of faith is adequately and faithful expressed in confessional standards, and that the focus should be on scriptural faithfulness in the confession and putting principles into practice.[[74]](#endnote-62) The next synod considered: “The [CRCA] correctly observes that the goal of growing together in the unity of faith can be pursued under [EF Rules]. Existing differences in confession and polity have not proven to be impediments for [EF]. Thus, within the context of [EF], the one can learn from the other about varying legitimate ways to summarize God’s Word and how to put into practice its principles, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each. We can also learn from each other about other matters of common concern which develop from time to time in the life of the churches. From such interaction, as opportunities arise, each federation can sharpen the other as iron sharpens iron.”[[75]](#footnote-13),[[76]](#endnote-63) This same synod considered that discussions of differences will never be done, given the dynamic nature of church life and such discussions can take place “when necessary and appropriate”.[[77]](#endnote-64) GS 2007 and several synods following mandated specific discussions with specific churches.[[78]](#endnote-65)

Because churches wondered whether discussions were indeed happening, committees were mandated to share information with the churches,[[79]](#endnote-66) and one synod even directly asked the synod of another church about a concern.[[80]](#endnote-67) In 2016 it was determined that unless the purpose and goal for discussing a difference was stated, there would no longer be a specific mandate as it is covered by EF Rule 1.[[81]](#endnote-68)

The investigation of a church should not focus on local practices or what is reported in the press but on confessions and official documents.[[82]](#endnote-69) A particular church should not be scrutinized more closely than others.[[83]](#endnote-70)

In one situation EF was delayed because a church, though having and maintaining the Reformed Confessions and having a Reformed CO, was not considered to be practicing Reformed church governance.[[84]](#endnote-71)

# EF and a Church Schism

When an EF church experienced a schism it was initially decided that the committee should have involved itself, but later that same synod decided that the committee was right in not involving itself.[[85]](#endnote-72)

When an EF church experienced a schism that had no “clear-cut justification”, successive synods differed on how to continue relationships with the two parties. Successive synods were consistent in continuing EF with the main party. The question became whether lack of information should imply there is or there is no EF with the other party. The situation resolved itself in a messy way when a synod erred in speaking of “continuing” EF with the other party when there was no EF. [[86]](#endnote-73)

When two church schisms were compared, where, for the one, EF was continued with both parties while for the other it was continued with just the one, the crucial difference was that in the second schism, one party had declared the other a false church.[[87]](#endnote-74)

# EF and a Church Mergers

When an EF church merges with a non-EF church, EF neither ends nor is automatically transferred but an investigation is to take place as to whether to extend or end EF.[[88]](#endnote-75)

# Ending a Contact or EF Relationship

At various points in time synods have had to consider explicitly whether to end a contact or relationship. In some situations it was simply recognizing that the other party had ceased contact.[[89]](#endnote-76) In one situation a contact was ended because of cultural and language barriers.[[90]](#endnote-77) The dissolution of a contact (e.g. when a church merges with another church when there is a relationship with both) was considered to imply the fulfilment of the mandate[[91]](#footnote-14).[[92]](#endnote-78) In several instances the continuation of contact was moved from a bilateral approach to a multilateral setting (ICRC, NAPARC).[[93]](#endnote-79)

In a situation where a request for EF from another church was withdrawn, a mandate to continue contact was maintained, though it need not be “on an official level”[[94]](#footnote-15).[[95]](#endnote-80) In these situations EF was not considered desirable as the other church did not have the manpower to maintain EF with the CanRC.

Where the CanRC had concerns about an EF church, synods mandated the CRCA to work in cooperation with deputies / committees of other churches, sometimes naming them, sometimes simply specifying “sister-churches”.[[96]](#endnote-81) Where concerns were considered to be very serious, the privileges granted under EF Rules 4&5 were suspended. Because it could not be said with confidence that the marks of the true church were consistently present in an EF church, the EF relationship was ended.[[97]](#endnote-82) The inter-church relations committee was mandated to convey the decision via letter delivered in person.[[98]](#endnote-83)

It has been considered that a synod cannot conditionally end a relationship or bind a next synod to a decision regarding EF under certain conditions.[[99]](#endnote-84)

# Ecumenical Organizations

The church political legitimacy of ecumenical conferences has been affirmed.[[100]](#endnote-85) Because membership is “voluntary”, the body is a “conference”, and its conclusions are “advisory”, ecumenical bodies are not considered to jeopardize confessional integrity. Rather, they are suitable forums in which to share the CanRC heritage.[[101]](#endnote-86)

Attendance at an RES was on synod agendas during the 1960 and 1970s. In the end it was determined that the CanRC did not fit the qualifications to send an observer to the RES.[[102]](#endnote-87)

The CanRC are one of the founding members of the ICRC.[[103]](#endnote-88) Initially synods would determine who would be delegated to an ICRC.[[104]](#endnote-89) The size of the delegation has been a point of discussion, until it was determined that the CanRC should take on a leadership role and send four delegates.[[105]](#endnote-90) GS 2016 determined that a delegation to an ICRC should, as much as possible, involve members of the various CanRC inter-church relations committees.[[106]](#endnote-91) Encouraging EF churches to join the ICRC has been considered insensitive.[[107]](#endnote-92)

Over the years there has been much discussion about CanRC delegates voting on allowing churches to become members of an ecumenical organization. It was decided that the CanRC can only sponsor EF churches for membership, but delegates or synods can vote on admission as members[[108]](#footnote-16).[[109]](#endnote-93)

The CanRC began investigating NAPARC in 1998 and decided to join in 2007 when the CRCNA were no longer members.[[110]](#endnote-94) Within the context of NAPARC there has been a lot of concern about the application of the Golden Rule Comity Agreement and Transfer of Members Agreement.[[111]](#endnote-95)

# Extent and Concentration / Regionalization

In principle the CanRC consider relations with Reformed churches all over the world desirable, even though this might not be feasible.[[112]](#endnote-96) “By reason of proximity, resources and other practical factors, priority is to be given to the ecumenical calling in the churches’ own environment”, though “geography is an inadequate criterion”.[[113]](#endnote-97) Where a relationship exists with a church closer to an EF church, that EF church should be the primary contact,[[114]](#endnote-98) and the relationship may even be left to just that EF church.[[115]](#endnote-99)

# Mandate

Synods give committees mandates and committees are expected to fulfill their mandates by the next synod. This has been an area that has been particularly imprecise and inconsistent.

