

21.12 PETITION OF PROTEST OF JF KRUGER WITH REGARD TO THE DECISION OF THE SYNOD 2003 – REGARDING THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION (Artt 19, 40, 337)

- A. Br JF 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.
- 1.4 The Curators of the Theological School recommend that the route of the church be followed after advice was asked due to the contradictory advice received from professors. (Appendix 12)

2. Synod decision that is being protested

Our protest regards certain formulations of Acta 2003 (**Errata has been included**) that are interpreted in differing ways:

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 much 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 drank in faith as sign and seal of the blood of Christ.

Compare the following Scriptural informarion:

"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 drank 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-mention 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. Grounds for Protest

3.1 Ground for protest 1

In point 2.2 and 4.1 of the Synod decision (Acta 2003) the word 'advice' is used, which is interpreted in differing (confusing) ways within the denomination.

Motivation

- 3.1.1 In the advice of prof A le R du Plooy he emphasises that the principle framework is only advice from Synod to Church Councils, in other words the Church Councils can follow it or not (Addendum 4, point 3.1).
- 3.1.2 In the advice of prof GJC Jordaan he states that the agreement should be adhered to (Addendum 3, point 2.1).
- 3.1.3 In the advice of dr JH Howell he states clearly that advice is binding, with the right to appeal. Advice of churches to each other is not merely for notice (Appendix 7, point 2.1).

3.2 Ground for Protest 2

Different (confusing) interpretations are attached to Point 3.2.2 (sacramental acts) of the Synod decision (Acta 2003).

Motivation

- 3.2.1 In his advice prof Du Plooy states clearly that as long as there is one central cup from which the wine comes when more cups or cuplets are used, it is in line with the decision of Synod 2003 (Appendix 4, point 3.5 and 3.6).
- 3.2.2 In his advice prof Jordaan states that the cup with the wine is so prominent that individual cuplets are not even mentioned (Appendix 2, point 1)
- 3.2.3 In the advice of prof Coetzee the deduction is made that the decision agrees with the decision of 1927/1930 (Appendix 5).
- 3.2.4 In his advice rev Momberg states it as follows: The amended principle framework completely excluded the possibility of the use of communal cup(s). The use of cuplets is no longer part of the principle framework (Appendix 6, point 2 b).
- 3.2.5 In his advice dr Howell states that only in highly exceptional cases there can be deviation from the cup (Appendix 7, under further remarks, point b).
- 3.2.6 In his advice rev Very states that the Synod did not explicitly reject cuplets and therefore one can not just suppose that cuplets can not be used (Appendix 9, point 2).
- 3.2.7 In his advice rev Johannes Bingle states that the 2003 decision does not make the matter any more clear. He also states that he can not give a clear answer on the unclear decision (Appendix 11). In Appendix 10 he also states that it is a matter about which there is much confusion.

3.3 Ground for Protest 3

Different interpretations are attached to Essential (3.2.1) and Sacramental acts (3.2.2) Appendix 1. The interpretation is that the essential should be met, therefore the

sacramental is average and does not have to be met.

- 3.3.1 In his advice prof du Plooy states clearly that when if the bread and the wine has been considered, it is principally pure and right (Appendix 4, point 3.5).
- 3.3.2 In the decision of the Gereformeerde Kerk Kathu exactly the above advice of prof Du Plooy is used to justify cuplets, in other words if the essential requirements have been met, the sacramental is not necessary (Appendix 14. point 11)
- 3.3.3 In his advice dr Howell (Appendix 7, point 2.3) states clearly that there is no indication anywhere that the cup is a mediocre matter.
- 3.3.4 In his letter (commentary) dr SJ van der Merwe states that we do not really know exactly how Jesus instated the Holy Communion. He states that on the essential elements Reformed theologians do not differ, but they do differ on the mediocre matters (Appendix 15).

3.4 **Ground for protest 4**

CO, art 62 is used randomly. The first sentence is emphasised, namely “Each church should celebrate the Holy Communion in a way that serves the most order”, while the qualifying sentence following this, is not considered, namely “However, it should be well understood that the external ceremonies that are prescribed in the Word of God, may not be changed”. The bread and the wine is seen as the external ceremonies, while the cup, table, etc. is not included there.

