ESTABLISHING A COVENANT COMMUNITY:
RELIGION AS A BASIS FOR COMMUNITY AND ETHNIC SEPARATENESS
AMONG DUTCH CALVINISTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA’S FRASER VALLEY

by

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Establishing a Covenant Community: Religion as a Basis for Community and Ethnic Separateness Among Dutch Calvinists in British Columbia's Fraser Valley

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Abstract

This thesis provides an examination of the ideology and experiences of post-World War II Dutch Calvinist immigrants in British Columbia's Fraser Valley. These immigrants experienced a way of life that distinguished them from many other immigrant groups. In focusing on the community they created, this thesis provides a revision of previous views of the experience of Dutch immigrants in Canada, which assert that the Dutch are disappearing as a distinguishable ethnic group in Canada. This thesis argues that Dutch immigrants in Canada must first be examined with respect to their distinctive religious backgrounds; only with this facet of their lives in focus, can their experiences in Canada be understood.

For the many Dutch Calvinist immigrants in Canada, religion was a dominant factor in the forces behind their emigration, the location of their settlement, and the degree of their Canadianization. Although a Dutch community as a whole does not exist in Canada, a strong Dutch Calvinist community does exist, built almost entirely in the post-war era. Many of these Calvinist immigrants arrived seeking economic security. However, after immigration, religious values became of paramount concern, leading them to create an environment in which they could achieve their ideals — a covenant community. Conservative, highly religious and largely rural, the members of this community were distinct both from Dutch immigrants of other religions and from the wider Canadian society. Their inherent conservativism, redoubled by a defensive reflex against change after immigration, allowed them to create the institutional and personal boundaries they deemed necessary to preserve their way of life. The importance of three institutions, the church, the school and the home, explains — far better than any link to other Dutch immigrants — the strength and presence of this 'ethnic' community. Through these institutions the Dutch Calvinists in Canada were able to maintain their traditional way of life more successfully than either their original community in the Netherlands or the older communities of similar origin in the United States. By
examining Dutch Calvinists in the Fraser Valley, and focusing on popular Dutch Calvinist publications and oral interviews, this thesis will illuminate this immigrant group as well as the complex role of religion in community formation and ethnic separateness.
Acknowledgments

In such a work, there are many people who helped in the creation of this work. I thank all the people who allowed me to enter their homes and opened their lives to me. Growing up in the community, I was able to see the determination and the pride of these immigrants as they set up their strong and vibrant community in Canada. The creation of this work did no more than renew my respect for their accomplishments. I must also give some special thanks to my parents and my relatives who not only tolerated my prying into their lives but showed an active interest in what I was doing.

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Introduction

Establishing a Covenant Community: Religion as Basis for Community and Ethnic Separateness Among Dutch Calvinists in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley

The study of ethnicity and immigration is currently an expanding field in Canada. Ethnicity as a motivation in the lives of people has been given greater recognition and stands as both a strategy for survival and as an objective force based on the immigrants’ cultural legacy. As the sixth largest ethnic origin group in Canada, with 425,945 Canadians claiming Dutch ancestry in 1981, the Dutch constitute an important group.\(^1\) With over 100,000 Netherlanders arriving in Canada in the seven short years between 1948 and 1955, the Dutch immigrant experience is an influential component of Canada’s post-war heritage.\(^2\) However, beyond the numbers, it is the nature of Dutch immigration to Canada that is particularly noteworthy. While some of these post-war immigrants have assimilated and disappeared as a distinct ethnic group, a significant community of Dutch Calvinists has been created and gives a singular focus to the Dutch immigrant presence in Canada. Religiously based and often rurally bound, Dutch Calvinists have formed an immigrant community — a covenant community — that has flourished in their adopted country and has set them apart from mainstream Canadian society.

The debate of ethnicity and its presence in Canada has centered on the effects of the immigration process and whether the Old World traits have disintegrated or been transplanted into the new society. Oscar Handlin, in his study of the immigrant experience at the turn of the century, argued that the ‘uprooted’ immigrants underwent disorganization, isolation and alienation in their vain struggle to establish themselves in

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their new environment.³ Replying to Handlin, Rudolph Vecoli, focusing on Italian immigrants in urban Chicago at the turn of the century, contended that the immigrants maintained a remarkable degree of continuity as they ‘transplanted’ the essence of their Old World culture into their new situation.⁴ In response to both Handlin and Vecoli, Robert Harney, studying Canada’s pre-World War II Italians, emphasized that the immigrant experience was a unique synthesis as the New World environment blended with the Old World traits of the immigrants past to create an identity that was neither Italian nor Canadian, but rather ‘Italo-Canadian’. Harney’s immigrants are thus both ethnic and Canadian.

The Dutch immigrant experience in North America has also been examined, although not in great detail. Many of the original works have chronicled the entire Dutch experience from the inception of the Dutch colonies to the present day and have glorified the courageous Dutch pioneer in ‘his’ struggles to tame the land. These celebratory works do give an introduction to history of the Dutch in North America but do very little to reveal their experiences. Later works, in the traditions of Handlin, Vecoli and Harney, have examined the immigrant experience and have tried to detail both their impact on the dominant society and society’s impact on them. Perhaps the premier historian of Dutch Canadians, Herman Ganzevoort, adds a new element to the immigrant debate. Ganzevoort’s Dutch immigrants’ experiences leave them in a state of transition as, in their desire for accommodation and assimilation into the new society, they abandon most of their cultural heritage and identity. Thus, Ganzevoort’s immigrants, in contrast to Harney, are neither ethnic nor Canadian. Their distinctiveness as an discernible group becomes increasingly less as they cease to have an ethnic identity.

Other scholars have also attempted to examine Dutch immigrants in Canada, adding to the interdisciplinary approach to the immigrant history, but with varying degrees of success. Sociology, geography and ethnic studies have all contributed to this field. A sociologist, K. Ishwaran, has done rather extensive work on contemporary familial and social relationships among the Dutch Canadians. However, these ahistorical attempts to analyze the experience of the Dutch over the entire continent overlook many of the subtle nuances which characterize Dutch immigrant culture and identity. While these investigations make some important contributions, they are ineffectual in providing a great deal of insight into the experiences of post-war Dutch immigrants in Canada.

Contrary to assertions of historians such as that of Ganzevoort, post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants experienced a way of life in Canada that was both unlike the experiences of Dutch immigrants of other religions in Canada and those Dutch Calvinists that remained in the Netherlands. In Canada, post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants were able to create a new and vibrant community based in the institutions of the church, the school and the home.

The story of the Dutch experience in Canada begins as much in the United States as it does in the Netherlands. The connection between the Netherlands and the United States extended back to the year 1628 with the establishment of New Amsterdam. Although this early Dutch presence in North America was soon subsumed within the growing colonies, it gave rise to perhaps the only truly lasting monument of Dutch immigrants in North America — a church federation. Throughout its reincarnations in North America, the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church became the Reformed Church in America as it is still known today.

Although this first presence in North America was important in the history of the American colonies, the modern presence of Dutch immigrants in the United States began in 1846. Division and disillusionment within Dutch Calvinism as a result of the impact of new thought, the material poverty of the church under French domination, and a general
relaxation of seventeenth century Calvinism had caused considerable discontentment for a significant minority of conservative, orthodox Calvinists in the Netherlands. In 1834, struggles between this conservative minority and the liberalizing majority led to the secession of a small conservative group from the Netherlands Reformed Church. Although these Secessionists argued that they were merely returning to a time before modernism had entered the church, the state Hervormde Kerk — the Netherlands Reformed Church — through its leader King William I, attempted to quash the Secession through fines, restriction of worship and other impositions. These measures led a large proportion of the dissenters to seek their livelihood elsewhere — particularly in North America.

However, Dutch emigration only begun when severe agricultural depression, brought about by the potato blight of the 1840s, encouraged the rural poor in the Netherlands to seek better conditions elsewhere as it had across Europe. Three-fourths of the emigrants from the Netherlands at this time were farmers, labourers or small craftsmen — few were paupers but the vast majority were from the country-side’s lower and middle ranks. Known as Christian Seceded Congregations and later as the Christian Reformed Church, the Secessionists were heavily represented among the rural poor. Emigration appealed to its members in much the same way that emigration appealed to other rural poor. However, the additional impetus of religious conflict resulted in their large-scale emigration to the United States.

The Secessionists, comprising less than five percent of the total population, made up a large proportion of immigrants to the United States. In one period, 1846-1849, they composed about 50 percent of all Dutch immigrants although they made up only 1.3

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6van Oene, pp. 20-21.
7Bratt, p.8.
percent of the total Dutch population.\textsuperscript{8} In 1846, this church-oriented migration arrived in the United States in the person of Albertus Christiaan van Raalte. Creating a community in Michigan, the Dutch immigrants set out to achieve economic security and religious freedom.\textsuperscript{9} This early migration used Seceder communications and organization, created under the auspices of the church, as the chief network for emigration.\textsuperscript{10} Of even greater importance, the ability of the Seceders to achieve an early cohesion in the United States attracted immigrants from the National church, giving them numbers and an influence in North America out of proportion to their representation in Dutch society.\textsuperscript{11}

After the worst ravages of the agricultural depression of the 1840s in the Netherlands were over, Dutch emigration once more became a mere trickle. A rejuvenation of Dutch agriculture, the development of a more liberal interpretation of the civil government’s role in Dutch society, and a more lenient king, William II, lifted many of the impositions placed on the Secessionists and they began to receive complete freedom of worship and organization.\textsuperscript{12} Although secession from the Netherlands Reformed Church had resulted in the withdrawal of a significant minority of dissenters, there were still a large number of people who disagreed with the direction the church was taking and another secession took place in 1886. This second secession, the \textit{Doleantie}, also resulted in a large, organized movement of people out of the Netherlands Reformed Church.\textsuperscript{13} In 1892, the \textit{doleantie} churches and the Christian Reformed Church — the

\textsuperscript{8}Bratt, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{10}Bratt, pp. 8-10.
\textsuperscript{11}Bratt, p. 8-10.
\textsuperscript{12}van Oene, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{13}From \textit{Doleantie}, a noun derived from a Latin word meaning “to grieve, to mourn.” Therefore the \textit{Doleantie} churches were the grieving churches. van Oene, p. 23.
new name for the Seceder churches — joined together, forming the *Gereformeerde Kerk* — the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. Under a charismatic leader, Dr. Abraham Kuyper, these orthodox Calvinists were to direct a nation-wide, all-encompassing movement that changed the fundamental structure of Dutch society.

