

21.11 PETITION OF PROTEST OF JL KRUGER WITH REGARD TO THE DECISION OF SYNOD 2003 ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION (Art 19, 39, 334)

- A. Br JL Kruger states the Petition of Protest.
- B. **Decision:** The Petition of Protest is referred to the Petition of Protest Commission 1.
- C. Rev C Aucamp delivers the Majority Report on behalf of the Petition of Protest Commission 1.
- D. Rev MJJ Erasmus delivers the Minority Report on behalf of the Petition of Protest Commission 1.

E. PETITION OF PROTEST

1. Introduction: motivation for submission of protest

In the *Call National Synod 2003 (Die Kerkblad, 22 May 2002:25)* the Scribe of the Deputy Correspondence (Agenda) says the following:

Those who want to submit Petitions of Protest against previous Synod decisions, should please take note of the procedure that has been set forth by the 1991 Synod. Compare Acta 1991:526-528, article 22..13.

- 1.1 Because this protest concerns certain matters of principle such as the authority of Scripture, Christ's ratification of the New Covenant and his command at the institution of the Holy Communion, and consequently relevant parts of the Confessions and also certain words and formulations in the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion, this protest is of such urgency that it is submitted to Synod directly.
- 1.2 Acta 1994:53, 3.2 grants full right to address the protest to Synod: *The Petition of Protest does not want to say anything more than that the ordinary ecclesiastical way according to CO art 46 should ordinarily be followed for all cases with consideration of CO artt 30, 31 and 33. The right to direct access to any majority meeting for matters that justify it Scripturally, is not blocked by the decision of 1991.*
- 1.3 The problematics around the exposition of a Synodal decision belong with the Synod that took the decision (CO, art 30). No minority meeting can deliver a verdict concerning such a matter.

2. Synod decision that is protested

The protest is with regard to certain formulations of 2.2 and 4.4 of Acta 2003 (**Errata has been incorporated**). To put the protest in context the entire decision is quoted:

F. REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMISSION OF PRE-ADVICE REGARDING THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

1. Mandate

To advise the Synod regarding Report Continuous Study on the Holy Communion and Second Report of the Commission : Doctrinal 1.

Decision: Note taken.

2. Points of Departure

2.1 Church Order, art 62: "Each church should celebrate the Holy Communion in the way that to its judgements serves to the most order. However, it should be well understood that the external ceremonies that are prescribed in the Word of God, may not be changed, that all superstitions should be avoided and that after the sermon and general prayers, the Form for the Holy Communion, as well as the prayer that belongs with it, should be read".

2.2 Instead of declining into a certain prescriptiveness, the Synod chose to fulfill CO art 62 by advising churches through a principle framework in the light of the Belgic Confession art 32. The framework is set out below.

Decision: Note taken.

3. Principle framework with regard to the way in which we celebrate the Holy Communion

Introductory

This feast is a spiritual meal where Christ reveals Himself and all of his good deeds to us and where he allows us to enjoy Him and the earnings of his suffering and death (Belgic Confession, art 35).

3.1 The bread and wine must be used as signs and seals of the body and blood of Christ (Matt 26:26-28; 1 Cor 11:23-26; Belgic Confession, art 35; HC, 25-29).

3.2 At the celebration of the Holy Communion there should be a distinction between fundamental aspects and sacramental acts. The church should then apply CO art 62 within this framework:

3.2.1 Fundamental aspects

At the serving of the Holy Communion the death of the Lord should be proclaimed in word and deed ("do this in remembrance to me" (Luke 22:19); "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor 11:26)).

3.2.1.1 The bread should be eaten in faith as sign and seal of the body of Christ (see Belgic Confession, art 35; HC, 25-29).

3.2.1.2 The wine should be drunk in faith as sign and seal of the blood of Christ.

Compare the following Scriptural information:

"Drink from it, all of you" (Matt 26:28)

"Take this and divide it among you." (Luke 22:17)

"...;do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11:25)

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Cor 11:26)

"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup" (1 Cor 11:28)

"...,when you come together to eat, wait for each other." (1 Cor 11:33).

Although Christ does not refer to wine in any of the commands, the relation is clearly of such a nature that He means that wine should be drunk as sign and seal of the blood of Christ (Belgic Confession, art 35; HC, 25, 28, 29).

Decision: Approved.

3.2.2 Sacramental acts

The Holy Communion has a meal character and is celebrated by believers together (1 Cor 11:33). This makes it a communal meal.