- 3.4.1 In the advice of prof Du Plooy (Appendix 4, point 3.4) only the first sentence is referred to, namely “that serves to the most order”, while the qualifying sentence is not even mentioned.
- 3.4.2 In his advice (Appendix 7, point 2.4) dr Howell states that a half-truth is being worked with if the qualifying sentence is not also considered.
- 3.4.3 In the decision of the Gereformeerde Kerk Kathu (Appendix 14, point 11) also only the first sentence of CO, art 62 is used as motivation while the qualifying sentence is not considered at all.
- 3.4.4 In his reaction dr SJ van der Merwe states that we do not really know how Jesus instated the Holy Communion. In doing so he also only quotes the first sentence of CO, art 62, but the qualifying sentence is omitted. This is the sentence that precisely commands that the external ceremonies may not be changed, the ceremonies are suddenly not clear, and therefore only the essential should be adhered to (Appendix 15).

4. **Conclusion**

The protester requests that Synod clarify the following in the light of the grounds of protest:

- 4.1 Pronounce a verdict on what meaning can be attached to the word advice in a Synod decision, in other words, is the advice binding?
- 4.2 Pronounce a verdict on whether the essential aspects as well as the sacramentle acts that are included in the principle framework should be adhered to, or whether there is a distinction that implies that only the essential aspects have to be adhered to.
- 4.3 Pronounce a verdict on whether cuplets is a possibility under the heading of sacramental acts in the principle framework, in the light of the Petition of Protest of Jan Visser and others (Appendix 1) that succeeded and how this Petition of Protest was included in the Synod decision.
- 4.4 Pronounce a verdict on what is meant within the set framework (Acta 2003, point 4.4).
- 4.5 Pronounce a verdict on what is meant with the words: “external ceremonies that are prescribed in the Word of God”. Are only the bread and wine part of the external ceremonies, or does the entire ceremony fall under this, including the cup. (Acta 2003, point 2.1; CO, art 62).
- 4.6 If Synod finds that certain formulations of the decision can be understood differently, that these formulations be corrected.
- 4.7 The Synod is requested to give the mandate that a booklet be published that contains

a summary of all Synod decisions that are applicable with regard to the Holy Communion since the decision of Synod 2003 (Acta 2003, point 4.3) only replaces the decisions of 1927/1930 and as a consequence also replaces the decision in 6.6 (Acta: 729) of Synod 1997.

F. MAJORITY REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

1. Assignments

The Petition of protest of JF Kruger concerning the decision of the 2003 Synod on having Holy Communion

Decision: Noted.

2. Issues that should be noted by the Synod

2.1 The protester followed the way that Synod 1991 set out for the handing in of petitions of protest.

2.2 In the commission opportunity was given for oral elucidation.

2.3 Decision that is protested: The protestor states in general that his petition of protest affects certain formulations of Acta 2003, because it is interpreted differently.

Decision: Noted.

3. Argumentation

3.1 *Argumentation*

In point 2.2 and 4.1 of the Synod decision (Acta 2003) the word advice is used that is being interpreted differently (confusingly) in the denomination.

3.1.1 Argumentation

The protestor argues in ground of protest 1 that points 2.2 and 4.1 of the Synod decision the word **advice** is used differently (confusingly). His argument relies on the fact that he quotes three persons who explained the word advice to him and he avers that their "advice" on the word "advice" in 2.2 of the Synod decision brings confusion in the denomination.

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 the word advice is used in a certain context. "*Without being prescriptive*", "*advice is served*", *art 62 KO*, *principle framework*" is used. On the other hand it is emphasised that the local church may not deal lightly and without in-depth consideration according to the principles provided, as well as in prayer and to the edification of the congregation, with decisions regarding the manner of celebration of Holy Communion. But on the other hand, the Synod does not give the principle framework as a law for each church council. Thus "*without prescription*", "*framework*", "*serve advice*".

3.1.2 Finding

In the context in which the word advice occurs, the meaning is not unclear. Thus the protest cannot succeed.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.1.2 noted.

3.1.3 Recommendation

Ground of protest 1 fails.

Decision: Approved.

3.2 *Ground of protest 2*

Different (confusing) interpretations are attached to point 3.2.2 (sacramental acts) of the Synod decision (Acta 2003).