The rejuvenation of Dutch agriculture, the continued reluctance to emigrate, and a reorganization of Dutch society occupied much of the attention of the Dutch people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The rejuvenation of Dutch agriculture after the disastrous harvests of the 1840s removed much of the population pressure. The relaxation of punitive measures and a greater acceptance of the Seceders also removed a great deal of the impetus for this group to emigrate. Emigration therefore dropped dramatically. The late nineteenth century also witnessed a changing Dutch society. The rapid rise in the secular proportion of society alarmed many people, particularly the Calvinists and the Roman Catholic groups. Both elements sought to isolate themselves from the threat of the increasing secularism in society. Led by the Calvinists, Dutch society began to coalesce into four distinct groups — Roman Catholic, liberal Protestant, secular and orthodox Calvinist. While these groups were not necessarily rigid or exclusionary, they did direct most activities of everyday life. The effect of these 'vertical' divisions could be seen in politics. In 1900, Abraham Kuyper as leader of the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary party, was able to form an alliance with the Roman Catholics and together remove the Liberals from their long-held control of power. Although the Calvinists made up less than 10 percent of Dutch society, with Kuyper as Prime Minister, they were able to implement the division of Dutch society through such measures as the entrenchment of a state-sponsored separate school system and encouragement of sectarian organizations. Amidst these movements in Dutch society, emigration was not a greatly desired or needed strategy.

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14van Oene, pp. 21-22.
16Bratt, p. 9.
This trickle of emigration from the Netherlands continued until the Second World War. Although emigration was greatly reduced, a few continued to seek their future elsewhere. Much of this emigration continued in the pattern of the early nineteenth century migration as many of these immigrants sought the Dutch communities that had been established by previous migrants. The United States continued to be the country of choice for the Calvinist element of the migration as the communities established there were attractive, allowing them to migrate and yet maintain their religion. Canada was not a first choice for many of these immigrants as only scattered immigrants arrived prior to the First World War and only slightly more than 18,000 Netherlanders emigrated to Canada in the interwar period. However, after the Second World War, this situation changed dramatically.

In the post-World War II period, there was a definite flood of Dutch immigrants to Canada. Two years after the conclusion of hostilities — time necessary to recreate and organize a new emigration system out of the shambles of post-war Netherlands — Dutch immigrants began to arrive in increasing numbers. More immigrants were to arrive in each year between 1950 and 1955 than had arrived in the entire interwar period. For the first time in their modern history, the Netherlands witnessed a desire of a significant proportion of its population to seek their livelihood elsewhere. The magnitude this migration to Canada gives this particular influx of Dutch immigrants a great deal of influence in the Canadian Dutch immigrant community as by its very numbers it overwhelmed the number of Dutch immigrants already established in Canada. The burst of Dutch emigration to Canada between 1947 and 1958 created a strong community and a distinguishable presence in Canada. Without an understanding of the social and political heritage of these Dutch immigrants, an assessment of the preservation of their shared

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18 Ganzevoort, pp. 31-32.
19 See VanderMay, pp.51-54. 31,982 arrived in the latter half of the 1950s while only 47,145 arrived in the 22 years between 1960 and 1981. The immigration of the years 1948 to 1955 represent an influx all out of proportion with the immigration both before and after this period.
cultural identity upon arrival in Canada will remain inadequate and incomplete. Their cultural heritage is an essential factor that must be appreciated in any comprehensive study of their experience and identity in Canada.

An understanding of the Dutch immigrant experience in Canada must start with an understanding of their situation in the post Second World War Netherlands. While territorially the Netherlands is a small country and the most densely populated country in Europe, within this small nation, there were fundamental diversities in the immediate post-war era. Between north and south, there were a number of significant language differences, so significant that when the immigrants congregated in Canada, English quickly became the common language. The population in the Netherlands also was, and remains, overwhelmingly concentrated in the north and west within the group of cities known as the Randstad Holland and this area dominated the agrarian south and east politically, economically, industrially and culturally. In addition to this rural/urban division, a second regional cleavage in Netherlands society existed between north and south, a cleavage based primarily upon religion. Political and cultural isolation had entrenched the Protestant nature of the north and the Catholic nature of the south until, for most practical purposes, the north and south represented two clearly defined subcultures.

In the post-war era, the society of the Netherlands was not a homogeneous structure but was deeply fractured, divided on religious lines. This religious diversity, the legacy of the Calvinist-led late eighteenth century ideological entrenchment, resulted in the unique feature of the Dutch social structure — the columnar system (Verzuiling). The three basic components of Dutch society — Roman Catholic, Protestant and secular or humanistic — created a vertical pluralistic society which complicated other structures

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20 The Netherlands has 428 inhabitants per square kilometer (1108 per sq. mile). In comparison, the Netherlands is just slightly larger than Vancouver Island.
21 The average population of this area is 1080 per square kilometer (2798 per sq. mile) and contains most of the industrial, administrative and governmental centres.
such as economic. Immediately following the Second World War, the Roman Catholics comprised 38.5 percent of the population, Protestants 44.3 percent, other religions 3.7 percent, and secular 13.5 percent. Religion played a dominant role in the Netherlands, forming the basis of the educational system and determining the organization patterns in almost every major aspect of national life. Each column (zuilen) maintained its own labour unions, social organizations, schools, political parties, emigration agencies and ideologies, and did not interact to any great extent. Only the Catholic column was clearly monolithic but the Calvinist element of the Protestant column approached its cohesion. The rest of the Protestant and the secular column were composed of fragments of society which interacted to some extent. Each social column practiced endogamy, maintained entrenched political identities and unique traditions — a solidarity which strengthened their coherence and identity. Industrial relations was even affected — with a lower frequency of industrial strikes than in many industrially advanced countries, due to columnar loyalties prevailing over class loyalties. This extreme pattern of socio-cultural pluralism resulted in “an endless competition and struggle among the columns for power, status, and honour.” These deep cleavages have been carried over to North America and largely determined the experiences of the Dutch immigrants.


24 Netherlands Central Bureaus of Statistics, Census Results, as quoted in K. Ishwaran, Family, Kinship and Community..., p. 22. The Calvinists made up about 10 percent of Dutch society at this time (about one quarter of all Protestants). The strength and cohesion of this group make it a column of its own but it is usually included with that of all Dutch Protestant, most of whom belong to the Hervormde Kerk. Although these groups shared the same roots, by the twentieth century, there were distinct differences in ideology, cohesion and attitudes, beyond that of theological doctrine.

25 Hofstede, pp. 6-11 and 96-121, and Ishwaran, Family, Kinship and Community..., pp. 21-25.


27 For example, Calvinist columnar loyalty with denominational primary schools, farmers' Unions, radio and magazines, and trade unions was greater than 90%. See Hofstede, pp. 74-75.

28 Other authors have suggested that the metaphor of tangled trees might better represent the complexity of Dutch society in the first half of the twentieth century. For example, see H. Verwey-Jonker, "De psychologie van de verzuilging," in Socialisme en Democratie, (January 1957), as quoted in Hofstede, p. 75.

For many Dutch immigrants, the immediate desire to migrate resulted from a variety of influences that arose as a result of the Second World War. The devastation of the war left the Netherlands in dire economic straits. Industry had been decimated and large portions of farmland were inundated with seawater through the destruction of dikes. Post-war reconstruction was also difficult as the Netherlands' chief pre-war trading partner — Germany — was also almost completely destroyed. The dislocation and disorder created during occupation and later by the independence of the Dutch East Indies in 1949 further drained the economy and also resulted in an influx of Dutch and Indonesian immigrants who preferred the country of their heritage rather than the new country of Indonesia being created. The tensions between the victorious powers also made further conflict seem inevitable and the anathema of communism to the strong religious element in the Dutch population resulted in general feelings of depression, pessimism and discouragement. These economic and psychological burdens, after the devastation of the war, contributed to a feeling of discontent and restlessness which in turn promoted emigration in the hope of finding better opportunities elsewhere.

Although the economic and psychological problems after the war promoted a desire for emigration, this desire was not uniform across all elements of Dutch society. Calvinists had predominated in pre-war emigrations. The Calvinist ethos that the entire world was "the Christian's field of operation" had not put constraints on migration. The rural population of the rich, clay farmlands of the provinces of Zeeland, Groningen and Friesland — predominately Calvinist — had also been feeling population pressure since

30See VanderMay, pp. 51-52, and Bratt, p. 195.
31Hofstede, pp. 3-4.
33Indonesia contributed no less than one-sixth of the Dutch national income and its loss was a blow both to the Dutch economy and to Dutch prestige. Petersen, p. 3. In addition to the great number of people emigrating from the Netherlands and the people repatriated after the independence of Indonesia, a large number of people also emigrated directly from Indonesia. However, Dutch sources on this emigration are understandably incomplete and vague.
34Petersen, pp. 3-11.
the turn of the century. Although the Calvinist community attempted to relieve these pressures through a variety of methods, the rejection of birth control by Calvinist authorities had limited the effectiveness of these traditional strategies.\textsuperscript{36} These provinces, therefore, had developed a high rate of migration, both to other provinces and to other countries.\textsuperscript{37} In contrast, other areas such as the sandy soil farmlands of the southeastern provinces of Brabant and Limburg did not feel the same pressure. Use of fertilizers and improved agricultural techniques allowed for unprecedented levels of productivity in these conditions and the rural population — predominately Roman Catholic — experienced little desire for emigration.\textsuperscript{38} Calvinists thus comprised an element of the pre-war emigrations which was far in excess of their proportion of the population as religion and geography combined to encourage their migration elsewhere.

