

- f. This note exemplifies the clarity and forthrightness that are the pedagogical hallmarks of the Heidelberg Catechism itself.

—*Recommitted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued in Article 61.)

ARTICLE 51

Advisory Committee 9, War and Peace, Rev. John W. Medendorp reporting, presents the following:

Committee to Study War and Peace

A. *Materials*: Committee to Study War and Peace Report including Appendices, pp. 381-452

B. *Observations*

“There is . . . a time for war and a time for peace” (Eccl. 3:12). What time is it? We receive the Study Committee Report on War and Peace during a time of conflict and war. We receive this report on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Towers and a recent break-up of an alleged terrorist cell in Canada. The report will be read in light of the world events that have caused and will continue to cause discussion and debate on the actions and policies of governments, political parties, and government leaders.

The church joins this discussion in its prophetic role as a spokesperson for peace and justice and also stands apart to clearly articulate that everlasting peace is possible only when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:10, 11).

The members of this advisory committee would articulate that we did not speak with one voice in agreeing or disagreeing with each and every line of the report. Nevertheless, we did find that our discordant voices came to speak in harmony as to the revised recommendations to the study report that we are now submitting. We strove to issue recommendations that address our current situation while not being bound by it. We would, therefore, encourage the delegates to consider the recommendations that we are submitting to synod in their own right.

Although some members of the committee expressed deep reservations and others were very supportive of the study report, we all felt it incumbent upon us, the church at this critical juncture in history, to speak a word of peace to the nations. We refer the report to the churches for study, debate, discussion, and prayerful reflection. It is a report that, once again, will be read in light of current events, but the report also contains certain challenges and perspectives that will help guide our study, debate, discussion, and prayer in the future.

The committee would like to call one important matter to the attention of the delegates in the reading of the following recommendations. The committee felt that the word *peace* was used somewhat ambiguously in the study report, encompassing both the redemptive and the sociopolitical aspects of peace. In our revised recommendations we have attempted to use the words *peace* and *peace-making* exclusively in the sociopolitical sense while reserving the word *shalom* for the redemptive sense.

We also invite and encourage the churches to recall other study reports on this topic as background for the current discussion (see Committee to Study War and Peace, section V, E, pp. 394-97, for references). As discussion of these important issues stimulates our life together, may we be mindful that we approach this matter as part of the church whose voices are united when we sing:

Crown Him the Lord of peace;
His Kingdom is at hand.
From pole to pole let warfare cease
And Christ rule every land!
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For you have died for me.
Your praise shall never, never fail
Through all eternity.

C. *Recommendations*

1. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Carl Kammeraad, chairman; Rev. Herman Keizer, Jr., reporter; and Dr. James Skillen, member of the study committee.

—*Granted*

2. That synod urge the Christian Reformed Church, through assemblies, congregations, and agencies to affirm the gospel's call to Christians to be agents of shalom in a broken world and to encourage members to take specific and intentional steps to fulfill this calling, including the following:
 - a. That synod acknowledge and affirm the content of previous synodical statements on war and peace and commend them to the churches as background to this current report.
 - b. That synod express appreciation for branches of the Christian church for work being done to make peace with justice a strong vocation and seek to work more closely with them, where possible, to enhance a collective impact and learn from one another.
 - c. That synod urge our congregations and assemblies to make our calling to be agents of shalom a matter of attention, including both prayers and biblically informed actions for peace that deepen our understanding of the implications of our Christian calling and its applications in all areas of life.
 - d. That synod urge our congregations and assemblies to set aside time for prayerful reflection on, and discussion of, our responsibility as peacemakers and agents of shalom.
 - e. That synod urge our congregations and assemblies to pray for guidance for the leaders of nations to establish just governance, maintain peace, strengthen international cooperation, and prevent conflict.
 - f. That synod urge our congregations and assemblies to commend and pray for the safety and well-being of all peacemakers, including those

who serve in our armed forces and those who participate in nongovernmental missions of peace and reconciliation.

- g. That synod urge our church members and assemblies to participate actively in building cultures of peace at all levels of society where we individually and collectively have influence; for example, participating in government and the political process, supporting nonviolent conflict resolution, strengthening respect for human rights, and opposing increasing militarization and other tendencies when they threaten peace and justice.

—Adopted

3. That synod acknowledge the pressing pastoral concern (see section IX, B, Committee to Study War and Peace, p. 414) and direct the Board of Trustees to encourage CRC Publications to partner with pastoral care experts to make available materials to assist churches in ministering to members and their families who are contemplating entering or serving in the military, as well as to veterans in their congregations.

—Adopted

4. That synod acknowledge the challenge of accomplishing peace with justice and urge the agencies and offices of the Christian Reformed Church and Reformed institutions of higher education to educate our members, especially our children and youth, on these issues; to work toward peace with justice; and to inform the Board of Trustees and the congregations of the Christian Reformed Church of their work.