3.2.1 Argumentation

3.2.1.1 The **protestor indicates** that there are diverging and thus confusing interpretations attached to the concept "sacramental acts" in the principle framework. In this regard he refers to seven different interpretations.

- 3.2.1.2 (Since **ground of protest 3 largely overlaps** with ground of protest 2, this argumentation also applies to ground of protest 3).
- 3.2.1.3 In the report of the **Study deputies tabled at Synod 2000**, the distinction between “essential aspects” and “sacramental acts” are used for the first time. The report provides a detailed and clear description of these two concepts.
- 3.2.1.4 In the **decision of Synod 2000** the distinction between the two concepts is maintained without repetition of the definition as in the report of the deputies.
- 3.2.1.5 In the **petition of protest** against aspects of the decision of Synod 2000 upheld by Synod 2003, the distinction is also used with definition.
- 3.2.1.6 In the **principle framework approved by Synod 2003** in answer to the successful petition of protest, the distinction is made without definition.
- 3.2.1.7 The “**source document**” from which the meaning of the two concepts must be determined, thus remains the **original Deputy Report** that defined it the first time, whilst all the other decisions simply uphold this distinction.
- 3.2.1.8 According to this document **both** “*essential aspects*” and “*sacramental acts*” are described as “*not simply time-directed as instructions only to be obeyed by the disciples. These are enduring prescriptions for the church of all time to uphold as external ceremonies of the Holy Communion.*”
- 3.2.1.9 The **distinction between the two concepts** is defined as follows:
“*Essential aspects*” are those “*that must apply always and under all circumstances, and from which may not be deviated universally and word-wide*”.
Sacramental acts are those “*that although it is not essential for the celebration of Holy Communion, they do bring to the fore the essential nature of the sacrament in a symbolic manner*”.
- 3.2.1.10 The decision of Synod 2000 (4.4 on p.401) that is contained word for word in the decision of Synod 2003 (4.4 on p 539), reads : “*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*”.
This reference to “*alternative ways of celebrating Holy Communion within the stated framework*” (in which the distinction between essential aspects and sacramental acts is made), can not possibly point to the “*essential aspects*”, but only the “*sacramental acts*.”
- 3.2.1.11 From the above it is clear that “*sacramental acts*” are those in which there under certain circumstances “*alternative ways of celebrating Holy Communion may occur*”.

3.2.2 Finding

The wording “*sacramental acts*” which is protested can within context and the historical course of the decision protest be well understood.

Decision: Points 3.2 to 3.2.2 noted.

3.2.3 Recommendation

Ground of protest 2 does not succeed.

Decision: Approved.

3.3 *Ground of protest 3*

Different interpretations are attached to Essential aspects (3.2.1) and Sacramental acts (3.2.2) Addendum 1. The interpretation attached to it is that the essential aspects must be upheld, thus the sacramental is peripheral and need not be upheld.

3.3.1 Argumentation

The same argumentation at ground of protest 2 also applies to ground of protest 3.

3.3.2 Finding

The distinction between “*essential aspects*” and “*sacramental acts*” can within the context and historical course of the decision protested, be well understood and interpreted.

Decision: Points 3.3 to 3.3.2 noted.

3.3.3 Recommendation

Ground of protest 3 does not succeed.

Decision: Approved.

3.4 *Ground of protest 4*

Church Order art. 62 is used randomly. Emphasis is placed on the first sentence namely "Each church shall celebrate the Lord's Supper in the way it considers most conducive to edification", while the qualifying sentence following it is not considered namely "provided, however, that the external ceremonies as prescribed in the Word of God be not changed." The bread and wine only are seen as the external ceremonies, while the cup, table, etc. are not account for in this.

3.4.1 Argumentation

This ground of protest is in essence a protest against different interpretations of art. 62 CO. It can at most serve as further indication of the confusing/different interpretations presented as motivation for ground of protest 2 and 3, and does not represent a new ground of protest against the decision being protested.

3.4.2 Finding

Ground of protest is in essence not a ground of protest against the decision being protested.

Decision: Points 3.4 to 3.4.2 noted.

3.4.3 Recommendation

Ground of protest 4 does not succeed.

Decision: Approved.