While an uncharacteristically large proportion of the post-war Dutch population desired to emigrate and seek their future elsewhere, this migration was still heavily influenced by the pre-war emigration patterns.\textsuperscript{39} The highly organized Calvinist community was first to promote emigration in the post-war era and survey the world for likely outlets for their excess population.\textsuperscript{40} The tradition of emigration and the ability of previous Calvinist immigrant groups to maintain their own identity in other countries also resulted in existing churches which were accommodating to the principles of the post-war immigrants. In contrast, while the other elements of Dutch society were also affected by post-war conditions, they were not privileged with such initial advantages and were slow to engage in large-scale emigration.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{36}The great Dutch Calvinist leader and politician Abraham Kuyper rejected birth control and was a staunch supporter of migration as a solution to population pressure. See Hofstede, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{37}Petersen, p. 17. The tradition of out-migration of these 'Calvinist' provinces since the beginning of the twentieth century partially accounts for the disproportionately large element of Calvinists in previous migrations to North America.
\textsuperscript{38}Petersen, pp. 13-14.
\textsuperscript{39}Hofstede, pp. 17-22. vanderHeide interview, September 17, 1991.
\textsuperscript{40}This emigration society had been established in 1927, part of the legacy of the organizations the Seceders had established to help their emigration in the 1840s.
\textsuperscript{41}Hofstede, pp. 39-40.
Although the post-war migration followed pre-war patterns, it differed distinctly in both the destination and magnitude. While the impetus to emigrate was stronger in the immediate post-war era than it had been ever before, Dutch emigrants were forced to find new locations in which to seek a new future.

**Figure 1**

Destinations of officially sponsored emigration from The Netherlands, 1952

- Canada: 42.42%
- Others: 5.41%
- Australia: 8.56%
- Brazil: 9.40%
- New Zealand: 0.58%
- South Africa: 32.51%
- United States: 1.11%

Total Emigration = 46,690

The resumption of American isolationist impulses in the post-war era resulted in the continuation of pre-war quotas for immigrants to the United States — the traditional location of Dutch migration. However, the large scale desire to emigrate could not be accommodated by the acceptance of a few thousand individuals in the United States and other locations needed to be found. In addition to the official emigration organization of the government, the *Stichting Landverhuizing Nederland* each social group quickly set up its own organizations to help direct its immigrants to acceptable locations.  

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42 At one point, there was no fewer than sixteen groups, official, semi-official and private, interested in fostering immigration. With this scale of organization, one of the most important aspects of the government immigration organization was to oversee the operation of these other groups. However, the number of emigrants and organizations, and the turmoil of the period, meant that some escaped government supervision. The numbers presented here are those of the official government organization which was to include all immigrants but, by their own admission, is not complete. See Petersen, p. 43.
Australia, followed by New Zealand, and South Africa received unprecedented numbers of new Dutch immigrants seeking to establish themselves.

The Dutch immigration to Canada in the post-war era was thus a function of the turmoil and changes in the Netherlands after the Second World War. For Canada, the immigration of large numbers of people was a situation distinct from previous Dutch immigrations. These immigrants also did not represent a cross-section of Dutch society but also was, in large part, composed of only a particularly narrow slice of it. While the pre-war emigration patterns were a major influence on this migration, the particular circumstances of their immigration, in the initial period, did not favour concentrated settlement. However, in short order, many of these immigrants recreated closed, family-centered communities, strongly influenced by the church. This creation of community was only accomplished through the strong personal determination, and through the agency of particular sub-sects, to rediscover and recreate the roots of Dutch Calvinism in North America.

This thesis will then examine Dutch Calvinism in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley in two parts. First, to provide a background, the forces leading to the Dutch Calvinist immigration and the nature of their settlement in Canada will be briefly examined. The disruption of the Second World War, overcrowding among specific elements of the Dutch population, and a general restlessness created an impetus to emigrate. The post-war Dutch immigration to Canada was distinguished by the dominance of religious concerns as the initially scattered immigrants coalesced into communities which preserved their religious ideals. Second, this thesis will then examine the three main institutions used to preserve their religious ideals and heritage — the church, the school and the home. The creation and maintenance of a covenant community was only possible through a church that could and would readily expel unwanted influences and that could also provide the social bonds its members desired as they withdrew from mainstream society to protect their religious ideals. A separate
school system was also a necessary requirement as it was seen that the protection of the children from the influences of the wider world was a necessary and divined-inspired duty for parents. Only through a completely separate school could this ideal be realized. Finally the home, as the ultimate source of religious legitimacy and authority, was the impetus for the creation of personal and family boundaries. Through these boundaries, Dutch Calvinists were able to keep out the unwanted influences of the wider Canadian society and preserve the ideals of their religious heritage and way of life. Through these two parts, this thesis will illuminate the ideology and experiences of post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants in the Fraser Valley.

In order to examine post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants’ ideology and experiences, this thesis will rely on the voices of the immigrants themselves. Through interviews, these immigrants were able to provide details of their daily routine, their ideology and as well as descriptions of their more memorable experiences. Eighteen people were interviewed — 10 men and eight women — of which nine belonged to the orthodox group, seven to the liberal group and two to the ultra-orthodox group. Most respondents were chosen from the immigrant generation, between the ages of 50 and 65, although three of the orthodox group and three of the liberal group would be considered second generation and were 21 to 32 years of age. Throughout their discussions, they presented their awareness of their differences from the wider society, the need for a complete Calvinist lifestyle and worldview, and the seemingly overwhelming obstacles facing the creation of their society.

To complement this rich source, other primary sources were also consulted. For a glimpse of the initial ideology and ideas of Dutch Calvinist immigrants in Canada, *The Banner* was examined. As the premier magazine and the official organ of the Christian Reformed Church in the immediate post-war period, *The Banner* was published by and

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43 A number of those interviewed expressed considerable concern about the use of their interviews. In respect to their desires, I have used both pseudonyms and anonymity when referring to the respondents in the text.
was the voice of the Dutch Calvinist communities established for the most part by the
nineteenth century Dutch Calvinist migration to the United States. Widely read, *The
Banner* was also important in the new community of Dutch Calvinists set up in Canada.
As most Dutch Calvinists were initially members of the U.S.-based Christian Reformed
Church in Canada before doctrinal disagreements broke them into three subsects, most
were exposed to it. For many, the complaint was not over the magazine’s prescriptions or
its statement of ideals but over its concentration on the American news. After the schism
among Dutch Calvinists in Canada, each group set up its own publications. For the
orthodox Calvinists of the Canadian Reformed Church, *The Clarion* was established.
While *The Banner* continued to be a premier magazine of the Christian Reformed
Church, during the late 1960s and 1970s, it came more and more to stand for the
evangelical wing of the church, a stand on the extreme wing of the Canadian Calvinist
community. *The Clarion* became more prevalent as the Canadian Reformed Church
established itself in the 1970s and much of its conservative ideology was acceptable to
the particularly conservative element of the Christian Reformed Church in British
Columbia. It is important to note that while *The Clarion* did not begin publication until
1972, *The Clarion* voiced many of the concerns and ideas of the reactionary and
conservative Canadian Reformed Church in particular and Dutch Calvinism in Canada in
general that remained largely unchanged since the influx of Calvinists in the post-World
War II era.

Supplementing these rich magazine sources are the church-produced
documentation such as the synodal reports and liturgy. As the Dutch Calvinists in
Canada, particularly those of the Canadian Reformed Church, were forced to create a
complete church and community, the liturgical documents are important expressions of
their Calvinism. Although they were based on previous Dutch Calvinistic documents, the
language and ideology they used were expressions of the immigrants’ contemporary
Calvinism and therefore also give insight into their particular ideology. The synodal
reports, often focusing on the creation, explanation and reinterpretation of their liturgy, also give a great deal of insight into the direct and continuing concerns of these immigrants as they struggle to rediscover their Calvinist roots and define them in modern Canadian society.

By providing an examination that focuses directly on the ideology and experiences of post-World War II Dutch Calvinist immigrants in the Fraser Valley, this thesis provides a revision of previous, narrowly-defined views of the experience of Dutch immigrants in Canada. Unlike scholars of the Dutch in Canada who assert that they are disappearing as a distinguishable ethnic group, this thesis argues that the Dutch immigrants in Canada must first be examined with respect to their distinctive backgrounds — in this case, religion. For many Dutch immigrants in Canada, religion was a dominant factor in the forces behind their immigration, the location of their settlement, and the depth of their Canadianization. Although a Dutch community as a whole does indeed not exist in Canada, a strong Dutch Calvinist community does exist, built almost entirely in the post-war era. The members of this community were distinct both from Dutch immigrants of other religions and from the wider Canadian society. Rather than becoming alienated in the New World or simply transplanting their portion of Dutch society into Canada, these Calvinist immigrants were able to build upon their deeply-held ideals to construct a new community. The importance of religious ideals helps explain, far better than any link to other Dutch immigrants, the strength and presence of this ‘ethnic’ community. By examining Dutch Calvinism in the Fraser Valley, this thesis will illuminate this immigrant group as well as the complex role of religion in community formation and ethnic separateness.
Chapter One
Migration and Settlement

While the Dutch presence in North America has stemmed from the seventeenth century, Dutch immigration to Canada is really only a mid-twentieth century phenomenon. The physical ravages of the Second World War and a general restlessness of the Dutch population created an impetus for emigration. For Canada, this emigration was distinct. The Dutch immigrants to Canada were not representative of Dutch society but were, in large part, dominated by a relatively small group of Calvinists. Although these immigrants did not emigrate in congregational groups and did place their faith at risk in immigration, they soon recreated closed, family centered communities which strove to protect their religious ideals. The creation of this community was only accomplished through the agency of the particular sub-sects of Dutch Calvinism in Canada which, through a rediscovery and recreation of their Calvinist roots, resulted in the creation of a strong, active, largely rural community that has set itself apart from the larger Canadian society.

