

## Protest-B. Hilt (1)

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defense of good works or the reward of grace.

- a. This is demonstrated by Hope's decision to sustain objection 4 of Mr. Bleyenberg.
  - b. Rev. Overway erred when he taught that the Heidelberg Catechism does not use a "justification template" to teach the reward of grace.
3. Rev. Overway errs in using the comparison without explaining the difference between the reward of punishment and the reward of grace. Rev. Overway preached: "The same thing is true, of course, with regard to punishment. Those who sin greater are punished more greatly. The same, too, also with regard to the reward of grace...."
- a. When Rev. Overway preached these words, he left the impression that the believer's works are meritorious. The unbeliever earns or merits or deserves the punishment he receives according to the strict execution of the justice of God.
  - b. However, the good works that God rewards are never earned or merited. It is all of grace. For Rev. Overway to make this comparison in the way that he does implies that the reward is earned, which in turn leaves the believer with no assurance. **Carried**

Cordially in Christ,  
Todd Ferguson

## Protest of Mr. Brian Hilt (1)

March 13, 2021

To: Synod 2021 of the PRCA

Dear Synod of the PRCA,

It is with a heavy heart that I bring to you a protest regarding a decision of Synod 2020 of the PRCA. It is with a heavy heart, but I bring it after much prayer and consideration as I believe it necessary.

The protest is regarding the decision Synod 2020 took not to print certain materials of the SSCAH. It must be protested, I believe, as it stands ungrounded and is in opposition to the Rules for Synodical Procedure. I will demonstrate as such in my protest.

You are in my prayers, and that of the church, as you deliberate.

In Christ,  
Brian Hilt

### Decision Protested

I am aggrieved by, and protest, the decision found at the top of page 92 of the Acts of Synod 2020. That decision is, "It is moved not to include the SSCAH's report in the printed *Acts of Synod 2020*."

**Legality**

This protest comes in harmony with Articles 30 and 31 of the Church Order. It also comes to the immediately following meeting of Synod 2020. Finally, I am a member in good standing of the PRCA. Hence, I believe this protest comes before you legally.

**Grounds and Support**

First, it is vital to note that this decision I am protesting has no grounds. It has no legs to stand on or reasons given for it to be made. As such, it must fall away. Though perhaps there may be extremely rare instances where grounds are not needed, this is not one of them. It is not one of them, as it stands in opposition to the Rules for Synodical Procedure.

I suspect that those who argue in favor of this decision will point back to the ground given on page 91 for why the report of the SSCAH was treated in closed session. That ground was, "The SSCAH was working with Hope's consistory on matters of a minister and his office, which are not public."

It would be faulty and erroneous to point backwards to that decision, however, as it was not done so by synod as grounds. It has been done before that a previous decision is used as grounds with that portion of the minutes being referenced. That is not done here. There are simply no grounds given.

Despite that, I will briefly enter these grounds. I will point to the Rules of Synodical Procedure VI, A. That is the portion regarding the agenda. Points 2, 4, and 5 here are especially relevant. These are:

2. It shall include as much as possible all matters for synod, including material forwarded by the classes, reports of committees, appeals (in harmony with Article VI, A, 5), and correspondence. (Cf. *Acts of Synod*, 1972, Art. 148.)
  4. The Stated Clerk shall ordinarily publish all material intended for the Agenda. He shall, however, have the right to exercise his discretion on matters which are clearly not ecclesiastical (Article 30 of the Church Order), but shall nevertheless list them in the Agenda and send them to synod for final adjudication. He shall not assume synod's prerogative to decide whether material is legal or illegal. (Cf. *Acts of Synod*, 1972, Art. 143.)
  5. Protests and appeals which deal with discipline cases, excluding those dealing with public deviation in doctrine, shall not be included in the Agenda, but shall be sent to the primi and secundi delegates to synod at the time the Agenda is mailed. Such protests and appeals shall be listed in the Agenda. (Cf. *Acts of Synod*, 1972, Art. 144.)
- These articles deal with the Agenda, but they are relevant as they give

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an indication of what ought to be public (in the Agenda, on the floor, and in the Acts of Synod) and what ought to be private, in closed session, and not printed.