3.2.2.1 The bread has to be served to everyone with the instruction: "Take it and eat" (Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22; 1 Cor 11:23). This sacramental act clearly emphasises the fact that Jesus offers his body as sacrifice for all our sins.

3.2.2.2 The **cup of wine** should be served to everyone with the instruction: "Drink from it, all of you" (Matt 26:28). Drinking the wine from (a) communal cup(s) serves to symbolise the spiritual unity of faith in Christ. Therefore the drinking cup, with the wine as sign, has a prominent place and function.

Decision: Approved

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Synod approves the above-mentioned principle framework as advice to churches in their execution of CO art 62.

4.2 The above-mentioned principle framework serves as answer to the Petitions of Protest at the Synods of 1927 and 1930 (Acta 1994 :493-524).

4.3 The principle framework replaces the decisions of Synod 1927 and 1930 and therefore also the decision in 6.6 (Acta:729) of Synod 1997.

4.4 Where a local church has alternative ways of celebrating the Holy Communion within the set framework, there should be the necessary respect and understanding for each other with the love of Christ.

Decision:

1. Approved.
 2. Point 3.2.2.3 in Acta 2000 (bi. 401) is deleted.
- Acta 2003, Article 21.8, p545
7. Implication

**That the introductory sentences at 3.2.2 receive an addition to read as follows:
"This makes it a communal and love meal founded in the unity with Christ (see
Joh 13-16, 1 Cor 10:16, 17).**

Decisions: Approved.

3. Background

Since 2003 we have a "new" principle framework with regard to the way in which we celebrate the Holy Communion.

- 3.1 It is the **result** of a Petition of Protest by CFC Coetzee, LF Schulze and J Visser that was maintained based on 4 grounds of protest:
 - 3.1.1 Grounds of protest 1: Logically seen the formulation of 3.2.2.2 is not foolproof [3.2.2.2 The wine should be handed out to everyone ...]. It is changed to: The **cup of wine** should be served to everyone.
 - 3.1.2 Grounds of protest 2: Content-wise the formulation of the conclusion of the sacramental acts (3.2.2.3) unintendedly leads to a paradoxical interpretation [3.2.2.3 If churches deviate from the communal cup for weighty reasons, it should be done with motivation from Scripture.] The principle framework gives the cup with wine a prominent place and function. The point of departure is that the cup and the wine are directly connected. While the Synod wanted to indicate how exceptional cases had to be handled with 3.2.2.3, the formulation opens it up for paradoxical interpretations, which could not have been the intention of Synod. Decision on 3.2.2.3: **Point 3.2.2.3 in Acta 2000:401 is deleted.**
 - 3.1.3 Ground of Protest 3: Scripture is clear on the institution of the Holy Communion. The intention of Scripture is not clearly communicated in the formulation of the decisions of the Synod. This Ground of Protest is maintained and the Ad Hoc Commission Regarding the Celebration of the Holy Communion (2003) changes the principle framework as follows:
 - 3.1.3.1 The introduction and essential aspects of the principle framework is kept unchanged.
 - 3.1.3.2 At the sacramental acts the following changes are made:
 - 3.1.3.2.1 Introduction: This makes it a communal **and love meal founded in the unity with Christ (see John 13-16, 1 Cor 10:16,17).**
 - 3.1.3.2.2 At 3.2.2.2 only the word **cup** is added.
 - 3.1.3.2.3 **Point 3.2.2.3 is deleted.**
 - 3.1.4 Grounds of Protest 4: Confessionally seen the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion and the GKSA Confessions agree with Scripture and teaches clearly that the Holy Communion is a divine institution with bread and cup. The current practice to condone the use of cuplets by calling on a Synod decision, but without adequate Scriptural proof, is a betrayal of the Belgic Confession, artt 7 and 29. There it is argued that: If there is a derivation from the communal cup it brings strain with the Confession and the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion. **This ground of protest is maintained.**

3.2 Conclusion

The changed principle framework rests on the mentioned Petition of Protest that was maintained with the clear intention that the Holy Communion should be celebrated with the cup.

4. Grounds of Protest

4.1 Grounds of Protest 1

Point 2.2 of the Synod decision (Acta 2003) is used to compromise the intention of the principle framework that the Holy Communion should only be celebrated with the communal cup, and in doing so this intention is rendered obsolete.