It happened once that an interchurch relations committee (CCU) was appointed without any mandate.[[116]](#endnote-100)

Normally a synod will decide to continue EF and then mandate the execution of this under EF rules to an interchurch committee. Sometimes, however, the committee itself is mandated to continue EF.[[117]](#endnote-101) Sometimes there is no mandate for a committee at all in a decision regarding a church.[[118]](#endnote-102)

Fulfilment of a mandate should happen even if a committee feels a mandate is wrong, though fulfilling it may involve interacting with it, provided the committee does not go beyond it.[[119]](#endnote-103) On another occasion, given ongoing developments, a committee did act beyond its mandate, and this, though challenged before synod, was approved.[[120]](#endnote-104)

When prayer and/or support by the CanRC for another church is mandated, sometimes the mandate is passed on through an inter-church committee[[121]](#endnote-105) and sometimes directly.[[122]](#endnote-106) If support involves another committee, sometimes the mandate is passed on through an inter-church committee[[123]](#endnote-107) and sometimes given directly[[124]](#footnote-17).[[125]](#endnote-108) When given directly, it is often part of the “church relationship” decision rather than the committee-in-question’s own mandate.

Committees have been frequently mandated to provide a contact or EF church with assistance in areas of confession, polity, and liturgy;[[126]](#endnote-109) in one case to help a contact church to merge with an EF church.[[127]](#endnote-110)

For the sake of proper procedure, a synod should not deal with communications from interchurch relations committees of other churches without the involvement of the appropriate CanRC committee.[[128]](#endnote-111)

Reports by committees serve as “observations” for a synod, they are not “approved”. As such, documents a committee produces do not require synod approval.[[129]](#endnote-112)

Workload has been a concern at times. Sometimes workload was addressed by increasing the number of men on a committee.[[130]](#endnote-113) Sometimes it was addressed by adjusting the mandate[[131]](#footnote-18).[[132]](#endnote-114)

Details in mandates for inter-church relations beyond EF Rules have included:

- Urging contact and EF churches to cooperate in theological training;[[133]](#endnote-115)

- Contact between parallel committees of an EF church. Sometimes the mandate was given to the specific committees,[[134]](#endnote-116) sometimes the interchurch relations committee was mandated to facilitate[[135]](#footnote-19);[[136]](#endnote-117)

- Mandating annual or biennial meetings[[137]](#footnote-20) with a counterpart in another church.[[138]](#endnote-118)

# EF Rules

GS 1954 adopted 6 EF Rules that were considered obligations.[[139]](#endnote-119) Later on it was considered application of EF rules depended on the similarity of the other church to the CanRC’s[[140]](#footnote-21).[[141]](#endnote-120)

The rules were tweaked and challenged early on.[[142]](#endnote-121) An issue wasthe reality that different churches (GKv, FRCA, CanRC) all had their own version of the rules.[[143]](#endnote-122)

GS 1992 adopted a set of rules that have continued to function since then almost unchanged.[[144]](#endnote-123) Changing these rules is to be done, not via an appeal but via the ecclesiastical route.[[145]](#endnote-124) GS 2019 considered a review of our current rules in the light of rules of other churches might be helpful.[[146]](#endnote-125)

# EF Rule 1 & 6: Assisting in Maintaining and Informing or Consulting regarding Changes

GS 1983 determined that churches should inform each other of changes being made to Church Order and Liturgical Forms; determining acceptability after the fact was fine. In regards to changes in the Confessions, EF churches should be informed at least three years prior to a binding decision being made.[[147]](#endnote-126)

A synod added “mission” to the list of items in EF Rule 1 in a mandate.[[148]](#endnote-127)

# EF Rule 3: Third Party Relationships

In pursuing a relationship with another church, the CanRC have frequently expressed concern about relationships that other church might have with other churches or membership in an ecumenical body, and considered this to be a hurdle to EF.[[149]](#endnote-128) The CanRC have been very insistent that consultation needs to take place before churches in EF enter into EF with third parties.[[150]](#endnote-129)

# EF Rule 5: Minister Credentials

Ecclesiastical Contact (TREC) does not include pulpit exchange.[[151]](#endnote-130)

It has been noted that while EF opens the pulpit “in principle”, the actual opening of the pulpit depends on an invitation from the local church.[[152]](#endnote-131)

There have been various practising on who issues the credentials for a minister of/to another church. Current practice is that the supervising consistory should do so.[[153]](#endnote-132)

# EF Rule 7: Delegation to Broadest Assemblies

Attending the broadest assemblies of other churches is necessary for a fruitful relationship, but it can be time consuming and costly. Churches as well as committees have frequently asked synod’s attention for this. In 1974 the conditions for attending elsewhere were “if invited, and when desirable and feasible”, in 1986 it became “if invited and when feasible”, and in 2001 “to respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests”.[[154]](#endnote-133) In 2007 a distinction was made between visiting within the Americas and outside of the Americas. For churches within the Americas (later: USA and Canada), the delegation arrangement has remained the same.[[155]](#endnote-134) For churches beyond the Americas, visits were to be made upon explicit mandate by synod or “only if necessary”.[[156]](#endnote-135) In 2013 there was no general mandate for the CRCA, and decisions regarding individual churches are inconsistent in their wording.[[157]](#endnote-136) In 2016, when it was noted that certain EF churches had not been visited for 9 years, it was decided that each EF church should be visited at least once every three years.[[158]](#endnote-137)