4. **Summary recommendation**

4.1 The petition of protest fails.\

4.2 The Deputies Publication of Acta are requested to publish the decision as per the Errata of Acta 2003 again in the Acta.

G. **MINORITY REPORT OF THE COMMISSION**

1. **Assignments**

The Petition of protest of JF Kruger concerning the decision of the 2003 Synod on having Holy Communion.

Decision: Noted.

2. **Issues that should be noted by the Synod**

2.1 The protester followed the way that synod 1991 set out for the handing in of petitions of protest.

2.2 In the commission opportunity was given for oral elucidation.

Decision: Noted.

3. **Judgement of grounds of protest**

3.1 *Ground of protest 1*

In point 2.2 and 4.1 of the Synod decision (Acta 2003) the word advice is used that can be interpreted differently (confusing).

3.1.1 Reasoning

3.1.1.1 In ground of protest 1 the brother proof that their are definitely different interpretations what the word advice in 2.2 and 4.1 means. The brother obviously quotes interpretations of the brother word by word.

3.1.1.2 2.2 of Synod 2003 states: "in stead of falling into a determined prescriptively the Synod... to serve churches... with **advice**, and in 4.1 the Synod proves the principle framework good as this advice.

3.1.1.3 The matter involved here is whether the **decision** (that is the advice that the synod gave) is reasonable for the confusion, or rather the various interpretations. What it is about over here, is the interpretation of the word "advice". The Reformed church

polity does not know advice meaning counselling and support, since advice that is given by a major assembly is given in the light of Scripture, confession and church order. The meaning of CO art. 31 is therefore that advice on which is decided in the light of the Scriptural **decision**, is fixed and binding. (Compare the reasoning of the commission report regarding Ground of Protest 1 of the petition of protest of JL Kruger on this Synod.)

- 3.1.1.4 Rightfully the decision indicates that it does not want to fall into “a determined prescriptively”, but chooses to “to serve and give advice in the light of the BC art. 32 churches in their execution of CO art. 62, (*naturally advice in die light of the Scripture*).”
- 3.1.1.5 That the synod takes the words of CO art 62 as point of departure used in his decision-making, and quoted it fully, reinforces that the synod did not want to give something else than advice in the spirit and meaning of the KO art 62.
- 3.1.1.6 The Synod takes NGB art. 32 as point of departure in his decision. This means that their should not be a clinging to prescription, but advice is served to churches in fulfilling CO art. 62. This emphasises that the Synod kept to what is understood from the Word of God that is fixed, do not deviate from what Christ, our only Educator, set out for us, not binding the consciences with human inadequacies or laws, but provide advice that will serve as obedience to the Word of God.
- 3.1.1.7 The Synod by calling unto the BC art 32 indicated by them selves what the meaning of the term. The principle framework and decisions that was made or this (4.1– 4.4), which was approved as advice for the churches, therefore carries the same authority than any valid Synod Decision in terms of CO art. 31.
- 3.1.1.8 Thus: not a determined prescriptive, but advice, according to art. 31 CO. With this the decision words an important Reformed church polity principle, namely: A Synod is not “prescriptive” by taking a decision that churches have to act on thereafter. No, we as church decide together (it implies: we agree on what the Lord teaches us in his Word on an determined issue) on advice. The decision / advice then is fixed and binding because it rests on scripture. Even now a synod or major assembly acts by no means “prescriptive”, since each local church has the responsibility to take into account the decision / advice served to them by major assemblies **in the light of the Scripture**, is for his own account, or otherwise put: to identify himself with it.

3.1.2 Finding

It is not because of the word ‘advice’ that is used in Point 2.2 and 4.1 of the synod decision, that is causing confusion, but because of various interpretations of involved points.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 313.2 noted.

3.1.3 Recommendation

Ground of Protest 1 is not upheld.

Decision: Approved.

3.2 *Ground of protest 2*

Various interpretations to point 3.2.2 (sacramental acts) of the Decision of Synod (Acta 2003) is different and confusing.

