

become. In the adoration of the consecrated bread and wine, Christ is being worshiped—not the elements (see Appendix E, II, B and Appendix D, III).

- c) The understanding of the Mass underlying this declaration is grounded in a lengthy conversation with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church (see Appendix E, section I).
- 2) That Q. and A. 80 still contains a pointed warning against any teachings, attitudes, or practices related to the Eucharist that either deny the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross or contribute to idolatrous worship.

Grounds:

- a) Practices are not always in accord with official teaching. When and where that occurs, Q. and A. 80 serves as a pointed warning.
 - b) In some places in the world today, practices associated with the Roman Catholic Eucharist obscure and distort important Eucharistic teachings, as they did in the sixteenth century.
- c. That synod propose to the churches that, rather than being deleted completely, Q. and A. 80 be retained but printed in a smaller font.

Grounds:

- 1) Q. and A. 80 does not offer an acceptable description or evaluation of Roman Catholic Eucharistic teaching or of practices in accordance with it.
 - 2) In certain contexts, Q. and A. 80 has offered, and will continue to offer, a needed warning against erroneous teachings, attitudes, and practices related to the Eucharist.
- d. That synod propose to the churches the following format and footnotes to Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 as the way to deal with the confessional difficulties it presents:

***80 Q. How does the Lord's Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?**

A. The Lord's Supper declares to us
that our sins have been completely forgiven
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ
which he himself finished on the cross once for all.¹

It also declares to us
that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ,²
who with his very body
is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father³
where he wants us to worship him.⁴

****But the Mass teaches
that the living and the dead
do not have their sins forgiven
through the suffering of Christ
unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests.**

It also teaches
that Christ is bodily present
in the form of bread and wine
where Christ is therefore to be worshiped.

Thus the Mass is basically
nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ
and a condemnable idolatry.

¹John 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25-26; 10:10-18.

²1 Cor. 6:17; 10:16-17.

³Acts 7:55-56; Heb. 1:3; 8:1.

⁴Matt. 6:20-21; John 4:21-24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1-3.

*Q. and A. 80 was absent from the first edition (February 1563) of the Catechism but was present in a shorter form in the second edition (March 1563). The translation here given is of the expanded text of the third edition (April 1563/November 1563).

**The synod of 2004 concluded that the Mass, when celebrated in accordance with official Roman Catholic teaching, neither denies the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ nor constitutes idolatry. The same synod also concluded that Q. and A. 80 still contains a pointed warning against any teachings, attitudes, or practices related to the Eucharist that either deny the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross or contribute to idolatrous worship. Therefore, Q. and A. 80 was not removed from the text but retained in a smaller font.

- e. That synod, out of pastoral concern for the churches, instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to prepare a prefatory statement to be included with the dissemination of the report(s) pertaining to Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism, as well as the actual changes to the catechism and the related synodical decisions. That prefatory statement should address the following points:
- 1) These modifications to the catechism are a result of extended conversations with Roman Catholic bishops, conversations in which our church made a sincere effort to come to a correct understanding of official Roman Catholic teaching about the Mass and the Eucharist. We have come to an understanding of Roman Catholic doctrine that no longer allows us to confess what the HC says about that doctrine.
 - 2) At stake in these modifications to the catechism are
 - a) A concern for our own confessional integrity, and our duty to confess what we believe to be true.
 - b) A concern to deal justly with our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers, and our duty to do what we can to guard and advance our neighbor's good name (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. and A. 112).
 - 3) These modifications to the catechism are consistent with our understanding of our own church, a church that is *semper reformanda* (always subject to reform). (See Article 7 of the Belgic Confession.)
 - 4) These modifications to the catechism do not change our Reformed understanding of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
 - 5) These modifications to the catechism do not imply an endorsement of Roman Catholic sacramental theology. In fact, significant differences remain between the Reformed and Roman Catholic understandings of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
 - 6) Despite the differences that remain, the dialogue with Catholic bishops was fruitful and represents an effort to promote the unity of

the church that is consistent with Christ's prayer for the unity of the church and with our own ecumenical principles.