For Canada, the explosion of Dutch immigration after the Second World War resulted in a very distinctive immigration profile. The Canadian economy was perceived to be relatively solid as it was seen to be similar to that of the United States and not adversely affected by the war. Dutch immigrants in the immediate post-war era therefore came to regard Canada as a haven where large tracts of cheap land were readily accessible and where economic stability could be assured.¹ However, the demands of the emigrants for transportation and government support were first subordinated by the government to the need to return the troops of the western allies, then to send troops to Indonesia, the repatriation of refugees and the rebuilding of the government infrastructure. Emigration to

¹Albert VanderMay, To All Our Children: The Story Of The Postwar Dutch Immigration To Canada (Jordan Station, Ontario: Paideia Press Limited, 1983), pp. 57-58, notes taken in interviews with G. DeLong interview, September 17, 1991, and A. Wagenaar, October 20, 1991. This perception was particularly played up by immigration pamphlets such as those of the CPR.
Canada really began in earnest only in 1948 and between 1950 and 1953 did not dip below 20,000 immigrants a year.²

However, in the autumn of 1953, for the first time since the Second World War, the Canadian economy failed to show an increase and unemployment increased.³ The publicity of this trend was given extensive news coverage in the Netherlands and resulted in a waning interest for prospective emigrants.⁴ The brief 1954 recession was followed by a spectacular recovery in 1955 when the general level of prosperity again began to rise and the emigrants that had taken a 'wait and see' attitude resumed their migration.⁵ Once again, in 1957, the Canadian economy underwent a recession and immigration subsequently

²These again represent figures supplied by the Stichting Landverhuizing Nederland, the official government emigration agency. However, because of the multiplicity of official, semi-official and private emigration organizations, the exact number of immigrants is not known. Although the government agency worked with other agencies, sponsored their applicants and compiled its statistics using their records, some escaped notice, having no records or emigrating privately.


⁴Hofstede, p. 168.

slowed down. The resulting disillusionment with Canada as a land of economic opportunity, combined with increasing industrialization, land reclamation, the rapid breakdown of social and provincial barriers due to modern communications and a developing labour shortage in the Netherlands, removed much of the desire for emigration and Dutch immigration to Canada returned to near pre-war levels.

The immigration policy of the Canadian government also helped to stream Dutch immigration. Farmers in Canada applied for labour from the Netherlands at immigration offices, the National Employment Service, the provincial government offices or the colonization offices of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways. Lists of prospective immigrants were forwarded from the Stichting Landverhuizing Nederland (the Dutch government emigration department) to Canadian immigration authorities and other interested agencies where placements were worked out. Initially, Canadian policy limited post-war Dutch immigration to war-brides and single farm labourers. This requirement chose against the liberal Protestant and secular elements of Dutch society as these groups were dominant in the urban areas and comprised the lowest proportion of agriculturalists. The desire for farm labourers therefore inadvertently caused a preference for Calvinist and Roman Catholics who each made up a substantial proportion of the rural population. While Canadian immigration constraints were relaxed in 1949 to allow for immigration of families, Canada continued to require a large proportion of agriculturalists, again inadvertently choosing Calvinists and Roman Catholics over other groups. It was not until 1953 when these restrictions were lifted to allow for easier access by other occupations that farmers as a proportion of the immigrant total dropped measurably.

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6The 1957 resurgence in emigration has also been attributed to the recession in the Netherlands and the fear of Communist aggression after the example of Hungary. See Herman Ganzevoort, A Bittersweet Land: The Dutch Experience in Canada, 1890-1980 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart limited, 1988), p. 112.
7Ganzevoort, A Bittersweet Land..., p. 112.
8VanderMay, p. 52.
9Ganzevoort, A Bittersweet Land..., pp. 111-112.
The high proportion of farmers among the Dutch emigrants created special problems regarding religious allegiance. Dutch immigrants often equated Catholicism with being French in Canada. Dutch Roman Catholics, wishing to emigrate to English Canada, perceived that they would be absorbed by the predominately British Protestant population. Dutch Catholic leaders such as Monsignor Hassan, the first Dutch Catholic 'emigration bishop,' were reserved with regards to Canada because of the perception of the relative weakness of Catholicism in the agricultural West:

From a religious point of view, the desirability of emigration is dependent upon the percentage of Catholics in the various states [sic] of English Canada. ... Generally speaking, the further one goes to the west, the weaker the Catholic element becomes.\textsuperscript{11}

If one was to emigrate to Canada, Monsignor Hassan advocated emigrating to the French-speaking part of the country as "the Catholic immigrant will feel at home there and safe as regards his spiritual values."\textsuperscript{12} Because of this concern for their religious values, Roman Catholics showed proportionately little interest in emigration to Canada. Instead, Dutch Roman Catholic leaders preferred emigration to Australia as they perceived that there the church was stronger. They also perceived that, in Australia, the Roman Catholic element was concentrated in towns and villages and thus was easily accessible. Further, parochial schools could be established relatively easily. For Australia, Roman Catholics comprised approximately 50 percent of all Dutch immigrants between 1950 and 1955 — a proportion larger than their share of the population in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{13}

On the other hand, while Australia was the country of choice for Catholics in the post-war era, Canada was the country of choice for Calvinists. Comprising only 10 percent of the population of the Netherlands, the Calvinists made up more than 40 percent of the immigrants to Canada between 1948 and 1952, and until 1957 did not constitute less than one quarter of all Dutch immigrants to Canada.\textsuperscript{14} The same Protestant nature of

\textsuperscript{11}Monsignor Hassan, as quoted by Hofstede, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{12}Monsignor Hassan, as quoted by Hofstede, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{13}Hofstede, pp. 96-98.
\textsuperscript{14}The Calvinists comprised about 17% of all Dutch emigrants to all countries at all times. The liberal Protestants do not show these features of chain migration, comprising between 20 and 28% of Dutch
western Canada that had discouraged Catholics, together with the presence of a functioning (if small) Calvinist community, encouraged Calvinists to emigrate to Canada.\(^\text{15}\) It was felt that in such an atmosphere, Calvinist religious values would be maintained. Dutch Calvinists also took advantage of their early organization and emigration tradition to dominate the relatively shorter trip to Canada.

Once the initial immigration of Calvinists to Canada resulted in the establishment of new churches and communities, further immigration became more attractive. Immigrants often wrote back to family and congregations with news of the ‘new dominion’ and relatively quickly fieldmen arose to help new immigrants.\(^\text{16}\) Fieldmen were usually older, established farmers who had both the time and the ability to correspond with the originating churches in the Netherlands and help the new immigrants set up their households upon arrival.\(^\text{17}\) Further immigration was encouraged as newly established Dutch farmers sponsored other Dutch immigrants. Working from lists of eligible immigrants supplied by Dutch emigration organizations, farmers in Canada could sponsor specific immigrants. This allowed immigrants already in Canada to bring relatives or others of the same religious background directly to their area. These links between the old world and the new further attracted Calvinists above other groups, preserved religious ties and encouraged immigration to established groups. These factors determined that Calvinists would characterize Dutch emigration to Canada until 1957 when the increasing industrialization in the Netherlands — particularly in the small towns of the Calvinist north — removed much of the population pressure from the rural Calvinist population and greatly reduced both their presence among Dutch immigrants and the total Dutch immigration to Canada.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{15}\)Petersen, pp. 66-67.

\(^{16}\)From notes taken in an interview with V. Veenama, September 24, 1991.


\(^{18}\)Ganzveoort, A Bittersweet Land..., p. 82.
Once in Canada, as a result of the processes comprising chain migration, Dutch immigrants congregated in several distinct locations. The initial acceptance and placement of Dutch immigrants was provisional upon their having a position waiting for them. This provision had resulted in a dispersal of immigrants as they were sent out to satisfy the demands of the Canadian labour market.\textsuperscript{19} However, the usually short contracts for farm labour quickly put many immigrants on their own and in search of a suitable location to establish themselves. After this short time-lag, the majority of Dutch immigrants migrated further to areas of previous Dutch settlement — Ontario, particularly the environs of the Niagara Peninsula, central and southern Alberta, and the Fraser and Bulkley Valleys of British Columbia.\textsuperscript{20}

The importance of such links remained an important feature of the immigration process. Migration was often family centered and family directed. For example, the importance of kinship links can be seen in the case of the family of Pieter and Martje DeBoer. In The Netherlands, at the turn of the century, the Calvinist DeBoer family had been farmers on marginal land in the northern province of Gronigen. However, in 1923 the farm had failed and Pieter DeBoer became a construction labourer in a suburb of the city of Gronigen. However, within months he died in a construction accident, leaving his wife and six children — four boys and two girls — ages one to fourteen, all of whom became labourers or domestic servants when they reached their early teens. After the Second World War, there was little for the family left in the Netherlands and in April 1951, the four sons emigrated to Canada with their spouses and sixteen children. With good reports of Canada, Martje DeBoer and one of the daughters also emigrated to Canada in October 1954.\textsuperscript{21} Joining one son who had settled near Edmonton, the family then spread out to work as individual inclination determined. However, the search to settle and become

\textsuperscript{19}Ganzevoort, \textit{A Bittersweet Land...}, p. 68. Common jobs were harvesting sugarbeets or potatoes in southern Alberta, milking cows in the Fraser Valley, cutting peat near Richmond, B.C., and other general farm labour.

\textsuperscript{20}Ganzevoort, \textit{A Bittersweet Land...}, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{21}The daughter who remained behind was also married but her husband was owner and master of a small coastal schooner and thus they had a strong economic incentive to remain in the Netherlands.
economically secure, and the attraction of kinship quickly led Martje DeBoer and all five children to reside in the Fraser Valley by 1958.

The cohesion and importance of the family network had been maintained throughout migration and, together with religion, had a great influence on the eventual destination of the DeBoers and many others in this post-war migration. The attractive climate and economic opportunity in British Columbia had initially attracted a few early immigrants, but kinship ties and the attraction of religious fellowship drew many more. Many of the Dutch Calvinist immigrants who came to British Columbia had initially migrated to other areas of Canada. Some, like the four Vinke brothers came directly to Ridgedale, B.C. in 1951 and only had to find jobs locally until in 1954 they saved enough to buy a farm. More often, immigrants initially settled in other locations like the M. Dalhuisen family who first settled in Coaldale, Alberta in 1952, then Tabor, Alberta, finally moving to the Fraser Valley in 1955. This period of moving about was in order to gain sufficient capital so a farm could be purchased. All four of the Vinke brothers and the Dalhuisens settled on dairy farms near Ridgedale B.C. by 1959. In British Columbia, such immigration resulted in the Dutch constituting the fourth largest ethnic group, buying approximately four hundred farms or about one-fifth the total and thus creating a significant community of Dutch-Canadians.22

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Figure 3

Population of B.C. by Ethnic Groups, 1971

The deep cleavages that pervaded post-war Dutch society also reappeared and greatly influenced Dutch immigrant settlement in Canada. Catholic immigrants appear to have been absorbed into the larger community of the Canadian Roman Catholic church and there are no parishes today in Canada which are considered 'Dutch.'