# Committees

The CanRC have always had more than one committee for interchurch relations. Initially there was one committee for EF churches and individual committees for contact with non-EF churches (e.g. PRC, CRCNA, OPC, RCUS, URCNA, ERQ).[[159]](#endnote-138) In 1998 it was decided to have three committees: one for relations beyond the Americas (CRCA), one for relations in the Americas (CCCA), and one with a view to a merger (DPEU, CPEU, CCU).[[160]](#endnote-139) The division of labour changed slightly in 2007 when “Americas” was restricted to “North America” (being Canada and the USA), and some churches were recategorized from seeking a “merger” to seeking “EF”.[[161]](#endnote-140) In 2010 a fourth committee was created with a view to concerns regarding an EF church.[[162]](#endnote-141) In 2019 the number of committees was brought back to just CRCA and CCCNA.[[163]](#endnote-142)

Analysis indicates that initially the division of labour was shaped by “the type of relationship” and in 2019 become “regionalisation”. A factor has also been the residential addresses of committee members. By the mid 1980s CRCA members were located in BC while CCCNA members were located in Manitoba (at times known as subcommittee west) and Ontario (at times known as subcommittee west). More recently both the CRCA and CCCNA have members from Ontario to BC – modern communication methods allow this to function well.

The manner in which these committees relate to each other is unclear.

The **CCCA** initially functioned as three individual committees[[164]](#footnote-22) and continues to consist of two subcommittees;[[165]](#endnote-143)

The **CRCA** saw the establishment of a subcommittee in 2010, yet that subcommittee functioned for the most part as an independent committee.[[166]](#endnote-144)

The **CPEU/CCU** was augmented with 4 sub-committees in 2001. Initially these subcommittees were answerable to CPEU, then directly to synod.[[167]](#endnote-145) The layout of the appointment decision suggests two functioned as true subcommittees while two others did not.[[168]](#endnote-146)

Communication between the committees was for the longest time minimal.[[169]](#footnote-23) This has led to ignorance of each other’s activities and diversification in the exercise of interchurch relations. This reality has made it difficult for other churches to communicate with the CanRC. Considerations of GS 2010 did not help the situation.[[170]](#footnote-24) Since 2016 cooperation has been encouraged and in 2019 a study mandate was given to reflect on reorganizing.[[171]](#endnote-147)

Currently the CRCA is responsible for relations with 9 EF churches, 5 contact churches, and membership in 1 ecumenical organisation. The CCCNA is responsible for relations with 4 EF churches, 4 contact churches, and membership in 1 ecumenical organisation. The CRCA is required to visit EF churches once every three years, the CCCNA generally does so annually.

# Committee Composition & Appointments

It has been constant practice that a committee can only appoint new members to fill inter-synod vacancies.[[172]](#endnote-148) An individual should in principle serve no more than 3 consecutive 3 year-terms,[[173]](#endnote-149) and the committees are responsible to ensure both continuity and fresh blood.[[174]](#endnote-150) In 2010 there was some resistance to recommendations for appointments coming from committees, but committee recommendations were mandated in 2013[[175]](#footnote-25).[[176]](#endnote-151) It has happened occasionally that one individual served on more than one inter-church relations committee.[[177]](#endnote-152) GS 2007 determined that professors should not be a appointed to a certain subcommittee, GS 2013 did so anyway.[[178]](#endnote-153)

Early on it was noted that the work of committees should involve as much as possible equal numbers of ministers and non-ministers.[[179]](#endnote-154) At its peak (2016-2019) there were 34 men serving on inter-church relations committees (16 for just the relationship CanRC-URCNA). Currently there are 15 men serving: 7 on the CRCA (4 ministers and 3 non-ministers) and 8 on the CCCNA (4 ministers and 4 non-ministers).

# Advisory Committees & Third Party Consultation

Synods have frequently been confronted with the question whether an advisory committee appointed for the duration of a synod can consult with third parties regarding a matter on the agenda of synod, be it a member of the committee, be it an advisor from within the CanRC, or be it a member of another church. While a third party has never been considered to have a right, synods consistently allowed for consultation with third parties during, even though this might present synod with information neither the committee nor the churches have seen.[[180]](#endnote-155)

# Consistency

Twice synods have urged consistency in contacts or relationships with other churches.[[181]](#endnote-156)

# Reports

Initially reports were only submitted to synods. GS 1965 deemed it improper for reports to be sent to the churches, as it might imply that the churches had a task to review them.[[182]](#endnote-157) The next synod specified certain reports had to be submitted to the churches and by 1992 the mandate was that reports be submitted to the churches 6 months prior to general synod opening, though sometimes there would be supplemental reports. Because of the date on which NAPARC meets, for the CCCNA the reporting deadline was recently changed to 5 months.[[183]](#endnote-158)

Committees were also required to inform the churches from time to time of items of interest, and should not rely purely on *Clarion* to do so.[[184]](#endnote-159)

Reports are to provide background information on churches CanRC may be unfamiliar with.[[185]](#endnote-160)

# Names and Acronyms

Acronyms save space and are thus commonly used in inter-church relations. Inconsistent use of acronyms has caused confusion within the churches. Inconsistent use of names has also occurred, when names are used in the language of origin or in English. Though a synod decided not to establish a rule for names and acronyms, a later synod did mandate that all reports must include a list of acronyms.[[186]](#endnote-161)