These rules, in the first place, state that as much as possible ALL matters for synod, which includes specifically the reports of committees, should be in the Agenda. I do not believe the, "as much as possible," gives grounds for not including the report of the SCCAH in the Agenda or in the Acts of Synod. The tone and clear intent here is that all matters and reports of committees be included and be public.

The rules state that the Stated Clerk shall ordinarily publish all materials intended for the Agenda, meaning they all ought to be public. The discretion is only on matters which are clearly not ecclesiastical. This matter was clearly ecclesiastical. Thus, this exemption may not be used.

Though not a protest or an appeal, the portion regarding protests and appeals is relevant as well. This gives direction on what ought to be public and what ought to be closed. What ought to be public, according to this point, is all appeals and protests besides those which deal with discipline cases, with the exception of those discipline cases which deal with public deviation in doctrine. So, those appeals and protests which regard discipline, but which deal with public deviation in doctrine, must be public.

That is applicable here. David Overway was not disciplined. The mandate of the SCCAH given by Synod 2018 and then Synod 2019 was "to discuss with Hope PRC's consistory whether Rev. Overway's errors in his preaching, as reported by the SCCAH, warrant the consistory's application of Church Order, Article 12 or Church Order Articles 79/80." Article 12 is not discipline, so if the report pertains to that, it ought to have been in the Agenda and be public. Articles 79/80 deal with public sin and deviation, so if the report pertained to these Articles, it should have been included in the Agenda as well.

In harmony with Article 46, I went back to the decision of Synod 1972 regarding the Agenda. The advice adopted by Synod 1972 is helpful to consider.

In the recommendation of the committee, which was adopted, the committee gives grounds for their recommendation that the Stated Clerk shall ordinarily publish all material but have discretion on matters clearly not ecclesiastical. The grounds given were:

1. There are instances where the stated clerk receives material which is only a request for information and which he can answer even though addressed to Synod.
2. There could conceivably come material which is quite obviously of a non-ecclesiastical nature. This need not be included in the Agenda.

3. Final adjudication would always be made by Synod so that the danger or error would be avoided.

4. The cost involved in printing some material could be considerable.

It is clear from these grounds what was in the mind of the committee and of Synod 1972. The things in mind where the Stated Clerk would have discretion are things such as a request for information (where the clerk can provide the information) and where material is *quite obviously of a non-ecclesiastical nature*. The words "quite obviously" are telling and indicate there should be no question that something is not ecclesiastical. It should be quite obvious.

Synod 1972 also considered the inclusion of protests and appeals in the agenda. The committee wrote in their advice, "Your committee is strongly of the opinion that, as much as possible, all the material which comes to our synod and which is treated there should be made available to the people of the Church and especially to the officebearers." They later write, "The saints in Christ's Church should know, as much as possible, what is happening at Synod, for only then can they fulfill their responsibilities in the office of believers."

Once again, the committee (and synod in adopting the advice) indicates their view. The words "as much as possible" are used. Synod 1972 also recognized why this is so important. It is important because "only then can they fulfill their responsibilities in the office of believers." I believe synod in the decision I am protesting placed a barricade in front of those in the office of believer and barred them from fulfilling their responsibilities. That is not in harmony with the Reformation and the revival of the office of all believers or Reformed church government.

Second, this decision is not in harmony with the Rules for Synodical Procedure. The applicable rules are found under XII, which pertains to the Acts of Synod. Point D and its subpoints 1 and 2 are especially applicable.

These rules here are very clear.

1. All of the proceedings and decisions of synod shall be recorded in the Minutes. An exception to this rule shall be the proceedings and decisions of closed sessions, when synod so decides. The reports of advisory committees (Information and Recommendations) shall be incorporated in the body of the Acts in their proper place.

**ALL** of the proceedings **SHALL** be recorded in the Minutes. There is an exception given to proceedings and decisions in closed session when synod decides. That is not applicable. I am not contending that the Acts of Synod should include the minutes from the proceedings or decisions from closed session, though in this case a protest could be made about going into closed session as well.