—Adopted

5. That synod encourage congregations to urge their members to exercise responsible citizenship by calling upon the governments of the United States and Canada to expand efforts in their calling to be agents of peace with justice through good governing. Topics for their consideration and study could include:

- a. Alternatives to war so that military force is the last resort,
- b. Alternative ideas on national security,
- c. Analysis of budget allocations for military and nonmilitary interventions,
- d. The development of postwar military doctrine for justice and peace that includes postwar conditions (*post bello*),
- e. Arms production and sales, and
- f. The militarization of space.

—Adopted

6. That synod acknowledge that the call for shalom in a broken world goes beyond any one nation's borders and urge the agencies and members of the CRC to promote and actively engage in international initiatives for building peace with justice.

—Adopted

7. That synod approve the following moral statements and direct the executive director to communicate these moral concerns to the U.S. and Canadian governments:

- a. Moral clarity requires a careful distinction between preemptive and preventive military actions.
- b. Preventive military actions, actions initiated by a government against an adversary who *may* pose a serious threat at some future date, is inconsistent with the moral standards expressed in the just-war criteria of just cause and last resort.
- c. Preemptive military actions, actions initiated by a government against an adversary who *will* pose a serious threat at some future date, need to be justified under the moral standards expressed in the just-war criterion of the right to resort to force.

Delegates spend time discussing Recommendation 7. No decision is made at this time, but discussion will resume in the evening.

(The report of Advisory Committee 9 is continued in Article 54.)

ARTICLE 52

The chair introduces Rev. Wes Granberg-Michaelson, general secretary of the Reformed Church in America (RCA), who pays tribute to Dr. Peter Borgdorff for the contributions that he has made as ED for the relations between the RCA and the CRC.

Rev. Roy Palavicini leads in the singing of "You Are Just," and the vice president leads in closing prayer. The afternoon session is adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, June 14, 2006 Ninth Session

ARTICLE 53

Ethnic adviser Yatta Foryoh leads in opening prayer taken from 2 Timothy 3:16-17. She announces "At the Cross" and "There Is Power in the Blood."

ARTICLE 54

(The report of Advisory Committee 9 is continued from Article 51.)

Advisory Committee 9, War and Peace, Rev. John W. Medendorp reporting, presents the following:

I. Committee to Study War and Peace

A. *Materials*: Committee to Study War and Peace Report including Appendices, pp. 381-452

B. *Recommendations*

1. That synod approve the following moral statements and direct the executive director to communicate these moral concerns to the U.S. and Canadian governments:

- a. Moral clarity requires a careful distinction between preemptive and preventive military actions.
- b. Preventive military actions, actions initiated by a government against an adversary who *may* pose a serious threat at some future date, is inconsistent with the moral standards expressed in the just-war criteria of just cause and last resort.
- c. Preemptive military actions, actions initiated by a government against an adversary who *will* pose a serious threat at some future date, need to be justified under the moral standards expressed in the just-war criterion of the right to resort to force.

—Adopted

The following negative vote is registered: Curtis L. Dubay (Hackensack).

2. That synod instruct the executive director to communicate to the U.S. and Canadian governments:
 - a. Our moral opposition to the development or deployment of new weapons of mass destruction.
 - b. Our continued support for conducting negotiations with other nations to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to further reduce nuclear arsenals, with the ultimate goal of multilateral nuclear disarmament as called for under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (and the recommendations of synod’s report of 1982).

—Adopted

The following negative vote is registered: Curtis L. Dubay (Hackensack).

3. That synod instruct the executive director to petition the President of the United States as well as the Department of Defense to provide a process and establish procedures wherein those who object to selective conflicts on the basis of just-war criteria are honorably discharged.

Grounds:

- a. The current policy is from the days of military draft. With the advent of the all volunteer force, the U.S. government has the ability to change policy to include those who conscientiously object to select conflicts.
- b. We have addressed the U.S. government policy of conscientious objection in previous decisions of our synod, noting that the policy stands “quite contrary to that of our church” (*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 738). Under this policy, our members “have no legal recourse” (*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 738).
- c. We have made strong statements concerning the obligation of our members to obey the national authority but also that our ultimate loyalty is to God. We also recognize our church’s pastoral responsibility to counsel and support commitment to that ultimate loyalty when conscientious objection is based on “intelligent and adequate grounds to be convinced that the given war to which he is summoned is an unjust war” (*Acts of Synod 1939*, p. 249).

d. We have pastoral responsibilities as previously outlined in the *Acts of Synod 1977*.

—Adopted

The following negative vote is registered: Curtis L. Dubay (Hackensack).

4. That synod direct the executive director to present a copy of this report and its recommendations to the Canadian government to encourage study of the peacebuilding components of its foreign policy.

—Adopted

The following negative vote is registered: Curtis L. Dubay (Hackensack).

