

There are three main groups within the CRC. These three groups are not exclusive as there is some overlap between them.

Confessionalists: This group of people hold to the Confessions of the CRC. In some ways they are more concerned that practices are not in line with the Confessions rather than with Scripture. These are the people of the Afscheiding and the Second Reformation. They are pietist in nature. The focus in their Christian lives is living in a way that take seriously the claims of the Bible. The problem is that they tend toward legalism.

Neo-Calvinists: This group of people take serious the direct in which Abraham Kuyper took the CRC. They are concerned with claiming all of life for Jesus Christ since there is no area in which Jesus does not say, "This is mine!" Neo-Calvinists are active in all areas of life. Since all of life is religion, then any vocation can be used to bring glory to God. The downside to this group is that they tend toward worldliness. In their fervour to claim all areas of life for God, they sometimes forget to use discernment in regard to the activities in which they engage. In some ways they tend toward a post-mill position in that they feel as though they can make the kingdom of God a reality in this world.

Evangelicals: This group is typified by its desire to reach out and to spread the gospel. And unlike the Confessionalists, they want to spread the gospel in the neighbourhoods where they live. Mission work doesn't only take place far away but also at home. Their focus in on the reality of the personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They seek spiritual aliveness in their church rather than adherence to Confessions. Their upward focus takes their eyes off the surrounding world and the injustices found there.

All three of these groups have a dimension of what it means to be Reformed. If the CRC is to survive, then all three must work together in some sort of harmony. And this might be hard for a tradition which solves its problems by schism and division.

God to the general Christian community

Synod 1934

- first Psalter Hymnal approved and use of hymns
- form for ordination of elders and deacons radically reworked

1940-49: membership in the NAE

Synod 1944—Report on Ecumenicity

- we have an obligation toward all Christians
- we have a deeper obligation toward Protestants
- we have a deeper obligation toward Reformed and Presbyterians
- we have a deeper obligation toward Reformed and Presbyterians who are confessionally faithful

1946: RES founded—in 1980 it became the REC

1958: RES publishes a report on Infallibility. In response to Barthian theology, the GKN asked for the infallibility study so that it could gain clarity as it asked questions.

1959-61: Hoogland brothers raise issues concerning “Infallibility and Inspiration” at CTS

Synod 1961

- inspiration and infallibility are clearly connected
- Kromminga exonerated on periphery charges
- Synod reaffirms doctrine on infallibility—the CRC has a carefully thorough and nuanced position on the trustworthiness and reliability of Scripture.

Synod 1967—Love of God Controversy

- Harold Dekker said we should be able to say “God loves you.” At Synod, Dekker clarified that God’s redemptive love is meant for all and his redeeming love is for the elect.

1972: “Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority”

- Verhey said that Scripture had to be read according to its genre and therefore it wasn’t necessarily factual.
- Hegeman said that Stek was soft on the historicity of the Bible.
- Libolt

Synod 1980—Exegesis controversy

- Harry Boer said that Scripture doesn’t teach reprobation like the Confessions do. Synod replied that doctrine doesn’t need to have a specific, exegetical basis as long as it is consistent with biblical exegesis and biblical theology.

1983—Report 44

1991—Report 28

- general and special revelation have divine authority
- freedom of exegesis—let people explore and interpret the Bible
- freedom of science without canonizing its theories
- unity of the human race in creation and the fall
- uniqueness of human race as image bearers of God
- passed Declaration F which said that the Bible clearly teaches (along with the Confessions) that we do not have evolutionary forebearers
- an added note stated that this did not eliminate further discussion on the origin of humanity but only did not permit any evolutionary view to be taught in the church

1600ff: Second Reformation

1618-19: Synod of Dort where forms unity take the centre stage

1816: National synod called by Willem I makes sweeping changes including "in so far as" from "because" they agree with Scripture on the Form of Subscription and the introduction of hymns

1816-24ff: Conventicles form in reaction

1819: Reveil with Bilderdijk, Van Prinsterer, Da Costa, Cadadose

1830's: Afscheiding begins with De Cock and Scholte

1840's: emigration to America begins—Scholte settles in Iowa and Van Raalte in W. Michigan

1850: Union with the RCA

1857: Withdrawal from the RCA—formation of the True Dutch Reformed Church (ie., the CRC is born)

1863: Van Leeuwen begins teaching sem students—beginning of CTS

1863: Kuyper converted while serving in Beesd

1885: the Doleantie leave and form their own church—appealed for others to reject state church

1892: Union of Afscheiding and Doleantie to form the GKN

Synod 1920—Liturgy

- more congregational participation
- more Calvinistic worship through the third use of the law
- dialogical—God speaks and we respond
- capture some American nuances

Synod 1920—Inspiration

- Synod didn't do anything with Janssen, but what was at stake was the fundamental issue about the authority of Scripture. Janssen was naturalizing some of the miracles, saying that God was using natural order to achieve his purposes. He used other literature to show that there was a dependency of the Bible on them, but that the Holy Spirit cleaned this other literature up.

Synod 1924—Common Grace

- God does have a disposition of mercy and kindness toward the unsaved, but it is not redemptive, only common.
- God restrains evil in the world without changing human hearts in a variety of ways
- Actual instances of civic good, integrity, and righteousness done by the unregenerate are attributed to the goodness of God working in these people.

Synod 1926

- an overture to forbid the use of choirs was rejected

Synod 1928—Worldly Amusements

- Amusements must honour God and give him glory and we cannot support institutions that do not do this.
- Recreation is important, for rest is creational.
- We are of the world but not of it. Therefore, we must stand on guard.
- The Bible is not a moral code book. We are expected to be a deliberating body of Christians who with the guidance of the Holy Spirit can discern God's direction.

Synod 1928

- approved a uniform order of worship
- the churches reacted and said that Synod had no right to impose a particular style of worship
- Synod recommended the order of worship and for 40 years was the standard of the CRC

Synod 1930—Baptism of Adopted Children

- church began to see the bigness of the covenant
- the ethnic understanding of the church was loosened
- an awareness arose that the covenant was not contained in genetics but is a promise of