

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^a, the CanRC reflected on the calling to engage in relationships with churches abroad, as articulated in the current church order under article 50.¹ Since 1980 synods have frequently been asked to reflect on how CO 50 is executed.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^b with Reformed Churches globally is considered a “desirable thing”.^c 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.³

PURPOSE OR GOAL(S) OF INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

Contact with another church^d was with a view to establishing EF, though not necessarily unification into a single federation of churches.⁴ EF can be implemented even when the desired goal is merging^e, although EF is not necessarily a step towards merging.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

^a 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.

^b This document consistently uses the abbreviation EF (=Ecclesiastical Fellowship), a synonym for sister-church relationship

^c The official Dutch text says: “een begeerlijk goed”. The word “goed” is related to the word “good” as in the English noun “goods”.

^d 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.

^e 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”.

33 2007.⁶

34 Entering into EF does not mean adopting another church's confessions or polity.⁷ However it does
35 imply working toward a more unified position on sufficiently important matters.⁸

36 There has been discussion on what makes another church "abroad". The question has recently been
37 raised whether the reality of ethnic or culturally defined churches in a same region should be considered
38 as part of CO article 50.⁹

39 **ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES AND THE EXECUTION OF CO 50**

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

51 While one synod directly encouraged classes to interact with a bordering RCUS classis the next synod
52 mandated the CPEU to encourage classes to interact with FRCNA and the CRCNA to encourage classes to
53 interact with an OPC presbytery in Canada once formed.¹⁴

54 Hence the study mandate given in 2019 included the question, to what extent should the practice of
55 inter-church relations be a local or classis matter, and to what extent a federational matter.¹⁵

56 In cross-cultural situations and where concerns existed, committees were mandated to cooperate with
57 same-culture EF churches in maintaining a relationship with a common EF church.¹⁶

58 **CATEGORIES OF RELATIONSHIPS**

59 Strictly speaking there is just one category of relationship, which the CO refers to as "sister church"
60 and synod documents refer to as "ecclesiastical fellowship" (EF). Though there has been confusion at
61 times over the two terms, these are synonymous.¹⁷

62 In principle all EF relationships are the same even if application may see differences; thus there is no
63 reason to establish a different form of permanent ecclesiastical relationship with churches elsewhere
64 other than the existing EF.¹⁸

65 In practice there were initially three categories: "EF", "seeking EF", and "none"^a.¹⁹ The second category
66 was loosely referred to as "contact church".²⁰ In 1977 one such "contact church", the OPC, was declared
67 to be considered a "true church of our Lord Jesus Christ", creating a "temporary relationship called
68 ecclesiastical contact" (TREC).²¹ The fear existed that EC was the equivalent of the "Fraternal Relations"
69 category used by the OPC. GS 1980 indicated it did not, rather, TREC is no more than a step closer towards
70 EF and does not imply intercommunion.²²

71 A further subcategory of "contact church" was implicitly created when the CanRC joined the ICRC
72 which, among its members, counted two churches with whom the CanRC had no contact. Empirically the
73 CanRC had a category "contact church" which included a subcategory "TREC" and a subcategory "ICRC
74 member church". However, there was no clarity on what these subcategories implied in practice.²³ It has
75 been specified that "TREC" only exists when EF is possible and that ICRC membership did not make a
76 church EF or TREC.²⁴

^a Other than "EF" the terminology is that of the author of this document and should not be related to anything found in synod acts.

77 A complicating factor has been that other churches had multiple categories for inter-church relations
78 while the CanRC persisted with one permanent one and one temporary one.²⁵ A request from churches
79 to create other categories was denied for “unfortunately” not interacting with a previous synod decision.²⁶
80 A request from the CRCA was denied for proposing what was not deemed necessary and for not having
81 the support of the CCCNA; the ten churches that submitted considerations on this request were all
82 opposed to the request.²⁷ The following synod denied a request for naming the categories that existed in
83 practice as the request had not gone the ecclesiastical route.²⁸ Most recently GS 2019 decided that a
84 category used by other churches equated to the CanRC “contact and dialogue”.²⁹ GS 2019 also received
85 the request from the CRCA and CCCNA together to reflect on the issue of categories, and many churches
86 in response pointed to the categories used by other churches.³⁰ There is a remarkable difference between
87 the situations at GS 2010 and GS 2019.^a