Further, later in this rule this is clarified and made abundantly clear when it says that reports of advisory committees **SHALL** be incorporated in the body of the Acts of Synod. There is no leeway given. The reports, as this was, **SHALL** be incorporated.

2. All of the material of the Agenda, including reports of standing and special committees; protests and appeals; correspondence; and reports of the Stated Clerk and Synodical Treasurer shall be included in a section of Supplements. Exceptions to this rule shall be all material declared not legally before synod, and all appeals and protests pertaining to private censure cases.

This point says that **ALL** of the material, including reports of standing and special committees...**SHALL** be included in a section of Supplements. This rule does two things. First, it provides further clarity to the previous rule. It says that the Agenda should have included reports of standing and special committees. These rules mean that I should not even have to write this protest, as the report of the SSCAH should have been in the Agenda! It should have been public already! Regardless, I write it, as it was not. Clearly, the report of the special committee (SSCAH) ought to have been included. The Rules for Synodical Procedure mean this decision was taken contrary to the rules, and this protest ought to be sustained.

Third, I believe the principles of Scripture also are clear in this regard and stand opposed to this secrecy.

In Galatians 2:11-13 Paul withstood Peter to his face. He did so publicly. It was a public matter, a public deviation, so Paul withstood Peter to his face. The Rules for Synodical Procedure harmonize with this passage in Galatians. Matters involving deviation ought to be public. The Holy Ghost, in inspiring the writing of the Word of God, was not concerned with Peter's reputation. The concern was for the truth.

Another example is II Timothy 2:17. There, the inspired writer points to vain and profane babblings (v. 16) and then lists by name Hymenaeus and Philetus. Once again, the reputation of men was not the focus. The truth was the focus and the warning against error.

The truth of corporate responsibility is also applicable. This truth is found throughout Scripture. That is an established truth, so for brevity's sake I will not point to a list of passages. That truth makes every one of the members of the PRCA corporately responsible for what is contained in this report. It was a committee appointed by the synod of the denomination of which I am a member. Thus, I am corporately responsible for the contents of that report. I, then, must be able to know what is in that report. I must not simply give blind trust to a committee. That would fly in the face of Scripture, which says that I must study and search the Scriptures lest I perish for lack of knowledge. This is the truth of Scripture taught

in Hosea 4:6 and I John 4:1. In an article by Rev. Steven Key published in the *Standard Bearer*, vol. 72, issue 17 we read:

*The idea of these "spirits," and particularly the "spirit of error" as John speaks of it in verse 6, is that these influences are very measured, oftentimes seemingly minor and insignificant. They often involve matters that perhaps would not be of major concern to us. Rather than the tempestuous wind of a full-blown storm, these are the measured breaths of certain teachings or perspectives that we hear, certain perspectives that would influence us and our loved ones and church members. These influences may belong to "the spirit of truth," again, as John refers to it in verse 6. But they may also belong to the "spirit of error."*

*And exactly because of the danger of those spirits of error, the dangers of all the influences of the many false prophets that are gone out into the world, you and I must try the spirits, and teach our children and our people to be discerning Christians.*

In order to exercise my calling as a child of God to "try the spirits," I must have the material to study.

Fourth, that ties into Article 31 of the Church Order. That article gives me (as anyone) and the other members of the PRCA the right (not the option or opportunity but the right) of appeal. This article is not qualified to be only applicable to having that right to those things which an ecclesiastical assembly deems me to be privy to, but it extends to any and all decisions.

Applied to this specific instance, I have the right of appeal regarding synod's approval of the work of the SSCAH in Article 55, B, 2. In order to know whether I desire to appeal, I need to have the report, which report should have been published in the Acts of Synod as required by the Rules for Synodical Procedure

### **Protest of Mr. Brian Hilt (2)**

April 10, 2021

To: Synod 2021 of the PRCA

Dear Delegates of Synod,

I admit I am writing this protest to you although at the present I believe it is a matter that should be first considered by Classis East by way of a protest of their decision taken in January 2021.

I address it to you at this time due to the timelines involved and the urgency and importance of the matter. If Classis East finds that due to the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies of Classis West it is a decision that must be protested to synod, I think it is in the best interest of the