3.2.1 Reasoning

- 3.2.1.1 Again the brother shows that there can be different (confusing) interpretations of the sacramental acts (Acta 2003). Here the different confusing interpretations are quoted word by word.
- 3.2.1.2 It is clearly not the **decision** causing confusion, but determined interpretations rejecting the principle framework.
- 3.2.1.3 The sentence about the prominence of the cup starts with “THEREFORE”. The immediate previous words: “The cup wine must be handed to everyone with the assignment: ‘Drink from it, all of you.’ (Mat. 26:27)” and “The drinking of wine (a) communal drinking cup(s) serve to symbolise the spiritual unity of faith in Christ”. It proofs that the prominence of the cup is found in the communal use of it.

3.2.1.4 Synod 2003 upheld the petition of protest of Schulze, Visser and Coetzee (Acta... 2003). Ground of Protest 4 that was upheld is: "Confessionals seen in the Holy Communion Formulary and the Reformed Confessions have similarities with scriptures and clearly indicate Holy Communion as Godly institution with bread and cup. The current practice to condone the use of small cups based on a decision of synod, but without satisfactory Scriptures, is a rejection of BC, artt. 7 and 29." This caused that the wording of Synod 2000 were altered in the following way: "The **cup** wine must be handed to everybody..." With reference to 4.4 of the decision: "Alternative ways" are only allowed if it is in line with the content of the principle framework, as altered.

3.2.1.5 This decision caused that 3.2.2.3 in Acta 2000:401 had been scratched out, implicating that no deviation of (a) communion cup(s) must be condoned by the principle framework any longer.

3.2.2 Finding

The decision concerning the sacramental acts is in itself not responsible for the confusing interpretations.

Decision: Points 3.2 to 3.2.2 noted.

3.2.3 Recommendation

Ground of protest 2 is not upheld.

Decision: Approved.

3.3 *Ground of protest 3*

Various interpretations are attached to Principle (3.2.1) and Sacramental acts (3.2.2) Appendix 1. The interpretation linked to these words is that the essential must be upheld, thus the sacramental is average and do not have to be upheld.

3.3.1 Reasoning

3.3.1.1 The brother shows clearly shows that the interpretation exists that the Essential aspects in the framework must be adhered to, but that it is not a necessity to adhere to the Sacramental acts.

3.3.1.2 The framework being a **principle** one does not indicate that only Essential aspects are principle, but not the Sacramental acts. The essential aspects indeed only get their meaning through the sacramental acts. Therefore both are part of the **principle** framework and inextricable bound to each other. In other words: The meaning of bread and wine is inextricably bound to the sacramental acts.

3.3.1.3 The points of departure of the principle framework is CO art. 62 and BC art. 32. This implies that in the principle framework – especially the sacramental acts – should not deviate from what Christ, out only Educator, set up for us.

3.3.1.4 The interpretation that only the Essential aspects can be principle is therefore wrong and cannot be placed at the door of the framework.

3.3.2 Finding

The framework indicates that the Essential aspects as well as the Sacramental acts are principle.

Decision: Points 3.3 to 3.3.2 noted.

3.3.3 Recommendation

Ground of protest 3 is not upheld.

Decision: Approved.

3.4 *Ground of protest 4*

Church Order art. 62 is also used arbitrarily. Emphasis is placed on the first sentence namely: "Each church must have Holy Communion in the way leading to the most edification", while the qualifying sentence thereafter is not regarded i.e. "But it must be understood well that the external ceremonies prescribed in the Word of God, may not be changed." The bread and wine alone is seen as the external ceremonies, while the cup, table, etc. are not brought into contention.

3.4.1 Reasoning

This ground of protest is essentially a protest against different interpretations of CO art. 62. The principle framework of the decision of the synod is especially meant as answer to unvalid interpretations of CO art. 62. In the previous reasoning it has been shown that the framework is clear en therefore satisfies this specific purpose.

3.4.2 Finding

This ground of protest indicates the frustration of the brother regarding the different interpretations of CO art. 62, but does not proof that the decision gives rise to different interpretations of CO art. 62.

Decision: Points 3.4 to 3.4.2 noted.

3.4.3 Recommendation

Ground of protest 4 is not upheld.

Decision: Approved.

4. Summarised recommendation

4.1 The petition of protest as a whole fails.

4.2 Deputies Publishing of the Acta are requested to republish the decision as is found in the Errata of 2003 Acta in the Acta.

Decision: Approved.

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

Acta 2003:530

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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) unintentional 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 cuplets 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."