Motivation

- 4.1.1 Under Points of Departure, point 2.2 [Instead of declining into a certain prescriptiveness, the Synod chose to fulfill CO art 62 by advising churches through a principle framework in the light of the Belgic Confession art 32. The framework is set out below. Decision: Note taken.] the word **advising** has the implication that the principle framework can either be followed or not, and is used as such in the church denomination (see Appendix 2, point 3.1)

Over and against this is the fact that the principle framework is a framework that is founded on Scripture, and because of this it is binding. In fact, any decision of a majority meeting is advice to churches, but binding advice contingent on the right to appeal. Therefore the word **advice** is used unnecessarily in point of departure 2.2, and this carries in it the possibility of rendering the entire principle framework obsolete. (See Kruger, LS ao, 1966. Handleiding by die Kerkorde van die GKSA:446-447 where they ultimately come to the conclusion: “advice of the Classis is binding, contingent on the right to appeal”.)

- 4.1.2 Under Points of Departure, point 2.2 (Acta 2003). [Instead of declining into a certain prescriptiveness, the Synod chose to fulfill CO art 62 by advising churches through a principle framework in the light of the Belgic Confession art 32. The framework is set out below. Decision: Note taken.] The second part of CO, art 62 under point 2.1: However, it should be well understood that the external ceremonies that are prescribed in the Word of God, may not be changed..., **that which is expressed beautifully in the principle framework**, is brought under suspicion with the misplaced reference to the Belgic Confession, art 32. By implication the Celebration of the Holy Communion according to the principle framework, based on the **Belgic Confession art 32**, is proposed as at most “**useful and good**” with the aim of a certain “order” that does not harm the “unity” between churches. The principle framework can therefore by implication serve as framework for the celebration of the Holy Communion, either with the cup or with cuplets. The content of the principle framework, which is founded on Scripture, may not be reduced to human laws. The implication that the principle framework is only seen as “useful and good” necessitates us to remove the references to **Belgic Confession art 32** from the decision as point of departure because the principle framework is clearly founded on Scripture and we should be guarding against deviating from what Christ, our only Master, set down for us.

4.2 **Grounds for protest 2**

In point 4.4 (Acta 2003) the Synod contradicts itself.

Motivation

- 4.2.1 The Synod just approved a “new” principle framework on the grounds of a Petition of Protest that succeeded. It only makes the possibility of the Celebration of the Holy Communion possible where there **are no alternative ways of celebrating the Holy Communion**. In point 4.4 (Acta 2003) alternative ways are now used after the principle framework clearly only speaks of one communal drinking cup (Appendix 3).
- 4.2.2 In point 4.2 of Acta 2003 it is stated that this decision is an answer to the Petitions of Protest against the decision of Synods 1927 and 1930. **This Petition of Protest was aimed against the use of the communal cup alone**. The alternative ways have to do with whether there are alternative ways next to the communal cup, a possibility that is not allowed by the principle framework based on the Petition of Protest that succeeded.

5. **Conclusion**

The protesters request Synod to delete points 2.2 and 4.4 based on the grounds of

protest (Acta 2003).

F. MAJORITY REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

1. Assignment

Petition of Protest of JL Kruger concerning the decision of the Synod 2003 – on the celebration of Holy Communion

Decision: Noted.

2. Issues that the Synod should take note of

- 2.1 The protesters follow the way set out by Synod 1991 for the introduction of petitions of protest.
- 2.2 In the commission opportunity was afforded for oral elucidation by the protestor and numerous brothers, a.o. Prof. Callie Coetzee whose protest (with Visser and Shultze) against a decision of Synod 2000 led to the decision of Synod 2003 against which the protestor protests.
- 2.3 The Synod notes points 1 to 3 of the protest.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.3 noted.

3. Argumentation

3.1 *Review of the petition of protest in its entirety*

3.1.1 Historical course of decisions protested against

1994: Deputies named after petitions of protest against 1927 and 1930.

1997: Deputies come with diverging majority and minority reports. Study deputies are named, including the reporters of both reports.

2000: Study deputies find one another and deliver unanimous report stating a principle framework from Scripture as advice to the churches, with a recommendation: *Where for serious reasons there is deviation from the agreed use, each church must decide in account before the Lord that the deviation is unavoidable.* The report and principle framework is shortened and accepted as amended. The recommendation above is amended to read: *it must be done with accounting from Scripture.*

2003: A petition of protest of Coetzee, Visser and Shultze, against especially the last decision, is upheld as a result of which the report of an ad hoc commission for pre-advice is accepted, with 2 points of departure: An amended principle framework with a few amendments and four recommendations. (Report fully quoted in petition of protest 2009, A p.308/9).

2006: None.

2009: Two petitions of protest, both against the second point of departure (2.2) and the last recommendation (4.4) of 2003's accepted commission report. The petition of protest being dealt with in this report is not against the principle framework.