The Protestant group was not monolithic but was fragmented into several theological divisions. The liberal Netherlands Reformed Church, the official state church, constituted about half of the Protestants in The Netherlands, making up about 25 percent of the country's population. Many liberal Protestants, theologically close to Anglo-Saxon Protestants, quickly joined various mainstream Canadian denominations upon arrival, such as the United Church.


24 van Stekelenburg, pp. 72-74.

The Calvinists, maintaining a large degree of cohesion and group identity, are the only visible, organized Dutch group in Canada of any consequence. With such structure in society, religion as an ethnic factor among Dutch immigrants takes on far greater importance than has been generally acknowledged.

To the present, historians have not attempted to revise their definition of ethnicity to one that will accommodate such cleavages. As the Catholics and liberal Protestants are regarded as members of non-ethnic, 'universal' churches, they are considered to have a minimal impact on the character of the Dutch community. While there was a recognized, visible Calvinist community in Canada, there was minimal contact, either desired or in practice, between members of the different religious communities. This has led historians to suggest that, as there is no universal Dutch ethnic cohesion, based on a characteristic such as that of language, the Dutch are disappearing as an identifiable group. Even the foremost historian of Dutch immigrants in Canada, Hermann Ganzevoort, suggests that such cleavages will not be healed:

The ideological segregation that has bound the groups in place in the Netherlands clearly has been re-established in Canada, and there is little hope that such division can be ended in the near future.

However, the cleavages in the Dutch community in Canada simply mirrored the society they had left in the Netherlands. Religion dominated their migration and their eventual settlement in Canada. For the Dutch, therefore, the emigrants’ religious origins dramatically affected the degree of assimilation that they experienced in Canada.

For Dutch Calvinists, this dominance of religion and the strength of their community has even assisted the perception that the Dutch community has quickly assimilated. An important indicator used to ‘measure’ the degree of assimilation is language retention. However, the limitations of such an indicator are seen in the way that

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26 Ganzevoort, A Bittersweet Land..., p. 115.
the strength of the Dutch Calvinist community has, in most cases, speeded the replacement of Dutch with English. As these immigrants congregated out of a desire for religious fellowship, people were brought together from all over the Netherlands. Although the Netherlands is geographically small, there are a significant number of dialects. When the immigrants came together in Canada, understanding each other was a significant problem. Therefore, these immigrants quickly adopted English as a necessary tool to maintain their ideology as well as to advance economically. Also the desire to maintain a close community, particularly with the young, encouraged the immigrants to adopt English as this would be the language of their future and their children. These factors have resulted in the near abandonment of the use of the Dutch language by the second and subsequent generations, and this has caused historians and sociologists to incorrectly conclude that the Dutch community in Canada has quickly assimilated. While it is true that there is no real community in Canada which encompasses all elements of Dutch society, visible and strong communities exist which represent specific elements. Instead of historians attempting to force an assessment of the Dutch community into a mold that is based on language, a new definition of ethnicity is needed which places greater emphasis on other factors such as religion.29

The Dutch, unlike many other Canadian ethnic groups, were immigrants by choice rather than by duress or social, political or religious persecution. Dutch Calvinists, overwhelmingly agrarian, have been attracted to the agricultural opportunities available in Canada. The most orthodox and theologically conservative of the Dutch Protestants, the Calvinists have maintained the heritage of the divisions within Dutch society and have

29 One of the most important and prevalent gauges of ethnic cohesion is language retention. Some groups, such as the Ukrainians and the Poles, are seen to maintain their ethnic boundaries, community solidarity and differentiation from surrounding communities in part by their high native language retention. A 1975 study of 'native' language retention indicated that the desire for language retention among persons of Dutch origin is one of the lowest of any of the ten ethnic groups studied. K. E. O'Bryan, J.G. Reitz, O. Kuploweska, *Non-Official Languages: A Study in Canadian Multiculturalism* (Ottawa: The Secretary of State, 1975), p. 389. From such studies, scholars of the Dutch in Canada such as K. Ishwaran and H. Gantzvoort have concluded that the Dutch have assimilated and become Canadians. See, K. Ishwaran *Family, Kinship and Community...*, and H. Gantzvoort, *A Bittersweet Land...*, pp. 116-118.
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established their own churches, schools, newspapers and organizations. Although they did settle in close proximity, the late arrival of Dutch Calvinists meant they did not form block settlements in the manner of the Mennonites and Scandinavians on the Prairies or the ethnic enclaves of the urban centers. Instead, the Dutch infiltrated into previously settled areas, often renting or taking over established farms and never formed distinct ethnic enclaves. Yet, Dutch Calvinists maintained strong ethnic ties in the manner of the Mennonites but without forming the closed communities of the Mennonites. Inward looking, endogamous, authoritarian, patriarchal, and relying heavily on kinship ties and religious affiliation to maintain their cohesion, this group provides an excellent opportunity to examine the processes of ethnic resilience and community formation.

For many post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants, even through the stresses and dislocation resulting from migration, several religious maxims survived intact. The nucleus of orthodox Dutch Calvinism revolved around three main ideas. First, Calvinists stressed the complete acceptance of religion as the chief focus in a person’s life. This idea was echoed by James Ghysels in an article of The Banner, the central magazine of Dutch Calvinists in North America at the end of the Second World War:

There is no part of life from which God is to be excluded. He is to be acknowledged in every experience and undertaking, in joy and in sorrow, in health and sickness, in prosperity and adversity. He is to be acknowledged not only on the Sabbath Day but also in our daily work and pleasure. He is to be acknowledged in secret and in public, and that part of our own life which no eye but our own can see, and in that part which is known to our fellow-men.

Second, many Dutch Calvinist immigrants maintained a complete faith in the legitimacy and authority of the family. Prominent Calvinist politicians and theologians in the Netherlands such as Abraham Kuyper — leader of Dutch Calvinism in the late eighteenth century,
Prime Minister of the Netherlands in 1900 and an important theologian in worldwide Calvinism — reiterated the importance of the family as the basic building-block of society:

The basic unit of society was the family. It alone had its origins before the Fall and in the explicit ordinance of God. The home contained every type of relationship in society and taught all the skills and duties needed there. Thus its rights took precedence over those of any other institution and its defense constituted the first concern of sound government.34

Third and perhaps most important to their post-migration interactions with Canadian society, Dutch Calvinists faithfully held to a literal interpretation of the Bible and the perceived rejection of ‘modernism,’ humanism and republicanism in which the ideas of man were placed before that of God. J. Vander Ploeg warned his readers of the inherent evil of modernism in a 1959 article in The Banner:

For our present purpose it will suffice to say that Modernism set forth views which constitute a denial of the fundamental truths of Scripture. ... This is so serious because Modernism is a soul-destroying heresy.35

These ideas are certainly not unique to those of Dutch heritage or of the Reformed faith. However, many Dutch Calvinists — both newly arrived immigrants in Canada and the older established immigrants in the United States — incorporated these tenets into their lives to such a degree that they remained insulated from others.

Despite the strong convictions maintained by many immigrants, ethnic Dutch churches in Canada were slow to form. Because the immigration process was religiously dominated by the church-based structure of early twentieth century Dutch society, each zuilen set up its own emigration committees to enable its people to emigrate and to direct them to acceptable places.36 Dutch Roman Catholic leaders directed their followers to maintain their faith while the largest Protestant church in the Netherlands, the Hervormde

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34Bratt, p.17.
Kerk (Reformed Church), encouraged post-war immigrants to join mainstream Canadian churches as the way to maintain their beliefs.\textsuperscript{37} In addition, as these new immigrants were initially dispersed as farm labour to such areas as the sugarbeet fields of southern Alberta, they came into direct contact with Canadian society and were in close proximity to Canadian churches.\textsuperscript{38} Also, the original dispersion resulted in low population concentrations that were insufficient to support local ‘Dutch’ churches. Therefore, the desire of these new immigrants to maintain religious fellowship drove them to initially seek church fellowship within established and local Canadian churches — mainly the United and the Presbyterian — which delayed the development of ethnically Dutch churches.

However, the religious future of these immigrants was not only of interest to religious leaders of the originating zuilen but was also of concern to Dutch immigrants already residing in North America. While many established Canadian churches paid little attention to the influx of Dutch immigrants, Roman Catholics and Calvinists made special efforts to aid them and direct them into what they perceived were appropriate churches.\textsuperscript{39}

The American-based Christian Reformed Church, the religious creation of eighteenth and nineteenth century Dutch Calvinist immigrants to the United States, had ventured into Canada but, because of the lack of a significant Dutch Calvinist population, had only made small inroads with twelve pre-war congregations spread throughout Canada.\textsuperscript{40} However, as the majority of the immediate post-war immigrants were of Calvinist background, the Christian Reformed Church became ever increasingly involved in attracting and aiding all Dutch Protestant immigrants to the extent of ensuring that their literature was handed out aboard ship and welcoming committees were at quayside.\textsuperscript{41} To accomplish the attraction of the new immigrants, the Dutch Calvinists of the Christian Reformed Church struck an


\textsuperscript{38}Ganzevoort, \textit{The Bittersweet Land}, p. 86; notes taken in interviews with G. DeJong, September 17, 1991, and A. Wagenaar, October 20, 1991.

\textsuperscript{39}Ganzevoort, p. 84; notes taken in an interview with G. DeJong, September 17, 1991.

\textsuperscript{40}van Oene, p. 52; and Ganzevoort, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{41}From notes taken in an interview with A. Wagenaar interview, October 20, 1991.
agreement with the mainly Scottish Calvinists of the independent Orthodox Presbyterian Church to use their facilities throughout Canada. In addition, the Scottish Calvinists also agreed not to attempt to attract these immigrants as they perceived their differing backgrounds could cause problems with their acceptance of their new church. The Christian Reformed church thus actively sought out Protestants in this post-war influx of immigrants. The religious future of these new immigrants therefore became a competition between the originating churches in the Netherlands, mainstream churches in Canada, and the United States-based Christian Reformed Church.

As the only Dutch Calvinist church in North America, the result of previous Dutch Calvinist migration, the Christian Reformed Church considered itself the natural recipient of the post-war Dutch Calvinist migration to Canada. To accomplish this the church determinedly expanded their home mission program to attract the new Canadian immigrants:

[Home Mission] must keep pace with the settlement of Holland Immigrants of the Reformed faith in the provinces of the wide dominion. It must help them build anew on the same foundation on which their faith and their churches were built in the old Fatherland.