5. That synod urge the Board of Trustees to encourage the Christian Reformed Church through its members, assemblies, appropriate agencies, and committees to participate more intentionally in policy development and programs for peace building, such as Project Ploughshares in Canada and other interchurch policy dialogues on war and peace issues.

—Adopted

6. That synod refer the study report, adopted recommendations, and supplemental materials to the churches for study, debate, discussion, and prayerful reflection and that synod dismiss the committee with thanks.

—Adopted

7. That synod join in singing verse 3 of *Psalter Hymnal* 410, “Crown Him with Many Crowns.”

—Adopted

II. Response to Overture 18: Revise Recommendation J in the Committee to Study War and Peace Report

A. *Materials*: Overture 18, pp. 533-35

B. *Recommendation*: That synod not accede to Overture 18.

Grounds:

1. It is customary to refer all matters of instruction to the executive director.
2. It is assumed that the executive director will work through appropriate structures and agencies to accomplish the intent of the directive from synod.

—Adopted

III. Response to Overture 19: Refer Report of the Committee to Study War and Peace Back to the Churches

A. *Materials*: Overture 19, p. 535

B. *Recommendation*: That synod not accede to Overture 19.

Ground: Although it is true that “significant long-term issues that require further study” are indeed raised by this report, the committee does not consider the study report the definitive word but, rather, a helpful point of departure in an ongoing discussion regarding the posture of the church toward the pressing issues of war and peace. We would fully expect there to

be “further study” as well as further action on these issues in the congregations and assemblies of the church.

—Adopted

IV. Response to Overture 20: Not Adopt Recommendation I of the Committee to Study War and Peace Report

A. *Materials*: Overture 20, pp. 535-36

B. *Recommendation*: That synod consider Recommendation 9 of the Committee to Study War and Peace Report the committee’s response to Overture 20.

—Adopted

V. Response to Overture 21: Amend Section X, B of the Committee to Study War and Peace Report

A. *Materials*: Overture 21, p. 537

B. *Recommendation*: That synod consider Recommendation 4 of the Committee to Study War and Peace Report the committee’s response to Overture 21.

—Adopted

VI. Response to Overture 22: Withdraw Support for the Conclusions of the Committee to Study War and Peace Report

A. *Materials*: Overture 22, Supplementary materials

B. *Recommendation*: That synod consider the above observations and significantly revised recommendations our response to Overture 22.

Grounds:

1. Although many members of the committee viewed the study report as a significant departure from past statements on war and peace, it was recalled that part of the mandate to the study committee was to “give special attention” to “the underlying theology and principles of peacemaking and peacekeeping to inform the conscience and praxis of the church.” The study report accepts, assumes, and relies on past proclamations of the church on issues of just war but focuses the majority of its attention on issues of peacemaking, for which there is little precedent in the assemblies of our church. The above recommendations attempted to preserve the essence of that mandate while departing from some of the language in the report.
2. We acknowledge that more could have been said about the scriptural principles underlying the conclusions of this report. Nevertheless, we do not view this report as the definitive statement on the issue of peacemaking and strongly encourage the church in the above recommendations to continue to study the issues from a biblical perspective.
3. While recognizing the biblical command to be subject to governments, the church must retain its prophetic role over against the governments to which it is subject, for which there is ample biblical precedent (the Old Testament prophets’ exhortations to the government of Israel as well as

the governments of the region; the command of Jesus Christ to his disciples in Matthew 10:15-20; the response of Jesus Christ to Pilate in John 18:33-38, 19:9-11; and the response of the Peter and John in Acts 4:19-20). We have, therefore, encouraged the church through the above recommendations to reflect thoughtfully and biblically on its prophetic role.

—Adopted

VII. Response to Communication 3

A. *Materials*: Communication 3, pp. 544-46

B. *Recommendation*: That synod consider the following recommendations of the Committee to Study War and Peace report our response to the comments of Communication 3:

1. Comment A – Recommendation 2, a
2. Comment B – Recommendation 5
3. Comment C – Recommendation 7
4. Comment D – Recommendation 8, a
5. Comment E – Recommendation 9

—Adopted

VIII. Response to Communication 4

A. *Materials*: Communication 4, pp. 546-48

B. *Recommendation*: That synod consider the following recommendations of the Committee to Study War and Peace report our response to Communication 4:

1. Communication 1 – Recommendation 2, g
2. Communication 2 – Recommendation 4
3. Communication 3 – Recommendation 5
4. Communication 6 – Recommendation 7
5. Communication 7 – Recommendation 8
6. Communication 8 – Recommendation 9

—Adopted

IX. Response to Communication 5

A. *Materials*: Communication 5, pp. 548-50

B. *Recommendation*: That synod consider the above observations and recommendations our response to Communication 5.

—Adopted

ARTICLE 55

Rev. Bruce Adema leads in closing prayer. Delegates join in singing *Psalter Hymnal* 410, vs. 3; “Crown Him with Many Crowns.” The evening session adjourns at 9:11 p.m.