88 **NEW CONTACTS / RELATIONSHIPS**

89 The feasibility of a contact or relationships has frequently been a factor of consideration^{b, 31}

90 Before EF is entered into there must be a “careful and serious”^c investigation that a church has adopted
91 Reformed confessions and polity and maintains it.³² In one instance, EF was decided to since the
92 committee and some local churches were interacting with another church in a way consistent with EF.³³

93 Initially requests to establish a contact and work towards EF would come from local churches,³⁴ from
94 broader assemblies,³⁵ or from a synod appointed committee.³⁶ More recently it has been determined that
95 such requests should come via the ecclesiastical route,³⁷ though there has been inconsistency.³⁸ Contact
96 may also be initiated by the committee if it arises out of multilateral relations though multilateral relations
97 do not necessarily obligate the creation of contact.³⁹ If the request comes from another church, it may
98 run via the committee.⁴⁰

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

108 A request to establish a contact and then work towards EF needs to be accompanied by sufficient
109 information.⁴⁴

110 Before EF is established there must be proper consultation with other EF churches regarding the new
111 relationship (EF Rule 3).⁴⁵

112 Maintaining EF with more than one church in a region is not accepting the doctrine of ecclesiastical
113 pluriformity.⁴⁶ In such situations unity is encouraged.⁴⁷

114 Synods have been imprecise when it comes the language used for establishing EF. For example, EF was
115 “offered” to a church which was “offering” it to the CanRC.⁴⁸

^a 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.

^b 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.

^c The Dutch has “nauwgezet en ernstig”.

116 **EF RULE 1 & 6: “DIFFERENCES” (AKA “DIVERGENCIES”)**

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

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

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

149 GS 2004 considered the goal of discussions of differences to be whether unity of faith is adequately
150 and faithful expressed in confessional standards, and that the focus should be on scriptural faithfulness in
151 the confession and putting principles into practice.⁶² The next synod considered: “The [CRCA] correctly
152 observes that the goal of growing together in the unity of faith can be pursued under [EF Rules]. Existing
153 differences in confession and polity have not proven to be impediments for [EF]. Thus, within the context
154 of [EF], the one can learn from the other about varying legitimate ways to summarize God’s Word and
155 how to put into practice its principles, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each. We can also
156 learn from each other about other matters of common concern which develop from time to time in the

^a The decision does not define “unity”. It likely means “unity in faith”, not “federational unity”.

^b In this case, the GKv.

^c 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.”

157 life of the churches. From such interaction, as opportunities arise, each federation can sharpen the other
158 as iron sharpens iron.”^{a,63} This same synod considered that discussions of differences will never be done,
159 given the dynamic nature of church life and such discussions can take place “when necessary and
160 appropriate”.⁶⁴ GS 2007 and several synods following mandated specific discussions with specific
161 churches.⁶⁵

162 Because churches wondered whether discussions were indeed happening, committees were
163 mandated to share information with the churches,⁶⁶ and one synod even directly asked the synod of
164 another church about a concern.⁶⁷ In 2016 it was determined that unless the purpose and goal for
165 discussing a difference was stated, there would no longer be a specific mandate as it is covered by EF Rule
166 1.⁶⁸

167 The investigation of a church should not focus on local practices or what is reported in the press but
168 on confessions and official documents.⁶⁹ A particular church should not be scrutinized more closely than
169 others.⁷⁰

170 In one situation EF was delayed because a church, though having and maintaining the Reformed
171 Confessions and having a Reformed CO, was not considered to be practicing Reformed church
172 governance.⁷¹

173 **EF AND A CHURCH SCHISM**

174 When an EF church experienced a schism it was initially decided that the committee should have
175 involved itself, but later that same synod decided that the committee was right in not involving itself.⁷²

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

181 When two church schisms were compared, where, for the one, EF was continued with both parties
182 while for the other it was continued with just the one, the crucial difference was that in the second schism,
183 one party had declared the other a false church.⁷⁴

184 **EF AND A CHURCH MERGERS**

185 When an EF church merges with a non-EF church, EF neither ends nor is automatically transferred but
186 an investigation is to take place as to whether to extend or end EF.⁷⁵

187 **ENDING A CONTACT OR EF RELATIONSHIP**

188 At various points in time synods have had to consider explicitly whether to end a contact or
189 relationship. In some situations it was simply recognizing that the other party had ceased contact.⁷⁶ In one
190 situation a contact was ended because of cultural and language barriers.⁷⁷ The dissolution of a contact
191 (e.g. when a church merges with another church when there is a relationship with both) was considered
192 to imply the fulfilment of the mandate^{b,78} In several instances the continuation of contact was moved
193 from a bilateral approach to a multilateral setting (ICRC, NAPARC).⁷⁹

194 In a situation where a request for EF from another church was withdrawn, a mandate to continue
195 contact was maintained, though it need not be “on an official level”^{c,80} In these situations EF was not
196 considered desirable as the other church did not have the manpower to maintain EF with the CanRC.