However, because of doctrinal distinctions between the Dutch Hervormde Kerk and the American Christian Reformed Church, which had arisen over time, a struggle arose over who had the best interests of the immigrants in mind. The Hervormde Kerk leaders, becoming increasingly liberal in the eyes of the Dutch Calvinists, maintained that Dutch Protestant immigrants would best keep their faith if they joined the mainstream Canadian churches such as the United Church. However, the Christian Reformed Church — the creation of generations of Dutch Calvinist immigrants to the United States — did not

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42 For example, see Adam Persenaire, "The Niagara Peninsula," The Banner, Vol. 87, No. 2847, (February 8, 1952), p. 173.
consider established Canadian churches such as the United or Presbyterian churches sufficient, particularly for the distinct Calvinist element of the migration, as they were perceived not to maintain biblical authority and instead strove to erase the immigrants' ethnic heritage:

If this church [the Netherlands Reformed Church] is satisfied with moral values and a religion of morality, a religion which centers not on God but in man, then the United Church is the proper body for speedy assimilation and complete absorption of the immigrant arrivals. ... Our Church, [the Christian Reformed Church] ... must be regarded as [one of] those that perpetuate "nationalistic groups."46

As the traditional recipient of a large proportion of the Dutch immigration to the United States, the Calvinists of the Christian Reformed Church asserted that in order to maintain the necessary aspects of the immigrants' religion, the immigrants must preserve those elements that were created through the church's development in the Netherlands even if this entailed the separation from the rest of society.47

The spiritual future of the Dutch immigrants and the degree of their eventual ethnic preservation was determined by their choice of church. Immigrants who followed the directions of the Netherlands Reformed Church, most entering the United or Presbyterian Churches, assimilated quickly and largely disappeared as part of a distinguishable ethnic group in Canada.48 This adoption of Canadian-based churches and subsequent 'ethnic' disappearance has resulted in some scholars concluding that the Dutch are "the disappearing ethnic."49 Those who were attracted to the Christian Reformed Church, because of theological or ethnic sympathies, retained much more of their 'Dutch characteristics' and formed the basis for the only identifiable group of Dutch immigrants in Canada.50 While the ready availability and the security of mainstream churches was tantalizing, language

47 See Ganzevoort, pp. 93-96 and vanderHeide interview, September 17, 1991.
48 Ganzevoort, The Bittersweet Land, p. 112.
50 Jean Burnet and Howard Palmer, Coming Canadians: An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples, p. 148.
differences and doctrinal distinctions encouraged many to seek churches which were more acceptable and familiar. The choice of many of the new immigrants to reject mainstream Canadian churches led to the tremendous expansion of ethnically Dutch religious institutions which formed the basis of their contemporary community in Canada.

While ethnically Dutch institutions were created, there was a variety of interpretation concerning doctrine. Although there was great agreement concerning the central tenets of their beliefs, there was also a great deal of diversity. For Calvinists, there has always been a conflict between ‘calling’ and ‘spirituality.’ Dutch Calvinist immigrants were not homogeneous in ideology but formed a spectrum of religious ideas from ecumenically-strong enthusiastic evangelicals to inward-looking, somber conservatives. A great emphasis of their theology demanded personal introspection and examination whereby the individual was to maintain self-discipline, self-control and self-examination. As G. VanDooren asserted in The Clarion, the voice of the orthodox Canadian Reformed church, each generation must challenge, not just accept traditional ideas:

[Church members must be] sympathetic-critical, by which we meant that we are sympathetic with the Reformed past, but every generation in its own turn has to go, from Cathechism, etc., to the fountain of living water itself, that is the Bible.

However, the importance placed on personal inspection led to significant differences of opinion and distinctions in the Netherlands and these differences followed the immigrants to North America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and after the Second World War.

With migration, these differences of opinion were exacerbated. The Christian Reformed Church, based in the American midwest, focused its attentions on its ‘foreign’ missionary program in Canada to attract these newcomers into its fold. Initially, this

effort was extremely successful. The Canadian pre-war total of twelve churches quickly expanded as new immigrants were attracted to the cultural and doctrinal similarities of the Christian Reform Church or the comforting presence of kin or other people with the same heritage. However, this influx of newcomers brought the Dutch Calvinist controversies to North America.\(^5^4\) The constraints and turmoil of wartime Netherlands had revived tensions concerning the authority and legitimacy of ecclesiastical assemblies. This conflict resulted in a schism which resulted in an orthodox congregationalist group departing from the synodal majority in 1944.\(^5^5\) This conflict followed the immigrants to Canada as a significant minority of orthodox members immediately left the Christian Reformed Church as it had sided with its synodal brethren in the Netherlands.\(^5^6\) This breakaway group created the congregationalist Canadian Reformed Churches in 1950 as a further attempt to maintain what they perceived as the heart of their community. W.W. vanOene, minister, and editor of The Clarion, defended this decision as a continuation of long-held values in the introduction of his book, *Inheritance Preserved*:

> Those who organized the Canadian Reformed Churches did not initiate something new. Through the grace of God they simply continued in the path which their forefathers trod.\(^5^7\)

A further minority of even more orthodox, conservative and somber Calvinists created the Netherlands Reformed Churches as they too had doctrinal disagreements with the perceived liberalism of the Christian Reformed Church. The spectrum of Calvinism in Canada thus broke into what would become its ‘liberal,’ orthodox and ultra-orthodox wings. These institutions fulfilled the needs of the diverse doctrinal elements and provided these immigrants with both a welcoming environment and a sense of identity.

In order to be able to maintain this amalgam of community, religion and identity, many Dutch Calvinists have continued in a rural lifestyle. The greater physical isolation of

\(^{5^4}\)From notes taken in an interview with A. Wagenaar interview, October 20, 1991
\(^{5^5}\)van Oene, pp. 39-42.
\(^{5^6}\)van Oene, p. 83.
\(^{5^7}\)van Oene, p. 7.
the farm allowed the family to create the necessary boundaries to keep out the influences of the world. The close confines of urban life forced emotional and psychological bonds with the church and the community to compete with the ideology and activities of neighbours of other cultures. In rural life, neighbours were separated physically and the people could turn themselves away from others.

An example of the commitment to rural life and its importance to their community could be seen in the location of the orthodox Canadian Reformed Churches in the Fraser Valley. Starting with an initial congregation in New Westminster in 1950, the next churches were constituted in Langley in 1954 and Abbotsford in 1960, both in the heart of agricultural areas of the lower Fraser Valley. These churches grew quickly while the original congregation began to languish as the original population moved away from the increasingly urban area of New Westminster. As the population gradually moved eastwards from Vancouver, the church at New Westminster closed and a new building was built in the more agricultural Surrey in order to better serve its people. Currently, while the other churches are bulging with people, the church in Surrey is languishing both in total population and in the number of starting families as the continuing urbanization of the area forces families to move further up the Fraser Valley in order to retain their rural lifestyle. As the relative lack of education of the people fixed them in a relatively narrow economic stratum, and the rise of house prices in the more urban areas certainly affect the ability of new families to settle there, the retreat of the majority in the face of urban expansion and the establishment of new churches in rural areas is certainly a distinguishing characteristic. Similarly, the majority of liberal Calvinist denominations were located in rural areas and also contain a large proportion of farmers. For the ultra-orthodox group, this situation was extreme as they are only located in rural areas.

The post-war Dutch Calvinist migration to Canada has therefore resulted in a strong and noteworthy community. While a variety of factors encouraged emigration, religion determined the pattern of settlement in Canada. While most immigrants did not come to
Canada for religious reasons, once here they sought out like-minded compatriots and created Calvinist concentrations. This settlement as a Calvinist group resulted in the creation of a strong, active, largely rural community based in the church, the school and the home that has set itself apart from the larger Canadian society. As J. Hendricks declared at the official dedication of the new Credo Christian High School of the Canadian Reformed Church in Langley, British Columbia in 1981:

We believe strongly in the relationship between church, home and school; a threefold cord ... not easily broken.\textsuperscript{58}

Chapter Two
The Church

For Dutch Calvinists, religion is an essential influence in their lives — it influenced the pattern of their migration, the place to which they finally settled, and the experiences they had once they arrived in Canada. While emigration put their faith at risk, Dutch Calvinists gave religious concerns a high priority both during migration and after arrival. The church was, and still is, much more than a cultural citadel — the church was the heart of the social community and continued to sustain it. The social life of the people was so intertwined with their spiritual life that an investigation that endeavors to separate the two removes the people from the vitality of their community. The desire for continuity, expressed by many Dutch Calvinists, manifested itself in the creation of religious organizations which maintained their religious ideals. Dutch Calvinists were able, even through migration, to preserve this continuity in their life through an active will of rejecting both 'worldly views' and the teachings of the established Canadian churches, and instead establishing their own institutions. These immigrants did experience changes — both culturally and religiously — but these changes were made in order to preserve deeper cultural values. While immigration put their faith at risk, many Dutch Calvinist immigrants were able to preserve the continuity of their religiously-based lives through a strong commitment to recreate their religious heritage and a community which purposely defended this heritage through the exclusion of the unwanted influences of outside society.

Immigration to Canada occurred in the post-war era for a variety of reasons but, for Dutch Calvinists, religion played a dominant role. Economic factors certainly were prominent in the desire of the Dutch people to emigrate as many were motivated to seek their future elsewhere. The devastation as a result of the war and the lack of opportunities in the immediate post-war era, a general restlessness after liberation, combined with fears of communism and further conflict convinced many to place their future — cultural as well as religious — at risk. As the huge influx of Dutch immigrants arrived in the immediate post-World War II era, much of the land was already
occupied and agrarianism already anachronistic. However, these immigrants were atypical for the post-war period in that they actively sought a rural lifestyle. Although initially they were forced to immigrate to cities and suburbs, they quickly sought to establish themselves on the land, becoming dispersed throughout the existing population.¹ In the Fraser Valley, many of the immigrants initially settled in New Westminster but many then sought and began work outside of the urban area. While other urban immigrants such as the Italians could form distinct communities, a majority of Dutch Calvinists desired a rural lifestyle, not a urban one. This dispersion was also increased as many immigrants were accepted as farm labour and spread throughout Canada to farmers who had previously registered that they needed agricultural labour. This comparatively late arrival on the Canadian landscape was particularly threatening to the Dutch Calvinist element of the wave of Dutch immigrants. The initial dispersion of immigrants constrained the ability of these strongly religious people to protect their ideology, as dispersion exposed them to the influences of the greater Canadian society. As these immigrants did not have the past experiences of physical separation in the Netherlands, they demonstrated a reluctance to concentrate themselves into bloc settlements or geographical-close communities.² This inability or unwillingness on the part most Dutch Calvinist immigrants resulted in few obvious communities that would dramatically distinguish themselves from others. Instead, these immigrants physically blended into mainstream Canadian society. However, while economic factors certainly influenced emigration, religious concerns were elevated to a high priority once these immigrants arrived. Through the creation of a strong and vibrant community, they have been able to fix invisible boundaries which insulated them from society in all but appearance. These concerns were, for many Dutch Calvinists, realized through the desire and the drive to create a church-centered community.