3.1.2 Decision against which is protested

- 3.1.2.1 According to **ground of petition 1** against "point of departure 2.2" in the decision of 2003, which Synod 2003 noted and which the Synod approved in the final recommendations:

In stead of falling into the trap of prescription, the Synod elects in the light of BC art 32 to serve churches in their execution of CO art 62 with advice by way of a principle framework, as expounded below.

- 3.1.2.2 According to **ground of petition 2** against recommendation 4.4 in the decision of 2003 that was approved by the Synod:

Where there may occur alternative ways of celebrating Holy Communion in a specific local church within the stated framework, the necessary respect and honour with the love of Christ should be shown towards one another.

The protestor requests the Synod to strike out both abovementioned points.

3.1.3 Common point of departure in both ground of protest

The common point of departure in both grounds of protest is located in the protestor's interpretation of the accepted principle framework, as being:

(according to ground of protest 1) "*Holy Communion may **only** be celebrated with a communal cup, and*

(according to ground of protest 2) it "*makes possible only the possibility of celebrating Holy Communion with a communal cup where there are **no alternative ways of celebrating Holy Communion.***

The testing of this common point of departure is of crucial importance in the adjudication of the protest against "*certain formulations*" of 2003's decision.

3.2 Relevant aspects in the adjudication of the common point of departure of protestor.

In order to adjudicate on the point of departure of the protestor, the following aspects of the decision of 2003 must be kept in mind: (All quotations from the decision itself).

3.2.1 A "*Principle framework*" is provided, and a normal decision is not taken.

3.2.2 The framework is based on Scripture.

3.2.3 The framework clearly distinguishes between *essential aspects* (the bread and wine) and *sacramental acts*, (that "*the bread must be given to all..*" and that the "*cup and wine must be distributed to all*").

3.2.4 According to the framework:

(a) *The cup of wine must be distributed to all*;

(b) *The drinking of wine from (a) communal cup(s) serves to symbolise the spiritual unity in faith in Christ*;

(c) *The cup has, together with the wine as sign, a prominent place and functions.*

3.2.5 The framework has the purpose "*to serve the churches in their execution of CO art 62 with advice*".

3.2.6 The framework as advice is given "*in stead of falling into the trap of prescription*".

3.2.7 The Synod follows this route of advice by way of principle framework "*in the light of BC art 32*".

3.2.8 The decision of Synod 2003 leaves open the possibility that "*there in a local church alternative ways of celebrating Holy Communion within the stated framework may occur*" in which case "*with the love of Christ the necessary respect and understanding should be shown towards one another*".

Summary: In summary and read together, all these points indicate that the Synod **does not wish to leave the decision of church councils that they must take themselves** (Art 62 CO, as quoted in point 1 of the quoted points of departure) **to randomness**, but to give a principle framework. On the other hand, the Synod **does not want to be prescriptive** but rather serve the churches with advice. The Synod serves the churches with a principle framework.

Decision: Points 3.1.1 to 3.2.8 noted.

4. Adjudication of ground of protest 1.

4.1 **Ground of protest 1 reads as follows:** *Point 2. of the Synod decision (Acta 2003) (3.1.2.1 above), is used to throw suspicion on and thus render powerless the clear intention stated by the principle framework namely that Holy Communion must only be celebrated with a communal cup.*

4.2 **The point of departure of ground of protest 1 is incorrect:**

The Synod did not in its principle framework and in any previous decision state categorically that the "*Holy Communion must only be celebrated with a communal cup*". The petition of protest of Schulze, Visser and Coetzee in 2003 was also not directed at 2.2, which after the success of the mentioned petition of protest still served as point of departure of the principle framework.

Points 3.2.1 to 3.2.8 above jointly contradict the claim of "*only*" and "*must*" i.r.o. the communal cup.

4.3 **Motivation 1 (4.1.1)**

In the light hereof point 4.1.1 of the motivation of the protestor (p. 310), where he protests the use of the word “**advice**”, does not hold water. He avers that the concept “advice” is used in 2.2 to render the whole principle framework powerless.

The word advice is not defined in the Confession, Church Order, or Synod decisions. It is used in different ways in church circles. Thus it is necessary to read the word advice time and time again **in the context** in which it is used.

In 2.2 advice is used in a certain context, especially that it is put as counter to “*to fall into the trap of prescription*”. Then the concept cannot render the decision powerless.