197 Where the CanRC had concerns about an EF church, synods mandated the CRCA to work in cooperation
198 with deputies / committees of other churches, sometimes naming them, sometimes simply specifying

^a This creates a general mandate for inter-church relations committees to ensure that learning, understanding, and sharpening takes place.

^b Note that the dissolved church (OCRC, a contact church) merged with an EF church (URCNA).

^c This could be inconsistent, as the purpose of contact was originally EF or church unity.

199 “sister-churches”.⁸¹ Where concerns were considered to be very serious, the privileges granted under EF
200 Rules 4&5 were suspended. Because it could not be said with confidence that the marks of the true church
201 were consistently present in an EF church, the EF relationship was ended.⁸² The inter-church relations
202 committee was mandated to convey the decision via letter delivered in person.⁸³

203 It has been considered that a synod cannot conditionally end a relationship or bind a next synod to a
204 decision regarding EF under certain conditions.⁸⁴

205 ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATIONS

206 The church political legitimacy of ecumenical conferences has been affirmed.⁸⁵ Because membership
207 is “voluntary”, the body is a “conference”, and its conclusions are “advisory”, ecumenical bodies are not
208 considered to jeopardize confessional integrity. Rather, they are suitable forums in which to share the
209 CanRC heritage.⁸⁶

210 Attendance at an RES was on synod agendas during the 1960 and 1970s. In the end it was determined
211 that the CanRC did not fit the qualifications to send an observer to the RES.⁸⁷

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

217 Over the years there has been much discussion about CanRC delegates voting on allowing churches to
218 become members of an ecumenical organization. It was decided that the CanRC can only sponsor EF
219 churches for membership, but delegates or synods can vote on admission as members^a.⁹³

220 The CanRC began investigating NAPARC in 1998 and decided to join in 2007 when the CRCNA were no
221 longer members.⁹⁴ Within the context of NAPARC there has been a lot of concern about the application
222 of the Golden Rule Comity Agreement and Transfer of Members Agreement.⁹⁵

223 EXTENT AND CONCENTRATION / REGIONALIZATION

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

229 MANDATE

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

232 It happened once that an interchurch relations committee (CCU) was appointed without any
233 mandate.¹⁰⁰

234 Normally a synod will decide to continue EF and then mandate the execution of this under EF rules to
235 an interchurch committee. Sometimes, however, the committee itself is mandated to continue EF.¹⁰¹
236 Sometimes there is no mandate for a committee at all in a decision regarding a church.¹⁰²

237 Fulfilment of a mandate should happen even if a committee feels a mandate is wrong, though fulfilling
238 it may involve interacting with it, provided the committee does not go beyond it.¹⁰³ On another occasion,
239 given ongoing developments, a committee did act beyond its mandate, and this, though challenged before
240 synod, was approved.¹⁰⁴

241 When prayer and/or support by the CanRC for another church is mandated, sometimes the mandate
242 is passed on through an inter-church committee¹⁰⁵ and sometimes directly.¹⁰⁶ If support involves another

^a NAPARC requires a vote by a general synod. The ICRC requires a vote by delegates of a member church.

243 committee, sometimes the mandate is passed on through an inter-church committee¹⁰⁷ and sometimes
244 given directly^a.¹⁰⁸ When given directly, it is often part of the “church relationship” decision rather than the
245 committee-in-question’s own mandate.

246 Committees have been frequently mandated to provide a contact or EF church with assistance in areas
247 of confession, polity, and liturgy;¹⁰⁹ in one case to help a contact church to merge with an EF church.¹¹⁰

248 For the sake of proper procedure, a synod should not deal with communications from interchurch
249 relations committees of other churches without the involvement of the appropriate CanRC committee.¹¹¹

250 Reports by committees serve as “observations” for a synod, they are not “approved”. As such,
251 documents a committee produces do not require synod approval.¹¹²

252 Workload has been a concern at times. Sometimes workload was addressed by increasing the number
253 of men on a committee.¹¹³ Sometimes it was addressed by adjusting the mandate^b.¹¹⁴