Although Dutch Calvinists split into three groups shortly after they arrived in Canada based on the doctrinal distinctions between the liberal, orthodox and ultra-orthodox Calvinist groups, more unified them then set them apart. The desire to maintain their religion and the shock of

¹Edith Margaret Ginn, Rural Dutch Immigrants in the Lower Fraser Valley, Unpublished Master Thesis (The University of British Columbia, 1967), p. 27.
²From notes taken in an interview with G. DeJong, September 17, 1991.
migration made many Dutch Calvinist immigrants hesitant about whole-heartedly grasping Canadian society. Rev. W. W. Van Oene, a post-war Dutch Calvinist leader in Canada and editor of the orthodox Canadian Reformed Magazine *The Clarion* asserted in his illuminatingly titled book, *Inheritance Preserved* that the newly arrived immigrants were determined to preserve their religious ideological heritage:

> [Those who organized the Canadian Reformed Churches] did not act from a desire to transplant a "Dutch" Church, nor were they motivated by a prejudicial stand that anything found in their new country could never be on par with that which was found in the old country. ... They did act from the deeply-rooted conviction that a union was to be sought only in a way which would preserve their inheritance.

The fear of the corruption of this religious heritage, together with the focus on personal introspection and the discomfort of the sudden loss of the protection for their religion that had been afforded by Dutch society, resulted for many in a common retreat toward personal 'spiritual cleanliness' rather than evangelical 'duty'. While most enjoyed many of the comforts of society and could not be readily distinguished from their neighbours, this defensive reflex induced many new immigrants to withdraw from mainstream Canadian society and fix ideological boundaries which maintained a community based both on their cultural values and their religion.

The desire to withdraw from the mainstream of society had traditionally been a part of Dutch Calvinism and this heritage was maintained with immigration to Canada. In order to maintain the deeper cultural values of their lives, these immigrants have attempted to set up a community and kinship network that removed them from most interactions with the outside world — a covenant community. The desire to protect these values extended within the Dutch Calvinist immigrant group as various factions worked to protect their own values and ideology. As Reverend Van Oene asserted in defense of the breaking-away of the orthodox Calvinist group from the rest of the post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants:

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Having discovered recently the riches of this inheritance through the struggle in the Netherlands in which they had been involved, they saw their obligation not to suffer it to be endangered in any way.  

For many Dutch Calvinist immigrants, Calvinism in the Netherlands had risen to a more complete form than found elsewhere and they were unwilling to place this history and development in jeopardy. While emigration certainly threatened this development, these immigrants sought to minimize the damage to this inheritance by recreating the form of their community that they had achieved in the Netherlands. As they were unable to find this ideological and cultural development within the Protestant churches in Canada, many Dutch Calvinist immigrants set the creation of a church-centered community as a primary goal to protect their particular convictions.

A main component of the relations of these immigrants with the wider world and a driving force for the creation of a church-centered community was their perception that they were continually involved in a struggle of ideology — spiritual war was to be constantly waged against the corrupting influences of the world in the defense of their ideals. The late nineteenth century rhetoric of Dutch Calvinist theologian and Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper illustrates the Dutch Calvinists' ideology of anti-thetical relations with ‘the world:

The redeemed lived out of one principle — love for God — and everyone else lived out of the opposite, however it might be expressed.

While Kuyper was not a personal representative of all branches of Calvinism in the nineteenth century Netherlands, he was a major influence on them all. His personal achievement had been to give Calvinism in the Netherlands a new spirit and sense of purpose. Kuyper offered Calvinists a new conception of society that befitted their increasing numerical minority in Dutch society. Calvinists, in the face of rapidly expanding secular and liberal Protestant elements of society could no longer confidently assert themselves as the 'real' nation and therefore set their tone on the country. Instead they had to be content with being a minority in a country they had long characterized. However, Kuyper's ideology contended that if the whole nation no longer served their faith, neither did it command their undivided loyalty. Through this ideology, the Dutch

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6 van Oene, p. 7.
7 Bratt, p. 20.
8 Bratt, p. 32.
Calvinist religious community often stood beside and above the nation and, through the attention and labour of its adherents, thrived as a result. For many Dutch Calvinists, the inability to aspire to great practical achievement in the secular world was countered by a redoubling of their belief that their world could be understood only with a 'correct starting-point.' This nineteenth century Dutch Calvinism was charged with a mission — to apply Calvinist principles to every sphere of their lives.

This intellectual heritage of anti-thesis between Calvinists and the world was maintained by many Dutch Calvinists — in particular by the number of conservative Calvinist immigrants who emigrated to Canada in the post-war era — and coloured their entire relations with society. In 1974 Harold Ludwig put into words this continuing feeling of disassociation with the wider world and the need to separate themselves from the wider society in an article of *The Clarion*:

> Those who will have communion only with brothers and sisters in Christ must be excommunicated from the great community, from the community of the democratic way of life.

While theological changes had moved many Dutch Calvinists away from Kuyperian doctrine, the essence of Kuyperian anti-thesis was still clearly evident. Within this ideological framework, the church functioned both as a religious center which fixed clearly defined boundaries — the 'visible' church — and as a social and emotional nucleus which joined and nourished the needs of the individual, replacing that which they had rejected in the wider world — the 'invisible' church. As Harold Ludwig further declared, this church-centered community must share one common basis:

> What is the basis of a true community? Is it not that we have a common basis shared by all? We say that the root of our community is Jesus Christ.

With a detachment that was born from this religious distinction between the community and the rest of the world, many post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants felt justified in removing themselves socially and emotionally from the wider society.

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9Bratt, p. 32-33.
10Bratt, p. 33.
12Harold J. Ludwig, p. 10.
The rejection of the wider world had become the prime motivator in establishing a community in Canada and further resulted in the ability and reasoning to protect it. As Harold Ludwig indicated, religion became a firm base for the community and this covenant community created both the inspiration for a sense of identity or peoplehood and the justification for exclusion of the world around them:

"We are all members of the one body, brothers and sisters in the Lord. And if all men do not confess Christ, He cannot serve as the root of a great community."13

Through the common bonds that this anti-thetical perspective inspired, these immigrants perceived themselves as personally involved in a continuous direct religious struggle with the rest of the world — being ‘in’ the world but not ‘of’ the world. Harold Ludwig further illustrated that the Dutch Calvinist immigrants perceived their situation was far more than the devotions of a religiously-minded group:

"Why do we need to concern ourselves with politics at all as church people? Do we not have freedom of religion in this country? There are no restraints on our freedom to worship, are there? But this is not what we meant by religion - this privatistic notion that religion is identified by Sunday worship only. What we are involved in is essentially a religious struggle ... the struggle as one in which we meet the forces of a religion called the democratic way of life."14

In the struggle against 'the democratic way of life,' ideological separation was deemed essential. In 1983, W. Pouwelse, co-editor of the orthodox Calvinist magazine *The Clarion*, summed up the justification used by many Dutch Calvinist immigrants to separate themselves from the world and the continuing need for this separation:

"There are certain areas [of the world] that we have to withdraw from. The Bible teaches us clearly that we are strangers and sojourners in this world. The service of the Lord comes first, and many areas will appear to be out of reach for Christians."15

The maintenance of a community which rejected this worldly ideology then necessarily entailed continued separation and struggle with the ideas of wider society as well as the rejection and expulsion of people and ideas which were perceived to threaten its livelihood.

While these immigrants were determined to maintain a separation from the wider Canadian society, they were willing to converse with other groups as long as it did not threaten their ideals.

13Harold J. Ludwig, p. 10.
14Harold J. Ludwig, p. 10.
To think that these immigrants simply transplanted and maintained a 'Dutch' church is to misunderstand their community. The separation from the wider society and the struggle against its corrupting influence provided the impetus for the creation of their own community. As this community was firmly based in the church rather than solely on a 'Dutch' identity, it was theoretically open to all from the wider Canadian community who maintained a like doctrine. However, their distance from other groups in Canada stemmed from the concerns that the struggle for Calvinism in the Netherlands, which had created their religious inheritance, would be betrayed by union with what were taken or perceived to be lesser forms of Calvinism created in other struggles in other countries. J. Geertsema gave voice to the continuing concerns about the lesser forms of Protestantism in the 1983 *Year Book of the Canadian Reformed Churches*:

The year 1983 will also be the year of two ecclesiastical assemblies in the Vancouver area of British Columbia in our country. The one is the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, the other is the tenth General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches. ... The one will speak about justice and unity. But that justice is a humanistic justice, on a human level, from a social gospel. ... It seeks the unity of the whole of mankind whereby all the barriers among the churches and in the world will be broken down. ... [I]t is clear who the master will be of such a world unity. We express the wish that the tenth synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches may serve that true unity which bases itself in the truth, and that also many more eyes in Vancouver and throughout Canada may be opened for a false kind of unity, as also Luther saw it and was given to work for the true unity.

This desire for greater ecumenical strength has resulted in continuous attempts to maintain religious communication with Calvinist groups both within and without Canada but the fear of diluting their form of Calvinism has resulted in generally little progress. Relations with organizations such as the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches in Canada, *De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (The Reformed Church of the Netherlands), *Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika* (The Free Reformed Church in South Africa), and the *Koryu-Pa* (The Korean Presbyterian Church) were started in 1950 and were continued through to the present but these relations were fraught with challenges as to the suitability of the other churches. Although the desire to join with both

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16 van Oene, pp. 7-8.  
19 For example, see "Contact with the Presbyterian Orthodox Church," *Acts, General Synod 1980 of the Canadian Reformed Churches, Smithville Alberta*, pp. 117-122; "Committee for Contact with the Orthodox..."
Calvinist groups and individuals was continually present, the defensive reflex to protect the members of the church from corruption which caused them to withdraw from Canadian society prevented them from achieving ecumenical union with others who had not experienced the same historical development.

