

21.2 ALTERNATIVE REPORT DEPUTIES DOCTRINAL MATTERS WITH REGARD TO ALTERNATIVE FORM(S) FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION (Artt 90, 251)

- A. Prof CFC Coetzee delivers the Alternative Report.
- B. **Decision:** The Report is referred to Commission Doctrinal Matters 1.
- C. Rev BCG Fourie reports on behalf of Commission Doctrinal Matters 1.

D. REPORT

1. Mandate

See Acta 2006:534, 4 and p535, 5.

Decision: Noted.

2. Matters to take cognisance of

- 2.1 Synod 2003 discusses a Point of Description of Particular Synod Pretoria to consider the creation of alternative Form(s) for the Celebration of the Holy Communion (see Acta:632-637).
- 2.2 The Point of Description was granted and a mandate was given to a deputy group to be appointed (Acta, 2003:637, 3).
- 2.3 Synod 2006 hears the report of the deputies, but does not finish with the matter and formulates a new mandate to the appointed deputies (see Acta 2006:520-535).
- 2.4 Prof. B Spoelstra is specifically added on an ad hoc basis to the Deputy group for the matter of Alternatiewe Form(s) for the Celebration of the Holy Communion as advisor (see Acta, 2006:841), apparently because he took the initiative with the formulation and presentation of the initial Point of Description.
- 2.5 From the advice of Prof. Spoelstra it seemed that the initial Point of Description asked for a revision of the existing Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion and not for the instatement of alternatiewe Form(s) for the Celebration of the Holy Communion (see also Point of Description of the GK Pretoria Sunnyside to Classis Eastern Pretoria, 12 September 2001).
- 2.6 Classis Eastern Pretoria does not grant the request of the GK Pretoria Sunnyside for the revision of the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion, but once again appoints study deputies to present an alternative Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion to the next Classis, as well as a concept Point of Description for presentation to the Particular Synod (see Appendix, p11).
- 2.7 Classis Eastern Pretoria furthermore decides that the request of the GK Pretoria Sunnyside should be added to any closer study and eventual presentation to majority meetings (see Appendix, p11).
- 2.8 The decision of the Classis mentioned in pts 2.6 and 2.7 above is in direct contradiction to itself. Points 5.1 and 5.2 of the Classis decision comes down to the Classis granting the Point of Description of the GK Pretoria Sunnyside that asks for a revision of the existing form and that with further presentation of further study to majority meetings. However, point 5.3 does not grant the Point of Description. If the formulation aims to say what is meant ecclesiastically, the entire matter surrounding the revision or creation of forms should have stopped there.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.8 noted.

3. The Synod considers

- 3.1 The request of the GK Sunnyside for the revision of the existing Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion came on the table of the Classis along the church route (art. 33, 46 CO).
- 3.2 Consequently, the final evaluation and execution of the request does not lie with a minority meeting, but with a meeting of all the churches, according to Art 30 CO. The

classis could test the “necessitas” (art 46 CO) and motivation according to Scripture, Confession and CO before the churches in the classis took it for their own account and sent it through to the Particular Synod.

- 3.3 The Point of Description was granted de facto from the elucidation and pieces (amongst which the Point of Description with elucidation from Sunnyside) that had to serve before Synod 2003 and especially Synod 2006, although it was given a different meaning by replacing the word “revise” with “alternative”. However, in their mandates the Synods 2003 and especially 2006 very clearly recognised the original intention of Sunnyside and included it in their mandate to the Deputies for the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion.
- 3.4 It can be indated as a shortcoming in terms of the practical implications of the decisions of the church meetings on this matter that the two directions (either the revision of the existing formulary, or the creation of alternative formularies) have not been adequately debated by church meetings in the light of principle points of departure that are amongst others stated in Eph 4:4, specifically aimed at the ministry of the Sacraments as powerful summaries of the doctrine of Scripture.
- 3.5 It speaks for itself that the Synods 2003 and 2006 would have acted in line with art 62 CO, namely to see to unity in doctrine and form with regard to liturgy at the Holy Communion, because no gravamen has been taken into consideration against art 62 CO.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.5 noted.

4. Findings

- 4.1 The Point of Description of the Reformed Church Sunnyside reached the table of Synod 2003 along the church route despite disorderly treatment.
- 4.2 The Synods 2003 and 2006 were not aware of the confusing decisions that were taken along the church route by minority meetings regarding this matter. The mandates of the Synods should be seen against this background.
- 4.3 It is nonetheless clear that the appendix by Prof. Spoelstra that requests a revision of the existing Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion played a determining role in the decision of Synod 2003 (see especially Acta 2003:636, pt. E 1 and 2).
- 4.4 From the decisions of Synods 2003 and 2006 it is not clear what the place and function of the existing form would be if “alternative forms” were accepted.
- 4.5 Synods 2003 and 2006 did not consider the implications that the acceptance of “alternative Form(s) for the Celebration of the Holy Communion” would have in terms of Art 62 CO, and did not give a related mandate to the deputies.
- 4.6 The question can be asked whether “necessitas” for “alternative forms” has been indicated and proven without any doubt by the minority meetings and Synods 2003 and 2006.
- 4.7 The “alternative forms” that have been formulated since 2003 in concept form, are according to the judgement of the deputies themselves not satisfactory. Members of the sub-group that was responsible for the concept formulations, also indicated that they do not see their way forward in the execution of such a mandate.
- 4.8 Point 5.5 of the mandate of Synod 2006 (Acta, p. 535) has not been met: “The Deputies should consult the other Afrikaanse Churches regarding this matter through the TKR (Deputies Ecumenicity National).”

Decision: Points 4.1 to 4.8 noted.

5. Matters for decision making

- 5.1 The Synod decides in the light of this report about the mandate to the Deputies.
- 5.2 If the Synod judges that the original request of Sunnyside is still on the table, as seems from especially Acta 2003:636, E 1 and 2, and Acta 2006:841, 2.11, the matter of revision of the existing form should receive primary attention. With the aim of a “well described mandate” according to Art 49 CO, the advice of Prof B Spoelstra can be

taken into consideration. The request with regard to “alternative form(s)” can only be evaluated in the light thereof.

5.3 The Synod first discusses this report before the Second report of the Deputies, if necessary, is discussed.

Decision: Points 5.1 to 5.3 are not approved.