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

- 255 - Urging contact and EF churches to cooperate in theological training;¹¹⁵
- 256 - Contact between parallel committees of an EF church. Sometimes the mandate was given to the
257 specific committees,¹¹⁶ sometimes the interchurch relations committee was mandated to
258 facilitate^c;¹¹⁷
- 259 - Mandating annual or biennial meetings^d with a counterpart in another church.¹¹⁸

260 EF RULES

261 GS 1954 adopted 6 EF Rules that were considered obligations.¹¹⁹ Later on it was considered application
262 of EF rules depended on the similarity of the other church to the CanRC’s^e.¹²⁰

263 The rules were tweaked and challenged early on.¹²¹ An issue was the reality that different churches
264 (GKv, FRCA, CanRC) all had their own version of the rules.¹²²

265 GS 1992 adopted a set of rules that have continued to function since then almost unchanged.¹²³
266 Changing these rules is to be done, not via an appeal but via the ecclesiastical route.¹²⁴ GS 2019 considered
267 a review of our current rules in the light of rules of other churches might be helpful.¹²⁵

268 EF RULE 1 & 6: ASSISTING IN MAINTAINING AND INFORMING OR CONSULTING REGARDING CHANGES

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

272 A synod added “mission” to the list of items in EF Rule 1 in a mandate.¹²⁷

273 EF RULE 3: THIRD PARTY RELATIONSHIPS

274 In pursuing a relationship with another church, the CanRC have frequently expressed concern about
275 relationships that other church might have with other churches or membership in an ecumenical body,
276 and considered this to be a hurdle to EF.¹²⁸ The CanRC have been very insistent that consultation needs
277 to take place before churches in EF enter into EF with third parties.¹²⁹

^a 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.

^b See “EF Rule 7: Delegation to Broadest Assemblies”.

^c GS 2010 did both when it comes to the SCBP.

^d Two of the 2007 decisions have “endeavour” in them, a third does not.

^e 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”.

278 **EF RULE 5: MINISTER CREDENTIALS**

279 Ecclesiastical Contact (TREC) does not include pulpit exchange.¹³⁰

280 It has been noted that while EF opens the pulpit “in principle”, the actual opening of the pulpit depends
281 on an invitation from the local church.¹³¹

282 There have been various practising on who issues the credentials for a minister of/to another church.
283 Current practice is that the supervising consistory should do so.¹³²

284 **EF RULE 7: DELEGATION TO BROADEST ASSEMBLIES**

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

296 **COMMITTEES**

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

305 Analysis indicates that initially the division of labour was shaped by “the type of relationship” and in
306 2019 become “regionalisation”. A factor has also been the residential addresses of committee members.
307 By the mid 1980s CRCA members were located in BC while CCCNA members were located in Manitoba (at
308 times known as subcommittee west) and Ontario (at times known as subcommittee west). More recently
309 both the CRCA and CCCNA have members from Ontario to BC – modern communication methods allow
310 this to function well.

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

312 The **CCCA** initially functioned as three individual committees^a and continues to consist of two
313 subcommittees;¹⁴³

314 The **CRCA** saw the establishment of a subcommittee in 2010, yet that subcommittee functioned
315 for the most part as an independent committee.¹⁴⁴

316 The **CPEU/CCU** was augmented with 4 sub-committees in 2001. Initially these subcommittees
317 were answerable to CPEU, then directly to synod.¹⁴⁵ The layout of the appointment decision
318 suggests two functioned as true subcommittees while two others did not.¹⁴⁶

319 Communication between the committees was for the longest time minimal.^b This has led to ignorance

^a 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.

^b Thus a CRCA request to GS 2010 to restructure the committees was rejected because the opinion of the CCCNA on it was not known.

320 of each other's activities and diversification in the exercise of interchurch relations. This reality has made
321 it difficult for other churches to communicate with the CanRC. Considerations of GS 2010 did not help the
322 situation.^a Since 2016 cooperation has been encouraged and in 2019 a study mandate was given to reflect
323 on reorganizing.¹⁴⁷

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

328 COMMITTEE COMPOSITION & APPOINTMENTS

329 It has been constant practice that a committee can only appoint new members to fill inter-synod
330 vacancies.¹⁴⁸ An individual should in principle serve no more than 3 consecutive 3 year-terms,¹⁴⁹ and the
331 committees are responsible to ensure both continuity and fresh blood.¹⁵⁰ In 2010 there was some
332 resistance to recommendations for appointments coming from committees, but committee
333 recommendations were mandated in 2013^b.¹⁵¹ It has happened occasionally that one individual served on
334 more than one inter-church relations committee.¹⁵² GS 2007 determined that professors should not be a
335 appointed to a certain subcommittee, GS 2013 did so anyway.¹⁵³