# Invitations to a GS-CanRC

Initially it was determined that all EF churches should be invited to send delegates to a CanRC synod at least one year before synod convenes.[[187]](#endnote-162) This became “as soon as its date has been established” in 1989, an approach last affirmed in 1998.[[188]](#endnote-163)

# Fraternal Delegates and Observers at CanRC Synods

A question most synods were confronted with was the extent of the rights and privileges of delegates sent by other churches to attend a CanRC synod. Synods have at times referred to delegates from both EF and EC churches as “fraternal delegates”[[189]](#endnote-164) though since then the term “fraternal delegate” has been used for a delegate from EF churches and “observer” for a delegate from a non-EF church[[190]](#footnote-26).[[191]](#endnote-165) Most recently the language was “tightened” with the expression “officially delegated observers”.[[192]](#endnote-166)

Initially it was determined that fraternal delegates of EF churches would be seated as advisors.[[193]](#endnote-167) Delegates from non-EF churches were seated as visitors and in one situation refused the privilege of the floor.[[194]](#endnote-168) Privilege of the floor has always been granted to fraternal delegates. It would seem that in 2001 privilege of the floor was also granted to observers, other synods make no statement on this.[[195]](#endnote-169) However, it has happened in the recent past that observers were allowed to address synod with a message of greeting.[[196]](#endnote-170) This suggests that “privilege of the floor” is more than just the right to address the assembly when given a time slot.[[197]](#footnote-27)

Initially internal synod documents were considered to be only for synod members.[[198]](#endnote-171) By 1998 this had changed to synod members and fraternal delegates.[[199]](#endnote-172) In 2010 observers were also given access.[[200]](#endnote-173) In 2019 “confidential documents” were restricted to synod members and fraternal delegates, while “public” documents were also for observers.[[201]](#endnote-174)

# Finances

For the first few decades there seems to have been on constraints on the cost of exercising inter-church relations. In 1992 it was decided that the CRCA had to submit a detailed financial statement and budget. From 1995 to 2004 synods received financial statements and adopted budgets. The acts of 2007, 2010, 2013, and 2016 have no record of financial statements or adopted budgets.[[202]](#endnote-175) The most recent synod determined that each committee should appoint an internal financial person to liaise with the general fund.[[203]](#endnote-176)

# Committee Access to Synod Documents

The responses of churches to reports by synod appointed committees go to the synod receiving the reports, not to the committee itself. At times it would happen that such a response would be forwarded on to a committee.[[204]](#endnote-177) Concerned that this might be considered restricting, upon its request, the CRCA was granted express access to all church responses.[[205]](#endnote-178)