- f. That synod, out of pastoral concern for the churches, ask CRC Publications to take note of the report(s) pertaining to Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism, as well as the actual changes to the catechism and the related synodical decisions, and incorporate them as it carries out its ongoing educational mandate in the CRCNA.
- g. That synod submit the revised report and the proposed footnote to the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) for review at its next assembly in July 2005 and also submit the report and recommendations to those churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC and to those in corresponding fellowship with the CRC.
- h. That synod ask each church council and each classis to review the proposed footnote to Q. and A. 80 and to submit their responses to the general secretary of the CRCNA by December 1, 2005, so that they can be considered by the Interchurch Relations Committee along with responses from other denominations and the REC.
- i. That synod instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to receive the responses and propose any changes to Synod 2006.
- j. That synod instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to send both this new report and the slightly revised earlier report to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, thanking them for their participation in dialogue with us, and also to appropriate ecumenical bodies.

—*Recommitted*

- 8. That synod take the following actions regarding participation in Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.:
 - a. That synod authorize the IRC, on behalf of the CRCNA, to become a founding participant in the new ecumenical organization known as Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT-USA).

Grounds:

- 1) The theological affirmations and the purpose of the organization are consonant with the confessions and teachings of the CRC, and the modus operandi (consensus decision-making) is in keeping with the polity of the CRC, namely that no external assembly makes decisions that are binding on the CRC.
- 2) Participation in CCT-USA enables the CRC to fulfill "its ecumenical responsibility to cooperate and seek unity with all churches of Christ in obedience to the gospel and insofar as is commensurate with the gospel" (Ecumenical Charter, III, A, 1; *Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 248; *Acts of Synod 2000*, pp. 670-71).
- 3) "The CRCNA seeks to pursue its ecumenical task by participating in ecumenical organizations, fellowships, and associations that enable it to carry out its ecumenical responsibilities broadly, effectively, and efficiently" (Ecumenical Charter, III, C, 1, b). CCT-

V. Response to Calvin Theological Seminary Communication: Calvin Theological Seminary Supplement

A. *Materials*: Calvin Theological Seminary Supplement (Section II)

B. Recommendation

That synod refer the concern expressed by Calvin Theological Seminary to the Board of Trustees for consideration in connection with the budgeting process.

—Adopted

VI. Retirement Benefits for Ordained Evangelists/Ministry Associates

A concern about the availability of retirement benefits for ordained evangelists/ministry associates was brought to the attention of the Financial Matters advisory committee. The director of finance is requested to investigate the matter and report to the Financial Matters advisory committee at Synod 2005 (reference: *Acts of Synod 2003*).

—Received as information

ARTICLE 68

(Report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued from Article 49.)

Advisory Committee 7, Interdenominational Matters, Rev. Shawn Brix reporting, presents the following:

Interchurch Relations Committee

A. *Materials*: Interchurch Relations Committee Report Section VI and Appendices D and E (pp. 263-64; 277-306).

B. Background

1. This matter is before Synod 2004 because in 1998, synod mandated the IRC to make an attempt to dialogue with Roman Catholic Bishops and clarify the exact nature of official Roman Catholic teaching relative to the Mass. The fact that this actually happened is an astonishing thing—an ecumenical breakthrough for the CRCNA that we should not lose sight of. It also represents an opportunity for further dialogue that should not be lost.
2. The IRC reported on this to Synod 2002, which mandated the IRC to confirm with Roman Catholic bishops that the report was accurate. In that same year, synod also mandated the IRC to advise a future synod as to any changes that might be necessary to Q. and A. 80. The IRC has now received official confirmation that the understanding of the Roman Catholic Mass as described in their revised report (2004) is accurate. This confirmation was received from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity acting in consultation with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.
3. The IRC has now advised synod that changes are indeed necessary to Q. and A. 80 because it does not accurately and fairly represent official

Roman Catholic teaching regarding the Mass. Synod should understand clearly what this does and does not mean.