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

340 ADVISORY COMMITTEES & THIRD PARTY CONSULTATION

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

347 CONSISTENCY

348 Twice synods have urged consistency in contacts or relationships with other churches.¹⁵⁶

349 REPORTS

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

356 Committees were also required to inform the churches from time to time of items of interest, and
357 should not rely purely on *Clarion* to do so.¹⁵⁹

358 Reports are to provide background information on churches CanRC may be unfamiliar with.¹⁶⁰

^a 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.

^b And yet, GS 2016 ignored a recommendation from the CRCA.

359 **NAMES AND ACRONYMS**

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

364 **INVITATIONS TO A GS-CANRC**

365 Initially it was determined that all EF churches should be invited to send delegates to a CanRC synod
366 at least one year before synod convenes.¹⁶² This became “as soon as its date has been established” in
367 1989, an approach last affirmed in 1998.¹⁶³

368 **FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS AT CANRC SYNODS**

369 A question most synods were confronted with was the extent of the rights and privileges of delegates
370 sent by other churches to attend a CanRC synod. Synods have at times referred to delegates from both EF
371 and EC churches as “fraternal delegates”¹⁶⁴ though since then the term “fraternal delegate” has been used
372 for a delegate from EF churches and “observer” for a delegate from a non-EF church^a.¹⁶⁵ Most recently
373 the language was “tightened” with the expression “officially delegated observers”.¹⁶⁶

374 Initially it was determined that fraternal delegates of EF churches would be seated as advisors.¹⁶⁷
375 Delegates from non-EF churches were seated as visitors and in one situation refused the privilege of the
376 floor.¹⁶⁸ Privilege of the floor has always been granted to fraternal delegates. It would seem that in 2001
377 privilege of the floor was also granted to observers, other synods make no statement on this.¹⁶⁹ However,
378 it has happened in the recent past that observers were allowed to address synod with a message of
379 greeting.¹⁷⁰ This suggests that “privilege of the floor” is more than just the right to address the assembly
380 when given a time slot.^b

381 Initially internal synod documents were considered to be only for synod members.¹⁷¹ By 1998 this had
382 changed to synod members and fraternal delegates.¹⁷² In 2010 observers were also given access.¹⁷³ In
383 2019 “confidential documents” were restricted to synod members and fraternal delegates, while “public”
384 documents were also for observers.¹⁷⁴

385 **FINANCES**

386 For the first few decades there seems to have been on constraints on the cost of exercising inter-
387 church relations. In 1992 it was decided that the CRCA had to submit a detailed financial statement and
388 budget. From 1995 to 2004 synods received financial statements and adopted budgets. The acts of 2007,
389 2010, 2013, and 2016 have no record of financial statements or adopted budgets.¹⁷⁵ The most recent
390 synod determined that each committee should appoint an internal financial person to liaise with the
391 general fund.¹⁷⁶

392 **COMMITTEE ACCESS TO SYNOD DOCUMENTS**

393 The responses of churches to reports by synod appointed committees go to the synod receiving the
394 reports, not to the committee itself. At times it would happen that such a response would be forwarded
395 on to a committee.¹⁷⁷ Concerned that this might be considered restricting, upon its request, the CRCA was
396 granted express access to all church responses.¹⁷⁸

^a This is the nomenclature used in what follows yet in this subsection.

^b 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).