# Endnotes

1. Acronyms in this document follow the system used in the Acts of General Synods 2016 (Dunnville) and 2019 (Edmonton-Immanuel). To keep things compact, a reference to a synod decision is as short as possible and yet attempts to be intelligible. Thus “GS 2019 (128.4.4)” refers to General Synod 2019 (Edmonton Immanuel) article 128 subsection 4.4 (an adopted recommendation), GS 1954 (44; 49; 54) refers to General Synod 1954 (Homewood) articles 44, 49 and 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. GS 1954 (44; 49; 54). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
3. In general: GS 1980 (154); GS 2016 (119); GS 2019 (149). Regarding inter-church relations locally and federationally: GS 1995 (86), GS 1998 (96.IV.F), GS 2004 (24.5.5-6; 85), GS 2007 (75.4.3.7; 75.4.4; 98.3.8). Regarding the involvement of mission churches: GS 2007 (128; 160); GS 2013 (127.4.3.3); GS 2019 (87.4.3.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
4. This document consistently uses the abbreviation EF (=Ecclesiastical Fellowship), a synonym for sister-church relationship [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
5. The official Dutch text says: “een begeerlijk goed”. The word “goed” is related to the word “good” as in the English noun “goods”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
6. GS 1954 (54), GS 1980 (154), GS 1992 (112.III.A, see also articles 79.III.A, 111.III.A, 128.III.A), GS 1995 (106.V.C.1.b), GS 2019 (41.3.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
7. The term “another church” is in reference to a denomination other than the CanRC. The “term other church” might be a sister church or a contact church. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
8. GS 1954 (54), GS 1977 (91.III), GS 1989 (117), GS 2004 (85). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
9. One might say: what TREC is to EF, EF is to merging (TREC – Temporary Relationship of Ecumenical Contact). Note that in one instance “EF” is known as “Phase 2” and merging is known as “Phase 3”. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
10. GS 1995 (106.V.B.5), GS 1998 (96.III.E.2-4,6), GS 2001 (73.5.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
11. GS 2007 (98.2.7-8, 98.3.5). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
12. GS 1995 (106.V.C.4). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
13. GS 2010 (29.3.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
14. GS 1992 (79.III.E), GS 2019 (149). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
15. GS 1995 (86.IV.D,F), GS 1998 (96.III.E.5), GS 2007 (98.4.3.3). On a local church and a church abroad see GS 2016 (119). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
16. Directly: GS 2019 (22.4.2). Via the committee: GS 2007 (75.4.3.7), GS 2019 (18.4.2.2, 139.4.7.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
17. GS 2007 (128.4.3), GS 2013 (87.4.3.2-3). [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
18. GS 2007 (160.3.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
19. GS 2004 (24.5.5), GS 2004 (85.5.2.3), GS 2019 (86.4.2.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
20. GS 2019 (149.2.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
21. GS 2013 (127.4.3.3), GS 2016 (104.4.4.8). [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
22. GS 2004 (97.4.4), GS 2007 (142.3.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
23. GS 1980 (154): *C4. Rules for permanent interchurch relations must be dictated by Scripture and not by reality, like the differences existing between the Churches; however, these Scriptural rules should be applied realistically, to the best of the Churches’ ability. C5. Adoption of different rules expressing different degrees of closeness to various Churches would lead to an undesirable distinction between Churches which are all equally true Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. … D1. There is no reason to establish a different form of permanent ecclesiastical relationship with other Churches in the world than as regulated in the rules for correspondence.* See further GS 1983 (105.B.3, 110), GS 2007 (142.3.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
24. Other than “EF” the terminology is that of the author of this document and should not be related to anything found in synod acts. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
25. GS 1954 (44, 54, 99): EF with GKv, “seeking EF” with FRCA, FRCSA, GGRI-NTT, IRB, and PRC (De Wolff). The first explicit record of a church with whom the CanRC did not seek EF was GS 1962 (33, 154) regarding the CRCNA. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
26. GS 1954 (100) appointed a Committee for *Contact* with the PRC. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
27. GS 1977 (91.III). [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
28. GS 1980 (97.III.B.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
29. GS 2007 (27.3.2) noted that one church incorrectly considered “true church” to mean “sister church”. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
30. GS 1986 (150.C.4, 175.I.C.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
31. GS 1989 (86 – GKv), GS 2001 (92 – FRCNA), GS 2019 (149 – FRCNA, HRC) [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
32. GS 2007 (142.3.3) required interaction with GS 1980 (154). [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
33. GS 2010 (59). [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
34. GS 2013 (119). The proposal was for 3 categories. Synod deemed two of the categories to be identical, and further that the church should have sought CRCA and CCCNA input. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
35. GS 2019 (112, 148). Something similar happened at GS 2001 (92). [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
36. GS 2019 (149). [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
37. In 2010 all ten churches who interacted with the proposal opposed it, in 2019 all three churches who interacted with the proposal supported it. One of the churches that interacted with the proposal in 2019 also interacted with the proposal in 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
38. The phrase “as much as possible” in CO 50 has its origins in a revision to the church order in The Netherlands in 1978 and in Canada in 1983. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
39. GS 1954 (49, 54), GS 2016 (120). [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
40. The Dutch has “nauwgezet en ernstig”. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
41. GS 1965 (141.II). [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
42. GS 2007 (75.3.5). [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
43. E.g. GS 1962 (146), GS 1974 (20, 64), GS 1977 (95), GS 1992 (36). [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
44. E.g. GS 1962 (82), GS 1965 (141). [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
45. GS 1986 (178). [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
