

21.3 MINORITY REPORT DEPUTY GROUP DOCTRINAL MATTERS – FORM FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION (Artt 91, 252)

- A. The Minority Report is stated.
- B. **Decision:** The Minority Report is referred to Commission Doctrinal Matters 1.
- C. Rev BCG Fourie reports on behalf of Commission Doctrinal Matters 1.

D. REPORT

1. Remarks

- 1.1 Around 2000 after a presentation at the Calvin Congress, the undersigned directed the attention of the Church Council of GK Pretoria-Sunnyside to certain points of difference between Calvin's exegesis with regard to the sacrament of the Holy Communion as communion and Olevianus' Form for the Celebration of the Holy Baptism, and especially the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion of a Lasco as used in the Netherlands. The influence of Zwingli's idea of a "meal of remembrance" is possibly favoured.
- 1.2 It is well-known that Olevianus wrote a letter to Calvin in 1563 saying that persons in his area thought that Calvin's view will in time take believers back to the Catholic idea of Holy Communion. Olevianus apparently used Calvin's exegesis in the prayer of the Form.
- 1.3 The GK Pretoria-Sunnyside referred the possibility of a revision of the Form to the Classis. A sub-commission of drs NP Heystek and PP Kruger joined the Point of Description and added more information. They convinced the Classis to request "alternative forms" with the Point of Description as added evidence for the sake of "enrichment of liturgy" from the Particular Synod. The request included a reference list of more than 40 scientific sources. The same Commission advised the Particular Synod on this alternative thought of more forms. It was sent to the Synod of 2003 with the Point of Description of Pretoria-Sunnyside as part of the motivation.
- 1.4 The undersigned was not called by one of the Classes or the Particular Synod of 2002 as advisor or informed about decisions and was unaware of the disorderly change in the Point of Description.
- 1.5 Alternative Forms with regard to CO, art 62 were formulated by Deputies for Synod 2006 and presented to the undersigned for advice. My advice was that the Forms do not succeed in revising the Form in CO, art 62 since they had certain shortages.
- 1.6 Synod 2006 did not accept the "alternatives" for the existing Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion, but once again appointed Deputies to pay attention to the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion. The undersigned was appointed as "advisor" for the Deputies for this mandate.
- 1.7 The Convenor of the Deputies and the undersigned agreed that due to practical and financial reasons the undersigned will not attend the first meeting of the Deputies, but will attend when the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion is on the table.
- 1.8 After some time passed and nothing was reported to me, I took the liberty to send the Convenor of the Deputies an "advice" on a possible method for the revision of the Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion that was in my view based on Scriptural, scientific and church orderly principles (amongst which CO, art 46). (The Deputies should be able to hand the advice to the Synod from their documents, CO, art 49).
- 1.9 Dr SP van der Walt reported to me that he passed my advice on to a "sub-commission" and rev JP Kruger consequently reported to me that the Deputies could not use the advice because it did not fall within their mandate. I was not consulted again before the finalisation of the report on 31 March 2008. On 31 March 2008 I met

with a sub-commission of the Deputies where apparent concept forms had to be formulated and evaluated.

- 1.10 The undersigned got the impression that his advice was not needed for the formulation of the report and that he was therefore not involved with the final approval. The impression developed that the matter which came in front of majority meetings in an orderly manner along the church route from the GK Pretoria-Sunnyside with regard to CO, art 62 and the Form was handled disorderly by the Classis and was not accepted without motivation, but was still passed on to the Particular Synod 2002 and 2003 with other connotations than those that came on the table of the Classis. It was nonetheless presented to more churches in Particular and National Synods and the undersigned was appointed as advisor in 2006.

Decision: Points 1.1 to 1.10 noted.

2. Considerations

- 2.1 I found and still find it strange that a decision that belongs with the Synod (CO, art 30) was referred to a Commission for “doctrinal matters” (an academic and not a church distinction). A “church manner” of dealing with it according to CO, art 49 would have implied that a Deputy group would have been appointed for the matter with a well-defined mandate. The Church Order does not hand any power of governance or right with regard to constitution to Deputy groups. In addition to the wide academic distinction of “doctrinal matter”, the Deputies apparently have room to make decisions about work division, division into “sub-commissions” as in church meetings with the right to decide who they want to use as “advisors”, like in societal churches. Consequently the Convenor of the Deputies sent the written advice of the undersigned to a sub-commission in 2006 who evaluated and rejected it because it fell outside of their mandate. With that my mandate as “advisor” also expired. The full Deputy group probably did not know this.
- 2.2 CO, art 62 states unity in the doctrine and liturgy as basis and essence of church denomination within a congregation and as condition of cooperation between churches (Belgic Confession, art 32). Consequently only one Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion is necessary. The article was according to my knowledge not amended according to art 86. The letters of faith bind delegates to majority meetings of churches (CO, art 33) to Scripture, Confession and Church Order as long as it has not been amended in an orderly manner with a majority of votes. The undersigned therefore initially understood the concept “alternative form(s)” as concepts that could possibly be fixed as the Form. The concept “alternative Form(s)” as “enrichment of liturgy” is alien to me in terms of Reformed liturgy and has not been weighed in terms of CO, art 46. Over and against that the revision of the existing Form and the form of ministry to bring them more in line with Scripture and Confession, could serve as true “enrichment of liturgy” (Belgic Confession, art 7). “Alternative formularies” can in terms of good order only mean the revision of the existing Form.
- 2.3 The undersigned is of the opinion that no Synod can give a “well-defined mandate” for the amendment of the existing Form before the Synod considered and decided on the positive and negative aspects of the existing Form, possible supplementation (for instance connection to the third cup of the Easter meal where it is instated) or shortening (for instance the Zwinglian meal of remembrance) and more direct connection to the words of instatement. Only after that can Deputies be appointed to present a concept Form to the Synod at a high literary level.
- 2.4 The undersigned can therefore not help but to give the advice that he gave to the Convenor of the Deputies in 2006 in written form to the Synod of 2009 as well. A form that spells out the doctrine and place of a Sacrament to the masses, is a responsible, sensitive task of faith. Although the Deputies interpreted it otherwise, I believe that consideration of the method of investigation was wrongly rejected by the Synod as worthless “advice” (see 1.8 and 1.9 above).

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.4 noted.

3. Recommendation

The Synod rules on the advice that the undersigned gave to the Deputies for Doctrinal Matters regarding the determination of a work method in 2006 regarding the revision of the existing Form for the Celebration of the Holy Communion, because the Deputies did not consider it. If the advice has merit, the Synod answers from the pieces of the Particular Synod Pretoria 2002 before Synod 2003 regarding which aspects should receive attention during revision. The Synod dedicates it to the Deputies to ask for suggestions and comments from the churches on the revision of the Form with reference to the pieces, and to advise the following Synod on the structure that can be used for revision before certain Forms of individuals be considered for church use.

Decision: The recommendation is not approved.