- ¹ GS 1954 (44; 49; 54).
- ² 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).
- ³ 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).
- ⁴ GS 1954 (54), GS 1977 (91.III), GS 1989 (117), GS 2004 (85).
- ⁵ GS 1995 (106.V.B.5), GS 1998 (96.III.E.2-4,6), GS 2001 (73.5.3).
- ⁶ GS 2007 (98.2.7-8, 98.3.5).
- ⁷ GS 1995 (106.V.C.4).
- ⁸ GS 2010 (29.3.2).
- ⁹ GS 1992 (79.III.E), GS 2019 (149).
- ¹⁰ 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).
- ¹¹ 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).
- ¹² GS 2007 (128.4.3), GS 2013 (87.4.3.2-3).
- ¹³ GS 2007 (160.3.3).
- ¹⁴ GS 2004 (24.5.5), GS 2004 (85.5.2.3), GS 2019 (86.4.2.2).
- ¹⁵ GS 2019 (149.2.3).
- ¹⁶ GS 2013 (127.4.3.3), GS 2016 (104.4.4.8).
- ¹⁷ GS 2004 (97.4.4), GS 2007 (142.3.2).
- ¹⁸ 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).*
- ¹⁹ GS 1954 (44, 54, 99): EF with GKv, "seeking EF" with FRCA, FRCNA, 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.
- ²⁰ GS 1954 (100) appointed a Committee for *Contact* with the PRC.
- ²¹ GS 1977 (91.III).
- ²² GS 1980 (97.III.B.3).
- ²³ GS 2007 (27.3.2) noted that one church incorrectly considered "true church" to mean "sister church".
- ²⁴ GS 1986 (150.C.4, 175.I.C.3).
- ²⁵ GS 1989 (86 – GKv), GS 2001 (92 – FRCNA), GS 2019 (149 – FRCNA, HRC)
- ²⁶ GS 2007 (142.3.3) required interaction with GS 1980 (154).
- ²⁷ GS 2010 (59).
- ²⁸ 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.
- ²⁹ GS 2019 (112, 148). Something similar happened at GS 2001 (92).
- ³⁰ GS 2019 (149).
- ³¹ GS 1954 (49, 54), GS 2016 (120).
- ³² GS 1965 (141.II).
- ³³ GS 2007 (75.3.5).
- ³⁴ E.g. GS 1962 (146), GS 1974 (20, 64), GS 1977 (95), GS 1992 (36).
- ³⁵ E.g. GS 1962 (82), GS 1965 (141).
- ³⁶ GS 1986 (178).
- ³⁷ 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).

- ³⁸ 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 allowed a request from a local church, but this concerned a church (KPCA) that functions as part of an EF church (KPCCK). GS 2019 (147) allowed a request from a local church, supported by the CRCA.
- ³⁹ GS 1986 (178), GS 2007 (125).
- ⁴⁰ 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)
- ⁴¹ GS 1992 (112.III.B&D), GS 1995 (101.VI.A.1.a&c).
- ⁴² GS 1995 (86.IV.E; cf. 101.III.B.3).
- ⁴³ 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).
- ⁴⁴ GS 1962 (82, 146), GS 1974 (20.cons7), GS 1977 (95.cons(d)), GS 1983 (150.C.3).
- ⁴⁵ GS 2007 (150.5.3.1).
- ⁴⁶ 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.
- ⁴⁷ 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).
- ⁴⁸ GS 2001 (55.4.1).
- ⁴⁹ GS 1965 (141), GS 1995 (73.III.D).
- ⁵⁰ As has been the case with the OPC from 1965 to 2001, the KPCCK 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.
- ⁵¹ GS 1977 (91.IV.cons2).
- ⁵² GS 1980 (152.C.5).
- ⁵³ GS 1983 (55.C.1.c).
- ⁵⁴ GS 1986 (128.C.cons2-3).
- ⁵⁵ GS 1989 (94.D.IV), GS 1992 (72.IV.B.7).
- ⁵⁶ GS 1992 (72.V.C.2).
- ⁵⁷ 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).
- ⁵⁸ 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.
- ⁵⁹ GS 1998 (130.VI.F), GS 2001 (45.4.10-12), GS 2004 (88.4.4.1).
- ⁶⁰ GS 2001 (45). The quote is in consideration 4.9. See further considerations 11-13 and 17.
- ⁶¹ GS 2001 (80.4.7).
- ⁶² GS 2004 (88.4.3).
- ⁶³ GS 2007 (80.4.6).
- ⁶⁴ GS 2007 (107.3.3). Note that GS 1980 (152.II.C.5 [=152.I.C.5]) stated that discussions should not continue endlessly.
- ⁶⁵ 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).
- ⁶⁶ GS 2010 (28.4.2.3; 29.4.2.2, 34.4.3.3).
- ⁶⁷ GS 2010 (63.4.4).
- ⁶⁸ GS 2016 (49.3.2-4).
- ⁶⁹ GS 1995 (106.V.B.6), GS 2001 (80.4.5), GS 2004 (44.4.9), GS 2007 (133.4.9).
- ⁷⁰ GS 2001 (80.4.12).
- ⁷¹ GS 2013 (127.3.1).
- ⁷² GS 1962 (112, 155).
- ⁷³ 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).
- ⁷⁴ GS 2010 (155.3.6).
- ⁷⁵ GS 2013 (126.4.3.1-2).
- ⁷⁶ FRCNA: GS 2007 (105.3.1), GS 2010 (30.3.2).
- ⁷⁷ GS 2007 (152.3.1).
- ⁷⁸ GS 2010 (42.3).
- ⁷⁹ GS 2010 (30.4.1.2), GS 2016 (90.4.3).