4.4. **Motivation 2 (4.1.2)**

The protestor states in 4.1.2 that 2.2 is a “*misplaced reference to BC, art 32*”, and that the “*principle framework is thus thrown into suspicion*”. Therefore he wants 2.2 struck out. The protestor however does not prove at all how 2.2 contain a misplaced reference to BC art 32. Art 32 contains the principle that is expressed in art 62 CO.

Decision: Points 4.1 to 4.4 noted.

5. **Finding ground of Petition 1**

The protest fails because the protestor:

5.1 Departs from a one-sided and incorrect point of departure that the Holy Communion must only be celebrated with a communal cup (4.1).

5.2 Errs by not discounting “advice” in context (4.1.1) and

5.3 Provides no proof that there is a misplaced reference to BC art 32

Decision: Approved.

6. **Adjudication of ground of protest 2. (4.2)**

6.1 **Content**

The ground is directed at 4.4 (Acta 2003) (3.2.8 above). The protestor avers in ground of protest 2 that the Synod contradicts itself in point 4.4, and requests that the relevant point is struck out.

6.2 **Point of departure**

Essentially the same as ground of protest 1, that the principle framework: “*makes possible only the possibility of celebrating Holy Communion with a communal cup where there are **no alternative ways of celebrating Holy Communion.***”

This point of departure has already been pointed out as incorrect in 3.2 and 4.2 above.

6.3 **Further adjudication**

Further, point 4.4 is in accordance with the principles stated in articles 62 and 85 of the Church Order. Point 4.4 states that where “*there in a local church alternative ways of celebrating Holy Communion within the stated framework may occur, with the love of Christ the necessary respect and understanding should be shown towards one another*”.

In art. 62 CO the responsibility of the local church in the decision on celebration of Holy Communion is emphasised, that serves to edification of the specific congregation. It may obviously not change the ceremonies that are directly prescribed in the Word, like those mentioned in the article: That after the sermon and general prayer the Formulary of the Holy Communion and the prayers contained in it, must be read. Art. 85 CO deals with foreign churches and that we do not condemn them. The word in Latin translated with “rites” is *ritus* and thus also indicate non-condemnation of churches with which we have ecumenical unity, who not only use the cup.

Decision: Points 6.1 to 6.3 noted.

7. **Finding ground of protest 2**

The petition of protest fails because the protestor:

- 7.1 Depart from a one-sided and incorrect point of departure that there are no alternative ways of celebrating Holy Communion.
- 7.2 His protest is directed at a decision fully based on art. 62 and 85 CO.
- 7.3 Does not indicate that the point he is protesting, contradicts the stated principle framework, but that it is indeed necessary because, as pointed out above, the framework does not work prescriptively with “*only*” en “*no alternative ways*”.

Decision: Approved.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 The petition of protest fails
- 8.2 The Deputies Publication of Acta are requested to publish the decision as per the Errata of Acta 2003 again in the Acta.

Decision: Approved.

G. MINORITY REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

1. Assignment

Petition of Protest of JL Kruger concerning the decision of the Synod 2003 – on the celebration of Holy Communion.

Decision: Noted.

2. Issues that the Synod should take note of

- 2.1 The protesters follow the way set out by Synod 1991 for the introduction of petitions of protest.
- 2.2 Opportunity was given in the commission for oral elucidation.

Decision: Noted.

3. Judgement of grounds of protest

3.1 *Ground of protest 1*

Point 2.2 of the decision of the Synod (Acta 2003) is used to bring under suspicion and therefore make powerless the clear meaning set out by the fundamental framework that the Holy Communion must be celebrate with communal cup.

3.1.1 Reasoning regarding 4.1.1 p.310

3.1.1.1 The ground of protest reasons that the word “advice” in point 2.2 and 4.1 of the decision of the Synod 2003 gave rise to contradictory interpretations of the decision of the synod. The ground of protest further reasons that the word advice might have the implication with some that the fundamental framework can be followed or not. On this ground the brother finds the word “advice” problematic. But, the brother later on indicates that **advice** from a major assembly is binding save for the right of appeal. The brother therefore accepts that the advice of the synod, which was decided in the **light of the Scripture**, is always binding.

3.1.1.2 If counsellors or advisors would understand that the Synod only wants to give guidance and support with its advice, the Synod could in the first place not have called it a **fundamental** framework. Fundamental means that it is founded in Scripture and is therefore binding. In the second place **advice** on which the Synod decided in terms of CO art. 31 can never be only guidance or support. A Synod is not supposed to give advice that is not founded in Scripture, confession and church order. With that it is also not the advice of the **synod** that is binding, but **Christ** binding us to his Word.