46. GS 1983 (150.D.2), GS 1995 (52.II), GS 1998 (73, 98.III.A), GS 2007 (129.3.4), GS 2013 (81.3), GS 2019 (111.3, 147.3.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
47. GS 1995 (52) insisted upon the ecclesiastical route while GS 1995 (73) allowed a request from a local church and noted the involvement of classis had not been necessary. GS 2001 (74) also a allowed a request from a local church, but this concerned a church (KPCA) that functions as part of an EF church (KPCK). GS 2019 (147) allowed a request from a local church, supported by the CRCA. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
48. GS 1986 (178), GS 2007 (125). [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
49. GS 1974 (64.cons2) determined that a request from another church had to be placed on synod’s agenda by a local church accompanied with background information (reaffirmed GS 1977 (94)). See also GS 1992 (43, 112.IV.A.2), GS 2001 (54.4.1, 55.3.5, 95.I.1.2.9-11), GS 2004 (31.4.3.2, 445.4.4-5, 100.5.3.1-2), GS 2007 (163.4) [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
50. GS 1992 (112.III.B&D), GS 1995 (101.VI.A.1.a&c). [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
51. GS 1995 (86.IV.E; cf. 101.III.B.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
52. CRCA: GS 2007 (142.4), GS 2013 (175.3.2), GS 2019 (128.3.4); CCCNA: GS 2007 (173.4.3.2), GS 2010 (61.4.1.2), GS 2013 (55.4.1.2), GS 2016 (49.4.1.2), GS 2019 (68.4.2.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
53. GS 1962 (82, 146), GS 1974 (20.cons7), GS 1977 (95.cons(d)), GS 1983 (150.C.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
54. GS 2007 (150.5.3.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
55. GS 2010 (81.2.4, 108.4.3). RE: GS 2010 (81), note that the observation referenced did not prevent GS 2010 from having EF with both the FCS and FCC. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
56. GS 2007 (150.5.3.3, 151.5.3.1), GS 2010 (105.4.2), GS 2013 (155.4.2.1, 157.4.2, 191.4). [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
57. GS 2001 (55.4.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
58. GS 1965 (141), GS 1995 (73.III.D). [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
59. As has been the case with the OPC from 1965 to 2001, the KPCK from 1972 to 1992, the FCS from 1986 to 1992, the RCUS from 1992 to 2001, the ERQ from 1995 to 2007, the GGRC from 2001 to 2019, the GGRI-NTT from 2004 to 2010, , and the GGRI from 2013 to 2019. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
60. GS 1977 (91.IV.cons2). [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
61. GS 1980 (152.C.5). [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
62. The decision does not define “unity”. It likely means “unity in faith”, not “federational unity”. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
63. GS 1983 (55.C.1.c). [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
64. GS 1986 (128.C.cons2-3). [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
65. GS 1989 (94.D.IV), GS 1992 (72.IV.B.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
66. GS 1992 (72.V.C.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
67. GS 1995 (101.II.B.4; 106.V.B; 106.V.C.3); reaffirmed by GS 1998 (130). See also GS 2010 (86.3.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
68. In this case, the GKv. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
69. GS 1998 (40.V.E). Note that the recommendations were amended and then adopted, so one needs to see the version right at the end of the article. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
70. GS 1998 (130.VI.F), GS 2001 (45.4.10-12), GS 2004 (88.4.4.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
71. The full statement, which is a quote of the final paragraph of a report published in the acts of GS 1986, reads: “Permanent contact in the unity of true faith and continual discussion of divergencies may express the catholicity of the Church of God and enrich the body of Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit, until we all attain to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
72. GS 2001 (45). The quote is in consideration 4.9. See further considerations 11-13 and 17. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
73. GS 2001 (80.4.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
74. GS 2004 (88.4.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
75. This creates a general mandate for inter-church relations committees to ensure that learning, understanding, and sharpening takes place. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
76. GS 2007 (80.4.6). [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
77. GS 2007 (107.3.3). Note that GS 1980 (152.II.C.5 [=152.I.C.5]) stated that discussions should not continue endlessly. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
78. GS 2007 (131.4.3; 133.4.2-6), GS 2013 (21.3.3; 43.3.3; 93.4.2.2), GS 2016 (77.3.3-4; 104.4.4.4-7). [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
79. GS 2010 (28.4.2.3; 29.4.2.2, 34.4.3.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
80. GS 2010 (63.4.4). [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
81. GS 2016 (49.3.2-4). [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
82. GS 1995 (106.V.B.6), GS 2001 (80.4.5), GS 2004 (44.4.9), GS 2007 (133.4.9). [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
83. GS 2001 (80.4.12). [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
84. GS 2013 (127.3.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
85. GS 1962 (112, 155). [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
86. GS 2001 (34.5.1.1) said “no EF”, GS 2004 (43.5.3) “continued” EF with both parties as further investigation was warranted. GS 2007 (80.5.3) observed that GS 2004 had acted in error. See further GS 2010 (81.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
87. GS 2010 (155.3.6). [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
88. GS 2013 (126.4.3.1-2). [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
89. FRCNA: GS 2007 (105.3.1), GS 2010 (30.3.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
90. GS 2007 (152.3.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
91. Note that the dissolved church (OCRC, a contact church) merged with an EF church (URCNA). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
92. GS 2010 (42.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
93. GS 2010 (30.4.1.2), GS 2016 (90.4.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
94. This could be inconsistent, as the purpose of contact was originally EF or church unity. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
95. GS 2013 (157.4.2), GS 2016 (106.4.1, 107.4.1), GS 2019 (101.4.1; 102.4.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
96. Regarding the GKv: GS 2010 (86.4.4.5) specified OPC and FRCA. GS 2016 (104.4.4.8) said “our sister-churches”. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
97. GS 2016 (104.4.3); GS 2019 (41.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
98. GS 2019 (41.4.4.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