- ⁸⁰ GS 2013 (157.4.2), GS 2016 (106.4.1, 107.4.1), GS 2019 (101.4.1; 102.4.1).
- ⁸¹ Regarding the GKv: GS 2010 (86.4.4.5) specified OPC and FRCA. GS 2016 (104.4.4.8) said “our sister-churches”.
- ⁸² GS 2016 (104.4.3); GS 2019 (41.4.2).
- ⁸³ GS 2019 (41.4.4.1).
- ⁸⁴ GS 2016 (104.3.9).
- ⁸⁵ GS 1983 (121.E – as the majority report was adopted, the minority report was rejected).
- ⁸⁶ GS 1992 (94.II.E and III.B).
- ⁸⁷ GS 1965 (212), GS 1974 (37).
- ⁸⁸ GS 1980 (153.E.7), GS 1983 (121.D.1).
- ⁸⁹ E.g. GS 1983 (121.D.3).
- ⁹⁰ GS 1998 (52.V.C), GS 2007 (132.4.3.1), GS 2013 (167.4.2).
- ⁹¹ GS 2016 (121.4.4; cf. 89.3.6).
- ⁹² GS 2010 (156.3.7).
- ⁹³ GS 1995 (101.IV.B.3), GS 1998 (52.V.D), GS 2004 (52.5.2), GS 2007 (27.3.2).
- ⁹⁴ GS 1998 (51.V.D.5), GS 2001 (74.5.7), GS 2007 (140.4.2), GS 2013 (77, 78); GS 2016 (89).
- ⁹⁵ 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)
- ⁹⁶ GS 1954 (44, 54).
- ⁹⁷ GS 1992 (112.III.C), first quote: GS 1992 (128.III.D), GS 1998 (72.III.C), second quote: GS 2007 (142.3.1).
- ⁹⁸ GS 2001 (54.3.2), GS 2007 (125), GS 2010 (108.3.9), GS 2019 (121.3.5).
- ⁹⁹ GS 1998 (132.III.B), GS 2016 (120.3.2).
- ¹⁰⁰ GS 2010 (63.4). Adopted recommendation 4.5 comes closest, though it lacks the introduction “To mandate the CCU”.
- ¹⁰¹ E.g. GS 2007 (128.4.3), GS 2010 (157.4.2), GS 2013 (192.4.2), GS 2016 (61.4.2).
- ¹⁰² E.g. GS 2013 (123.4, 132.4), GS 2016 (60.4, 81).
- ¹⁰³ GS 1983 (55.C.1.b), GS 2001 (45.4.5), GS 2013 (76.2.5 and 76.3.3).
- ¹⁰⁴ GS 2013 (190.3.3 and 190.4.1).
- ¹⁰⁵ E.g. GS 2004 (33.5.2.1, 44.5.4.6).
- ¹⁰⁶ E.g. GS 2007 (124.4.2), GS 2010 (82.4.2).
- ¹⁰⁷ E.g. GS 1995 (101.II.C.3), GS 2004 (33.5.2.1).
- ¹⁰⁸ 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.
- ¹⁰⁹ E.g. GS 1998 (97.V.C.3), GS 2013 (127.4.3.2), GS 2019 (120.4.2.2, 121.4.2.2).
- ¹¹⁰ GS 2019 (147.4.1.1).
- ¹¹¹ GS 1992 (113.IV.B).
- ¹¹² GS 1995 (86.IV.A).
- ¹¹³ GS 2001 (56.3.7), 2019 (128.3.5).
- ¹¹⁴ GS 2007 (142.4.1.2).
- ¹¹⁵ 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).
- ¹¹⁶ GS 2010 (115.4.2), GS 2013 (123.4.5).
- ¹¹⁷ GS 2010 (33.4.3.1), GS 2016 (21.4.3.2), GS 2019 (117.4.4.2).
- ¹¹⁸ GS 2004 (88.4.5), GS 2007 (107.4.3, 131.4.4, 133.5.8).
- ¹¹⁹ GS 1954 (54), GS 1971 (92).
- ¹²⁰ GS 1980 (154.D.2).
- ¹²¹ GS 1958 (56), GS 1962 (139), GS 1965 (93), GS 1968 (79.6).
- ¹²² GS 1954 (54), GS 1965 (92), GS 1992 (49.V.F), GS 1995 (19.V.E).
- ¹²³ GS 1992 (50).
- ¹²⁴ GS 1998 (123.III.B.2). GS 1998 (123.IV.A) thus rescinded GS 1995 (101.VII.C).
- ¹²⁵ GS 2019 (149.3.3).
- ¹²⁶ GS 1983 (99.D.3).