3.1.1.3 2.2 of Synod 2003 states: “In stead of becoming intertwined in prescription... the Synod chooses... to serve churches... with **advice**, and in 4.1 the Synod endorses the fundamental framework as this advice. The decision of the Synod therefore does not want to be prescriptive on things to which the Scripture (in other words **Christ**) binds us, but to what the Scripture teaches us as is found in the fundamental framework.

3.1.1.4 The brother accepts that the advice of the fundamental framework is binding since it is founded in the Scripture and confession. Since the brother himself accepts this, it means that the word “advice” do not bring the fundamental framework under suspicion.

3.1.2 Reasoning regarding 4.1.2

3.1.2.1 The brother claims that the second part of CO art. 62 (“It must be understood well that the external ceremonies prescribed in the Word van God, may not be changed...”) which, according to him “is expressed beautifully in the fundamental framework”, is placed under suspicion by “a misplaced reference to BC art. 32”.

3.1.2.2 The decision rightfully says that the Synod do not want to get intertwined in “a determined prescriptivism”, but choose to serve “in the light of BC art. 32, churches in the execution of CO art. 62 with advice (*naturally advice in the light of the Scripture*).”

3.1.2.3 The reference to BC art. 32 actually confirms that the Synod wanted to keep to what is fixed from the Word of God, thus: “*not deviate from that which Christ, our only Educator, set aside for us*”, not want to “bind” the “consciences of people” by importing “*human fabrications*” or “*laws*”, but serve churches with advice “*to maintain everything in obedience to God.*”

3.1.3. Reasoning regarding “that the Holy Communion should only be held with a communal cup”.

3.1.3.1 The brother argues that it is the clear meaning of the fundamental framework that Holy Communion can **only** be held with a communal cup.

3.1.3.2 The argument is correct in as far as that there is no other liturgical act with the wine within the fundamental framework, than by drinking it in (a) communal cup(s).

3.1.3.3 Where there is a extraordinary pastoral situation with reasons why a member/s cannot drink from a communal cup, an alternative arrangement can be made within the fundamental framework, to accommodate such a member/s (compare. 4.4 of Synod 2003). But such an arrangement must only be for exceptional cases, in order for the external ceremony of (a) communal cup(s) is not brought under suspicion as determined in CO art. 62. Therefore the deviation of the brother that their is only one possible use of the cup in the fundamental framework is not totally correct.

3.1.4 Finding

3.1.4.1 (Regarding 3.1.1) The word “advice” in Point 2.2 of the decision of the Synod does not make the fundamental framework powerless.

3.1.4.2 (Regarding 3.1.2) The reference to BC art. 32 the decision of the Synod is not misplaced.

3.1.4.3 (Regarding 3.1.3) The brother is not totally correct in his deviation that there can be only one possible use of the cup in the fundamental framework.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.1.4.3 noted.

3.1.4 Recommendation

Ground of protest 1 is not upheld.

Decision: Approved.

3.2 *Ground of protest 2*

In point 4.4 (Acta 2003) the Synod contradicts himself.

3.2.1 Reasoning

The brother claims that the expression ‘alternative ways’ in point 4.4 of the decision of the Synod give rise to confusing interpretations. But the decision makes it clear that alternative ways may only exist **within** the fundamental framework. If confusing interpretations follows from ‘alternative ways’, it is not because of an unclear decision, but because of invalid interpretations of the decision. Again, the decision is clear that alternative ways may not exist out of the fundamental framework.

3.2.2 Finding

Point 4.4 (Acta 2003) does not contradict the decision of the Synod.

Decision: Points 3.2.1 to 3.2.2 noted.

3.2.3 Recommendation

Ground of protest 2 is not upheld.

Decision: Approved.

4. Summarised recommendation

4.1 The petition of protest fails.

Decision: Approved.

H. ERRATA – HANDELINGE 2003:530, 536-539, [vanaf pt 4.2, p530]

Acta 2003:530

4.2 Regarding Grounds for Protest 2.2: the protest is not granted.

Decision: Approved.

Motivation: The protest is stated too categorically – “In its literal meaning the decision is unenforceable.”

The point of departure of the protesters in this argument is the deviation from couplets, while the point of departure of Synod is motivation from Scripture. There is consequently a logical deficiency in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

Decision: Note taken.

4.3 Regarding Grounds for Protest 2.3: the protest is not granted.

Decision: Approved.

Motivation: Although more than one cup may be used, the communion is not lost. It does not bring confusion in terms of that which is SIGN-ified in the sacrament, nor to that which CO, art 62 has in mind.

Decision: Note taken.