- a. The IRC and its report clearly state that very significant differences remain between Reformed and Roman Catholic understandings of the Eucharistic celebration.
 - b. The IRC and its report frankly acknowledge that the Roman Catholic Church has a pastoral problem in that official teaching is not always followed in actual practice.
 - c. The IRC and its report indicate that the CRCNA has a confessional problem, namely, that we officially confess (by way of Q. and A. 80) things that the IRC found reason to believe are not actually true.
 - d. Synod 1998's instructions were clear that we ascertain what official Roman Catholic teaching is and base our advice to future synods on that, not on departures from Roman Catholic doctrine or other abuses.
4. A primary consideration of synod should be to speak the truth in love, not only in our interaction with other Christian communities but also in our official expressions of our faith. We must also deal justly with our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers and do what we can to guard and advance our neighbor's good name (HC Q. and A. 112).
 5. Synod 2004 ought to take a significant step to lead our church toward an articulation of beliefs that we can confidently confess.

C. *Declaration*

As indicated above in B, 3, a, it is important that synod acknowledge that there are significant differences between the Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper and the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass. For instance, a key difference is highlighted in Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 78, which says: "the bread of the Lord's Supper is not changed into the actual body of Christ even though it is called the body of Christ in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments." There are also different understandings of the nature and direction of the sacrament (*Agenda for Synod 2004*, pp. 285-86) and of the role of the church in the mediation of salvation (*Agenda for Synod 2004*, pp. 286-89). Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Mass is seen largely as a sacrifice offered, while the Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper is that the sacrament is a gift to be received. There are also different views regarding the role and place of the Eucharist in worship and in the life of the church. In Reformed understanding, Christ gathers his church by his Word and Spirit (HC Q. and A. 54). However, in Roman Catholic teaching, the church is constituted by sacramental grace, especially through the Eucharist.

D. *Recommendations*

1. That Rev. Philip De Jonge, along with members of the Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 subcommittee, be given the privilege of the floor when matters relating to the IRC are being discussed.

—*Granted*

2. That synod declare there are significant differences between the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass and the Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper.
—*Adopted*
3. That synod declare Q. and A. 80 can no longer be held in its current form as part of our confession given our study of official Roman Catholic teaching and extensive dialogue with official representatives of the Roman Catholic Church.
—*Adopted*
4. That synod submit the IRC reports (see *Agenda for Synod 2004*, pp. 277-306) and 2004 synodical decisions concerning Q. and A. 80 to the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) for review at its next assembly in July 2005 and to those churches in ecclesiastical or corresponding fellowship with the CRC.
—*Adopted*
5. That synod ask each church council and each classis to review the reports and decisions relative to Q. and A. 80 and to submit their responses to the general secretary of the CRCNA by July 1, 2005, so that they can be considered by the IRC along with responses from other denominations and the Reformed Ecumenical Council.
—*Adopted*
6. That synod instruct the IRC to evaluate the responses and propose recommendations concerning Q. and A. 80 to Synod 2006.
—*Adopted*
7. That synod instruct the IRC to send a progress report concerning these matters to the Canadian and United States Conferences of Catholic Bishops, thanking them for their participation in dialogue with us, and also to appropriate ecumenical bodies.
—*Adopted*

ARTICLE 69

(Report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued from Article 53.)

Advisory Committee 5, Missions, Rev. Calvin Compagner reporting, presents the following:

Recommendation: That synod approve the following membership for the study committee on third wave Pentecostalism:

- Dr. Mariano Avila, professor at Calvin Theological Seminary
- Rev. Amanda J. Benckhuysen, Willowdale, Ontario (on leave and enrolled in a doctoral program in biblical studies)
- Dr. David Holwerda, professor emeritus at Calvin Theological Seminary
- Mr. Paul Tameling, elder delegate to Synod 2004 and licensed psychologist from Classis Georgetown who presently serves as president of Set Free Ministries
- Rev. Ray Vander Kooij, pastor of Bethel CRC, Acton, Ontario (pastoring in an area where the issue is alive)