99. GS 2016 (104.3.9). [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
100. GS 1983 (121.E – as the majority report was adopted, the minority report was rejected. [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
101. GS 1992 (94.II.E and III.B). [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
102. GS 1965 (212), GS 1974 (37). [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
103. GS 1980 (153.E.7), GS 1983 (121.D.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
104. E.g. GS 1983 (121.D.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
105. GS 1998 (52.V.C), GS 2007 (132.4.3.1), GS 2013 (167.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
106. GS 2016 (121.4.4; cf. 89.3.6). [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
107. GS 2010 (156.3.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
108. NAPARC requires a vote by a general synod. The ICRC requires a vote by delegates of a member church. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
109. GS 1995 (101.IV.B.3), GS 1998 (52.V.D), GS 2004 (52.5.2), GS 2007 (27.3.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
110. GS 1998 (51.V.D.5), GS 2001 (74.5.7), GS 2007 (140.4.2), GS 2013 (77, 78); GS 2016 (89). [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
111. GS 2010 (52.4.2.2; see also 43, 44), GS 2013 (77.3.1; see also 109), GS 2016 (89.4.2.3), GS 2019 (105.2.4 & 3.3) [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
112. GS 1954 (44, 54). [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
113. GS 1992 (112.III.C), first quote: GS 1992 (128.III.D), GS 1998 (72.III.C), second quote: GS 2007 (142.3.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
114. GS 2001 (54.3.2), GS 2007 (125), GS 2010 (108.3.9), GS 2019 (121.3.5). [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
115. GS 1998 (132.III.B), GS 2016 (120.3.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
116. GS 2010 (63.4). Adopted recommendation 4.5 comes closest, though it lacks the introduction “To mandate the CCU”. [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
117. E.g. GS 2007 (128.4.3), GS 2010 (157.4.2), GS 2013 (192.4.2), GS 2016 (61.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
118. E.g. GS 2013 (123.4, 132.4), GS 2016 (60.4, 81). [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
119. GS 1983 (55.C.1.b), GS 2001 (45.4.5), GS 2013 (76.2.5 and 76.3.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
120. GS 2013 (190.3.3 and 190.4.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
121. E.g. GS 2004 (33.5.2.1, 44.5.4.6). [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
122. E.g. GS 2007 (124.4.2), GS 2010 (82.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
123. E.g. GS 1995 (101.II.C.3), GS 2004 (33.5.2.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
124. This concerns assigning the FRCSA with theological training. A problem is that in 2013 the mandate was given to the Board of Governors, in 2016 to the CRTS, and in 2019 there is no reference to it though the support is ongoing. It is all the more curious as in 2019 a similar mandate was given to the Board of Governors and Senate of CRTS under the FRCA decision. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
125. GS 2013 (132.4.3), GS 2016 (47.4.3). These regard the same mandate, but in 2013 it was given to the Board of Governors, in 2016 to the CRTS. [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
126. E.g. GS 1998 (97.V.C.3), GS 2013 (127.4.3.2), GS 2019 (120.4.2.2, 121.4.2.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
127. GS 2019 (147.4.1.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
128. GS 1992 (113.IV.B). [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
129. GS 1995 (86.IV.A). [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
130. GS 2001 (56.3.7), 2019 (128.3.5). [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
131. See “EF Rule 7: Delegation to Broadest Assemblies”. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
132. GS 2007 (142.4.1.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
133. GS 2007 (150.5.3.4), GS 2013 (126.4.3.6, 127.4.3.4), GS 2016 (115.4.2.5, 116.4.2.3). It was not mentioned at GS 2010. This mandate was considered improper by GS 2019 (120.3.4). [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
134. GS 2010 (115.4.2), GS 2013 (123.4.5). [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
135. GS 2010 did both when it comes to the SCBP. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
136. GS 2010 (33.4.3.1), GS 2016 (21.4.3.2), GS 2019 (117.4.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
137. Two of the 2007 decisions have “endeavour” in them, a third does not. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
138. GS 2004 (88.4.5), GS 2007 (107.4.3, 131.4.4, 133.5.8). [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
139. GS 1954 (54), GS 1971 (92). [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
140. The original of GS 1954 says: “correspondentie … zal moeten en kunnen bestaan in [deze regels]” (“correspondence … shall need to and be able to exist of [rules listed]”). The point to note is that 1980 turned “obligations” into “privileges”. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
141. GS 1980 (154.D.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-120)
142. GS 1958 (56), GS 1962 (139), GS 1965 (93), GS 1968 (79.6). [↑](#endnote-ref-121)
143. GS 1954 (54), GS 1965 (92), GS 1992 (49.V.F), GS 1995 (19.V.E). [↑](#endnote-ref-122)
144. GS 1992 (50). [↑](#endnote-ref-123)
145. GS 1998 (123.III.B.2). GS 1998 (123.IV.A) thus rescinded GS 1995 (101.VII.C). [↑](#endnote-ref-124)
146. GS 2019 (149.3.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-125)
147. GS 1983 (99.D.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-126)
148. GS 2007 (75.4.3.4). [↑](#endnote-ref-127)
149. GS 1954 (54), GS 1958 (290), GS 1965 (141), GS 1968 (154), 177), GS 1971 (92.conclusions.3-6, 94), GS 1974 (146, 149.recommendations.3.c), GS 1980 (97.II.B.ii.9, 152.D.2.d), GS 1983 (55.D.2.d, 99.D.5, 105.D.3.d), GS 1986 (128.D.recommendations.1), GS 1992 (72.V.C.4), GS 1995 (73.IV.D.2, 106.IV.C & D.2), GS 2001 (59.5.7), GS 2004 (28.3.2), GS 2007 (66.5.2), GS 2010 (34.4.3.2, 86.4.4.4, 154.4.2), GS 2013 (21.3.6, 190.5.5.3), GS 2016 (117.4.1), GS 2019 (124.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-128)
150. GS 1995 (19). The GKv wanted simply “to inform”, the CanRC wanted “to consult”, the FRCA wanted “to give account”. For application see GS 2007 (66), GS 2010 (63), GS 2013 (43) [↑](#endnote-ref-129)
151. GS 1980 (97.III.B.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-130)
152. GS 1992 (50.III.D). [↑](#endnote-ref-131)
153. GS 1968 (110), GS 1974 (170.B), GS 1995 (101.V.B.2), GS 2013 (175.4.2-3). [↑](#endnote-ref-132)
154. GS 1974 (140.A.recommendations.6), GS 1986 (145.D.2), GS 1989 (102.E.3), GS 1995 (19.V.D), GS 2001 (56.4.8.2; 74.5.3.3.), GS 2004 (31.4.3.3; 100.5.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-133)
155. GS 2010 (61.4.1.3), GS 2013 (55.4.1.3), GS 2016 (56.4.1.3), GS 2019 (68.4.2.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-134)