4.4 Regarding Grounds for Protest 2.4: the protest is not granted.

Decision: Approved.

Motivation: The relevant prescription states that whatever action is taken (to deviate, or whatever) should be done with motivation from Scripture. This can not be viewed as prescriptive. Furthermore, as churches we have agreed on certain things that should be respected on the strength of our denomination. The protesters do not indicate from Scripture, the Confessions or the Church Order that this arrangement is unnecessarily prescriptive.

Decision: Note taken.

4.5 Regarding Grounds for protest 2.5: the protest is not granted.

Decision: Approved.

Motivation: The decision in question links to Scripture, the Confessions and the Church Order, but is not needlessly prescriptive. It seems the protestors do not understand CO, art. 62 correctly. The formulation in CO, art.62 “for the edification of” only concerns moderate matters such as during Communion, should the minister read from the Bible while members are at the table or should they sing, etc. See in this regard J. Jansen 1952 Korte Verklaring van die Kerkorde der Gereformeerde Kerken, Kampen: Kok, p.273-277 (discussion of art.62).

Decision: Note taken.

5. Recommendation

5.1 The protest is granted in terms of the first ground of protest.

5.2 Regarding the request, the Commission recommends based on the partial granting of the protest that the decision of 2000 (p.401, 3.2.2.3) is not voided, but is reformulated (see 4.1 of this Report).

Decision: Approved.

Acta 2003:536-539

3.1.2 Finding

The formulation of 3.2.2.2 is indeed not sound or logical. The language is unclear and it is of no assistance to the churches as advice within the context.

Decision: Note taken.

3.1.3 Recommendation

This Ground for Protest is granted.

That Synod considers making the following amendment to 3.2.2.2 of the principle framework: "The cup of wine should be distributed to all with the instruction ..."

Decision: Approved.

3.2 Ground for Protest 2

Seen in context the formulation of the conclusion of the sacramental actions (3.2.2.3) unintentionally lends itself to paradoxical interpretation.

3.2.1 Argumentation

The principle framework gives a prominent place and function to the cup of wine. The point of departure is that the cup and the wine are intrinsically linked. While Synod intended to indicate the orderly manner in which to deal with extraordinary circumstances in churches in its formulation of 3.2.2.3, the formulation unintentionally opens itself to paradoxical interpretations. This could not have been the intention of Synod.

3.2.2 Finding

In the context of the principle framework the formulation of 3.2.2.3 unintentionally opens itself to paradoxical interpretations.

Decision: Note taken.

3.2.3 Recommendation

This Ground for Protest is granted.

Decision: Approved.

3.3 Ground for Protest 3

Scripturally seen the Bible is clear on the institution of the Holy Communion. Scripture's intention is not clearly portrayed in the formulation of the decision of Synod.

3.3.1 Argumentation

The intention of Scripture with the institution of the Holy Communion is clear. This Scriptural intention is not conveyed clearly enough in the decision (3.2.2.2 and 3.2.2.3 of the principle framework). In the exegetical material presented to the Commission, it is indicated as such.

3.3.2 Finding

That 3.2.2.3 of the principle framework does not convey the intention of Scripture clearly enough. This is confirmed by the problems around the formulation of 3.2.2.3. (Regarding 3.2.2.2 of the formulation of the principle framework, see 3.1.2 of this Report.)

Decision: Note taken.

3.3.3 Recommendation

This Ground for Protest is granted.

Decision: Approved.

3.4 Ground for Protest 4

Confessionally seen the Formulary for the Holy Baptism and the Reformed Confessions agree with Scripture and clearly teaches the celebration of the Holy Communion with the bread and cup. The current practice to condone the introduction of couplets by appealing to a Synod decision, but without sufficient Scripture information, is a betrayal of Belgic Confession artt.7 and 29.

3.4.1 Argumentation

The Confessions and the Formulary for the Holy Communion clearly agree with Scripture where the wine and cup are linked. If there is a deviation from the communal cup, it brings strain with the Confession and Formulary for the Holy Communion.

3.4.2 Finding

The confusing formulation of 3.2.2.3 of the principle framework can create tension with the Confession and Formulary for the Holy Communion.

Decision: Note taken.

3.4.3 Recommendation

The Ground for protest is granted.

Decision: Approved.

3.5 **Ground for Protest 5**

Semantically seen the play with figures of speech can open any periscope or text for multiple “interpretations”.

3.5.1 Argumentation

Cup can not be a mere synecdoche within Scripture, since the cup has definite revelation historical elements. Luke and Paul bring the cup into relation with the covenant. This once more indicates that the cup occupies a much wider range of meaning and it should be understood in terms of revelation history. In this case the cup receives a covenantal emphasis with the blood of Christ.