- ¹²⁷ GS 2007 (75.4.3.4).
- ¹²⁸ 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).
- ¹²⁹ 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)
- ¹³⁰ GS 1980 (97.III.B.3).
- ¹³¹ GS 1992 (50.III.D).
- ¹³² GS 1968 (110), GS 1974 (170.B), GS 1995 (101.V.B.2), GS 2013 (175.4.2-3).
- ¹³³ 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).
- ¹³⁴ GS 2010 (61.4.1.3), GS 2013 (55.4.1.3), GS 2016 (56.4.1.3), GS 2019 (68.4.2.3).
- ¹³⁵ 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.
- ¹³⁶ 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.
- ¹³⁷ 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).
- ¹³⁸ GS 1995 (106.V.A.7) refused to merge the CCOPC with the CRCA.
- ¹³⁹ GS 1998 (72.IV, 143,II-IV), GS 2001 (74.4.2).
- ¹⁴⁰ 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.
- ¹⁴¹ GS 2010 (86.4.3).
- ¹⁴² GS 2019 (41.4.1 & 41.4.4, 139.4.4 & 139.4.7).
- ¹⁴³ GS 2001 (45.5.6, 55.3.6, 56.4.1)
- ¹⁴⁴ GS 2010 (86.4.3, 167.3.2).
- ¹⁴⁵ GS 2001 (95), GS 2004 (75, 76, 77), GS 2007 (98.4.3-4).
- ¹⁴⁶ GS 2013 (130, 131, 149, 177.Part2.6, 182), GS 2016 (177).
- ¹⁴⁷ GS 2016 (89.3.6, 121.3.3), GS 2019 (149).
- ¹⁴⁸ GS 1971 (96), GS 1974 (183).
- ¹⁴⁹ GS 1995 (116).
- ¹⁵⁰ GS 2001 (56.4.5-6), GS 2004 (31.3), GS 2010 (60.3.5).
- ¹⁵¹ GS 2010 (61.3.4), GS 2013 (177.Part1.4).
- ¹⁵² L. Selles in 1954, H. Scholten in 1968, J. Visscher in 2007 and 2010.
- ¹⁵³ 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.
- ¹⁵⁴ GS 1971 (52).
- ¹⁵⁵ 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.
- ¹⁵⁶ 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.
- ¹⁵⁷ GS 1965 (148).
- ¹⁵⁸ GS 1968 (41, 134.VIII.8, 154.RecommendationsE.5), e.g. GS 1992 (72.V.C.6), GS 2019 (68.3.2).
- ¹⁵⁹ GS 1974 (140.F.f), GS 1995 (101.B.1).
- ¹⁶⁰ GS 2013 (55.3.2).
- ¹⁶¹ GS 1998 (40.IV.E); GS 2004 (90).
- ¹⁶² GS 1974 (140.E), GS 1980 (153.E.6), GS 1986 (145.D.2).
- ¹⁶³ GS 1989 (102.E.3), GS 1998 (34.IV.D).
- ¹⁶⁴ E.g. GS 1995 (43) calls a delegate from an EC church a “fraternal delegate”
- ¹⁶⁵ E.g. GS 1998 (6), GS 2004 (56, 69), GS 2010 (5.7), GS 2013 (5.7).

¹⁶⁶ 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.)

¹⁶⁷ GS 1954 (54); GS 1974 (5).

¹⁶⁸ GS 1968 (11, 23), GS 1974 (50).

¹⁶⁹ GS 2001 (4.2).

¹⁷⁰ GS 2016 (44), GS 2019 (51).

¹⁷¹ GS 1986 (6.f).

¹⁷² GS 1998 (8.e), GS 2007 (5.7).

¹⁷³ GS 2010 (5.7), GS 2013 (5.7), GS 2016 (8.7).

¹⁷⁴ 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.)

¹⁷⁵ 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).

¹⁷⁶ GS 2019 (128).

¹⁷⁷ GS 2001 (94.5.2); GS 2004 (86.4.11).

¹⁷⁸ GS 2019 (128.4.4).