156. GS 2007 (On churches “outside the Americas”: 142.3.6; 142.4.1.2; 142.4.2. On churches “within the Americas” 173.4.3.3). The CRCA was mandated to visit 3 EF churches and the ICRC. [↑](#endnote-ref-135)
157. GS 2013 (132.4.4) “if possible”, GS 2013 (192.4.2.5) “if feasible”, GS 2013 (161.4.2.2, 162.4.2.2) left it in the freedom of the CRCA. [↑](#endnote-ref-136)
158. GS 2016 (45.4.2.1, 46.4.2.1), GS 2019 (18.4.2.3, 21.4.2.2, 103.4.2.2, 136.4.2.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-137)
159. GS 1995 (106.V.A.7) refused to merge the CCOPC with the CRCA. [↑](#endnote-ref-138)
160. GS 1998 (72.IV, 143,II-IV), GS 2001 (74.4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-139)
161. GS 2007 (174). This meant the IRB moved from CCCA (now CCCNA) to CRCA, and OCRC and FRCNA moved from CPEU (now CCU) to CCCNA. [↑](#endnote-ref-140)
162. GS 2010 (86.4.3). [↑](#endnote-ref-141)
163. GS 2019 (41.4.1 & 41.4.4, 139.4.4 & 139.4.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-142)
164. So much so that the CCCA submitted a report to synod that disapproved of the report of its OPC subcommittee which was submitted directly to synod. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
165. GS 2001 (45.5.6, 55.3.6, 56.4.1) [↑](#endnote-ref-143)
166. GS 2010 (86.4.3, 167.3.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-144)
167. GS 2001 (95), GS 2004 (75, 76, 77), GS 2007 (98.4.3-4). [↑](#endnote-ref-145)
168. GS 2013 (130, 131, 149, 177.Part2.6, 182), GS 2016 (177). [↑](#endnote-ref-146)
169. Thus a CRCA request to GS 2010 to restructure the committees was rejected because the opinion of the CCCNA on it was not known. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
170. GS 2010 (60.3.4) considered: “The present two committees have a good handle on their mandates and the churches with which they are dealing. It would not be good for the continuity of this work to completely restructure these two committees.” GS 2010 (61) decided not to mandate the CCCNA to communicate with other committees as unnecessary and possibly wrong, as it could suggest the CCCNA is answerable to other committees. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
171. GS 2016 (89.3.6, 121.3.3), GS 2019 (149). [↑](#endnote-ref-147)
172. GS 1971 (96), GS 1974 (183). [↑](#endnote-ref-148)
173. GS 1995 (116). [↑](#endnote-ref-149)
174. GS 2001 (56.4.5-6), GS 2004 (31.3), GS 2010 (60.3.5). [↑](#endnote-ref-150)
175. And yet, GS 2016 ignored a recommendation from the CRCA. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
176. GS 2010 (61.3.4), GS 2013 (177.Part1.4). [↑](#endnote-ref-151)
177. L. Selles in 1954, H. Scholten in 1968, J. Visscher in 2007 and 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-152)
178. GS 2007 (103.3.8), GS 2013 (177.6.2.2). Private communication with individuals involved suggests that the concerns present in 2007 were no longer relevant in 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-153)
179. GS 1971 (52). [↑](#endnote-ref-154)
180. This was explicitly considered by GS 1995 (110) and GS 2002 (56.4.3). See further GS 1974 (6.j), GS 1980 (40), GS 1986 (48), GS 1992 (93; 107), GS 2004 (89.4.3), GS 2007 (66.3.14), GS 2010 (41), GS 2013 (148.3.14-15). See also Synod Guidelines I.I. [↑](#endnote-ref-155)
181. GS 1980 (152) in relation to churches with a relationship with the GKN[s]. GS 2010 (77) in relation to the issue of female deacons (CRCAus, RPCNA). Note that in both situations there is the question of the independence of another church. In 1980 the CanRC has concerns with respect to the OPC for its relationship with the GKN[s], and thus felt the GKv and FRCA should have the same concern with respect to the KPCK for its relationship with the GKN[s]. In 2010 the CanRC noted it felt the existence of female deacons in the CRCAus should be a concern for the RCNZ, and thus the existence of female deacons in the RPCNA should be a concern for the CanRC. [↑](#endnote-ref-156)
182. GS 1965 (148). [↑](#endnote-ref-157)
183. GS 1968 (41, 134.VIII.8, 154.RecommendationsE.5), e.g. GS 1992 (72.V.C.6), GS 2019 (68.3.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-158)
184. GS 1974 (140.F.f), GS 1995 (101.B.1). [↑](#endnote-ref-159)
185. GS 2013 (55.3.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-160)
186. GS 1998 (40.IV.E); GS 2004 (90). [↑](#endnote-ref-161)
187. GS 1974 (140.E), GS 1980 (153.E.6), GS 1986 (145.D.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-162)
188. GS 1989 (102.E.3), GS 1998 (34.IV.D). [↑](#endnote-ref-163)
189. E.g. GS 1995 (43) calls a delegate from an EC church a “fraternal delegate” [↑](#endnote-ref-164)
190. This is the nomenclature used in what follows yet in this subsection. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
191. E.g. GS 1998 (6), GS 2004 (56, 69), GS 2010 (5.7), GS 2013 (5.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-165)
192. GS 2019 (6.7). (Note from the author of the report, who served as clerk of GS 2019: The reason was that it was becoming common place that office bearers of other churches would “observe” a CanRC synod by attending, without being officially delegated by their church.) [↑](#endnote-ref-166)
193. GS 1954 (54); GS 1974 (5). [↑](#endnote-ref-167)
194. GS 1968 (11, 23), GS 1974 (50). [↑](#endnote-ref-168)
195. GS 2001 (4.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-169)
196. GS 2016 (44), GS 2019 (51). [↑](#endnote-ref-170)
197. The author of this report was a fraternal delegate from the GKv to GS 2004 and GS 2007. He sought the floor outside of his “allotted time” and it created some discussion as to whether he had the right to speak. Both times the executive determined that he could speak (he had a voice but not a vote). GS 2013 (77) records involvement of a fraternal delegate (FRCA) in a matter (CanRC activity in an ecumenical body). At GS 2019 it happened several times that fraternal delegates (e.g. FRCA, FRCSA) would involve themselves in a synod discussion (this is not recorded in the acts, but the author of this report was a member of that synod). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
198. GS 1986 (6.f). [↑](#endnote-ref-171)
199. GS 1998 (8.e), GS 2007 (5.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-172)
200. GS 2010 (5.7), GS 2013 (5.7), GS 2016 (8.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-173)
201. GS 2019 (6). (Note from the author of the report, who served as clerk of GS 2019: The reason for granting fraternal delegates access to internal confidential documents [relating to appeals regarding discipline] was with a view to transparency and accountability; after all, fraternal delegates have a mandate to see whether all things are done decently and in order.) [↑](#endnote-ref-174)
202. GS 1992 (112.IV.C), GS 1995 (101.IX), Gs 1998 (132.III.E), GS 2001 (56.4.9; 74.5.4), GS 2004 (31.4.4; 100.5.2). [↑](#endnote-ref-175)
203. GS 2019 (128). [↑](#endnote-ref-176)
204. GS 2001 (94.5.2); GS 2004 (86.4.11). [↑](#endnote-ref-177)
205. GS 2019 (128.4.4). [↑](#endnote-ref-178)