3.5.2 Finding

This Ground for Protest lays more on the level of the **interpretation** of 3.2.2.3 than pertaining to the decision itself.

Decision: Note taken.

3.5.3 Recommendation

That this protest is not granted.

Decision: Approved.

4. **Concluding recommendations**

4.1 The protest is granted based on Grounds for Protest 1-4.

Decision: Approved.

4.2 Implications

4.2.1 That it has been adequately shown that 3.2.2.3 of the principle framework should be reformulated to exclude any confusion.

4.2.2 If the Synod accepts 4.2.1 above, the Commission can suggest a reformulation for consideration by the Synod.

Decision:

1. Approved.

2. Point 3.2.2.3 in Acta 2000:401 is voided.

F. **REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMISSION FOR PRE-ADVICE REGARDING THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION**

1. **Assignment**

To advise Synod regarding the Report Continues Study on the Holy Communion and the Second Report of the Commission Doctrinal 1.

Decision: Note taken.

2. **Point of departure**

2.1 Church order, art.62: “Each church should celebrate the holy communion in the way that is most edifying to the congregation. However, it should be well understood that the outward ceremonies prescribed in the Word of God may not be changed, that all superstition should be avoided and that after the sermon and general prayers, the formulary for the Holy Communion and its accompanying prayer should be read.”

2.2 In stead of declining into a certain prescriptiveness, Synod chooses to advise churches in the light of BC, art.32 in their execution of CO, art. 62 by providing a principle framework as set out beneath.

Decision: Note taken.

3. Principle framework regarding the manner of celebration the Holy Communion

Introductory

This feast is a spiritual meal during which Christ shares Himself and all his beneficence with us and where He allows us to enjoy the virtue of his suffering and death (BC, art.35).

3.1 The bread and wine should be used as signs and seals of the body and blood of Christ (Matt 26:26-28; 1 Cor 11:23-26; BC, art.35; HC, 25-29).

3.2 During the celebration of the Holy Communion there should be a distinction between the essential aspects and the sacramental actions. Churches should apply CO, art. 62 within the following framework:

3.2.1 Essential aspects

At the ministry of the Holy Communion the death of the Lord should be proclaimed in word and deed (“...do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19); “...you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” (1 Cor 11:26)).

3.2.1.1 The bread should be eaten in faith as sign and seal of the body of Christ (see BC, art.35; HC, 25-29).

3.2.1.2 The wine should be drunk in faith as sign and seal of the blood of Christ. Compare the following parts of Scripture:

“Drink from it, all of you” (Matt 26:27)

“Take this and divide it among you” (Luke 22:17)

“...do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Cor 11:25)

“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26)

“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup” (1 Cor 11:28)

“...when you come together to eat, wait for each other.” (1 Cor 11:33).

Although Christ does not explicitly refer to wine in any of the instructions, the relation is clearly of such a nature that He means that wine should be used as sign and seal of the blood of Christ (BC, art.35; HC, 25, 28, 29).

Decision: Approved.

3.2.2 Sacramental acts

The Communion has a mealtime character and is celebrated together by the believers (1 Cor 11:33). This makes it a communal and love meal based in the unity with Christ (see John 13-16, 1 Cor 10:16,17).

3.2.2.1 The bread should be distributed to all with the instruction: “Take, eat” (Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22; 1 Cor 11:23). With this sacramental action the fact that Jesus gives His body as offering for all our sins is clearly brought to the fore.

3.2.2.2 The cup of wine should be distributed to all with the instruction: “Drink, all of you” (Matt 26:28). The drinking of the wine from (a) communal cup(s) serves to symbolize the unity in faith in Christ. Therefore the cup, together with the wine, has a prominent place and function.

Decision: Approved.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Synod approves the above principle framework as advice to churches in their execution of CO, art.62.

4.2 The above principle framework serves as answer to the Petitions of Protest against the decisions of Synod 1927 and 1930 (Acta 1994 :493-524).

4.3 The principle framework replaces the decisions of Synods 1927 and 1930 and consequently also the decision in 6.6 (Acta:729) of Synod 1997.

4.4 Where there are alternative manners of celebrating the Holy Communion in local churches within the given framework, fellow believers should show the necessary respect and understanding for each other.

Decision:

1. Approved.
2. That the following words in point 3.2.2.3 in Acta 2000:401 is voided: "If churches deviate from the communal cups for weighty reasons, this should be done with a foundation from Scripture."