While the justification of maintaining their form of Calvinism did not limit members of the community to those of Dutch heritage and opened the community to people from other national groups, the reality of doctrine, kinship and community ties entrenched the Dutch heritage. Each Canadian Calvinist group — the liberal Christian Reformed Church, the orthodox Canadian Reformed churches, and the ultra-orthodox Netherlands Reformed churches — maintained a very high degree of exclusivity and endogamy. Although marriage outside of the select group does occur, it was almost exclusively isolated to members of other Dutch Calvinist groups. In British Columbia, where there are 47 congregations, the proportion of the congregation being of Dutch heritage ranges from almost 100 percent in the orthodox churches to a "mere 98 or 99 percent" in the majority of the liberal Calvinist churches. Only in one specialized liberal 'outreach' church which has actively engaged in evangelical work has the Dutch component dipped below 90 percent. The importance of religious doctrine, the virtual separation from society and the importance of kinship networks among the post-war immigrants thus maintained and reinforced the Dutch Calvinist heritage of the people.


20Of the 223 communicant members of the Abbotsford congregation of the orthodox Canadian Reformed Church, all but one member are of Dutch heritage. In like manner, of the 136 members of the Chilliwack congregation, all but one is Dutch. Both of the members who were not of Dutch heritage were men who married into the community. This is fairly representative of both the orthodox and ultra-orthodox communities. The more conservative of the 'liberal' congregations also maintain such a proportion. Poortenga interview, December 8, 1991.

21The most liberal Dutch Calvinist outreach church in the Fraser Valley — New Life Christian Reformed Church of Abbotsford — has slightly more than 200 adult members. Of this number, four are of Anglo-Saxon origin, four of German and the rest Dutch. All but two of those of non-Dutch heritage have married into the community. Poortenga interview, December 8, 1991.
The ability of Dutch Calvinists to sustain the cohesion of their community and maintain their separation from society was firmly based in their religion. The Reformed, fundamental and anti-humanistic teachings of church doctrine may distinguish these immigrants from the majority of Canadian society but it was the religious, personal and kinship ties which bound this group of people into a tightknit community. Through these bonds, this immigrant group created its identity and maintained its continuity. The bonds which held them together are well demonstrated through the actions of the people of the Canadian Reformed churches. Created in Canada in 1950 and immediately forced to build a community in the post-war society, this specific group illustrates the connection between the church, ideology, the individual, the family, and the functioning of societal bonds within the tightknit groups of Dutch Calvinists in Canada.

The Dutch Calvinist immigrants who would form the Canadian Reformed Church were attempting to create an environment that promoted and protected their individual religious and social ideals. The schism that prevailed among Dutch Calvinists in the Netherlands in the immediate post-war era was brought with the new immigrants and also split the community in Canada, creating a number of the dissenting minorities. The adherence of many of the newly arrived Dutch immigrants to a congregational system conflicted with the support given by the American-based Christian Reformed Church to the synodal Hervormde Kerk, (the Netherlands Reformed Church). In a similar manner to the rejection of mainstream Canadian churches and the flow of many of the newly arrived Dutch Calvinist immigrants to the Christian Reformed Church, a number of immigrants left the Christian Reformed Church to form their own community. As this schism was of a personal rather than institutional nature, no organized church left the Christian Reformed Federation. Instead, the intellectual conflict left many dissenters alone, removed from both kin and community as they felt it necessary to distance themselves from the apostacies they felt were taking hold in the Christian Reformed Church. However, the desire to continue their religious heritage and maintain a covenant community brought a large proportion of these

22From notes taken in an interview with A. Wasgenar, October 20, 1991.
dissenters together to forge a new society — the orthodox congregationalist Canadian Reformed churches.  

The creation of a protective environment which maintained their ideology was created through the auspices of the church. The perceived scriptural directives to worship together in a formal manner resulted in several families gravitating together into a 'house congregation.' Such house congregations or conventicles had been the ultimate source of Dutch Calvinist legitimacy in the past and this heritage allowed for quick and legitimate association. The first Canadian Reformed church congregation in the Fraser Valley was instituted in New Westminster in 1950. The initial house-congregation of five families in New Westminster was loosely affiliated with other dissenters in Alberta and Ontario as well as religious leaders in the Netherlands. With a small influx of new immigrant families which left the sugarbeet fields of Southern Alberta searching for jobs and a place to settle down, a church was instituted on December 17, 1950. The few original families, supplemented with the movement of a few more families from other areas of Canada, grew quickly. The first steps toward a church was then the gathering of like-minded families which attempted to create a religious and social environment that could provide all that the family could not.

The manner of community creation was repeated when the original church became too crowded. As the immigrants became more economically established and the population of the original congregation grew, the community became too large and unwieldy for personal interaction and communication. Also, the increasing number of people in the more distant areas of the Fraser Valley created the demand for a congregation in their locale. A new church was thus 'budded off' to serve the more distant families and another church was instituted in Cloverdale in 1954. This church was vacant — had no minister — until 1957 when another minister, D. vanderBoom, immigrated to lead this congregation. This was repeated when the Abbotsford church was instituted in 1960 and a minister was called in 1962. By 1988, the 100 members of the original

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23From notes taken in an interview with A. Waagenar, October 20, 1991.  
church had grown to almost 2500 people in seven churches. Through this budding-off process from the original church, seven more churches were created with practically all their founding members having once belonged to the original church at New Westminster\textsuperscript{25}.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Date of Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>December 17, 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloverdale</td>
<td>March 7, 1954,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbotsford</td>
<td>September 11, 1960,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chilliwack</td>
<td>February 1, 1970,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Langley</td>
<td>June 20, 1976,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynden Washington</td>
<td>March 10, 1985,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vernon</td>
<td>November 1 1987,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Port Kells</td>
<td>January 21, 1990,</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Each new church would then consist of several initial families — the ‘skeleton’ of the community. This core group would attract other members — relatives and people who, in many cases, became relatives through marriage. Through social contact with the other churches, the people would maintain the ties of a larger community and common heritage. Through religious contact with sister churches in Canada and Dutch Calvinists in the Netherlands, religious continuity and leadership was also maintained. However, while these connections were all important, every element of community life, both religious and social, was recreated in the individual church as each became a microcosm of community.

With the prominence of the church as both a religious and spiritual focus, religious adherence was paramount to the protection of the community. Sunday was strictly devoted to

religious purposes in which no work was done. Only essential, minimum maintenance work in occupations such as dairy farming was carried out. Regular church attendance was considered an essential component of an individual's spiritual well-being. Each church offered two services every Sunday as well as services on religious holidays, and attendance was considered obligatory. While not everyone was able to go to church twice, it was considered inappropriate not to attend both services unless sickness or some special problem arose to keep an individual away. Often, travelers would plan their vacation to be at another church for a peaceful Sunday in which no travel or non-religious activities would be done. To ensure attendance, the churches remained flexible in order to serve the particular nature of the community. With the large number of dairy farmers among the congregations of orthodox Dutch Calvinists, the churches scheduled their services at 10:00pm and 2:00am so the constraints of these farmers' daily work and the distances that they had to travel could still be accommodated. With the incorporation of the Abbotsford church, the New Westminster church conducted its second service at 4:30 so that the minister could serve a 2:00 afternoon service in Abbotsford as well. Dairy farmers could then milk their cows both before and after church. Other than this however, no work was done on Sunday as many purposely bypassed jobs which demanded Sunday labour. Excuses for the contrary were seldom tolerated or accepted. Although there was no official note taken of attendance, the closed nature of the community meant that nonattendance could be quickly noted.

In addition to participation in the formal church service, there were other religious duties as well. Once every week, during the evening, children between 8 and 18 were also obliged to go to Catechism classes. Created in 1563, the Heidelberg Catechism was one of the three doctrinal
standards of Dutch Calvinism and was still used for the education of the young. In these weekly 45 minute to one-hour classes, the children were expected to memorize, recite and retain this information in preparation to their Confession of Faith. However, the initial classes were hard to arrange as the families were often unable to break away from their work. For example, after the institution of the Abbotsford church, Catechism classes were also quickly started even though the church did not yet have a minister and the members were widely scattered about the central Fraser Valley. Every Tuesday afternoon, the minister of the New Westminster Church would journey to Sumas, conduct a Catechism class for the children of one family right after they came home from school. From there, he would travel to Hatzic for another Catechism class with the children of two more families, a quick meal, followed by two more classes in New Westminster that evening. As more families moved into the area, the minister changed his route, taking the two boys of one family from Haney with him to Hatzic, had classes for the children of the local area, and then drove them back again. When still further families moved into the area and became established, the classes were moved to the church. Boys had Catechism classes on different nights than girls until 1963 when changing attitudes and practical transportation problems resulted in these classes merging together. While the form of the Catechism classes continually changed as a result of practical considerations and the ability of the immigrants to transport their children, the intent of these classes remained the same — to give a thorough grounding in Calvinist ideals to allow the children to prepare to participate in communion — the final step of religious maturation.

In addition to the formal religious training, informal Bible study societies also met on a weekly basis. People again gathered together in a less formal and more social atmosphere to discuss Biblical concepts. These meetings expected active individual participation, and were segregated by gender and age (between adults and adolescents). The need for the new immigrants to establish themselves delayed the formation of such societies but within three years of the church at Abbotsford being instituted, regular meetings were started. With illustrative names such as

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Chapter Two: The Church

"Bud to Bloom" for 10-16 year old girls, "More than Conquerors" for young people between 17 and 20, and "Faith and Knowledge" for women over 20, these study societies sought to demonstrate to the young and reiterate to the mature both the importance of religion as a dominant aspect of an individual's life and the close relationship with other church members.

Over and above the bonds that were created because of common religious experience, religious instruction also reinforced close personal bonds between the community members. The cohesion due to the kinship ties reinforced and was reinforced by the sheer quantity of interaction due to religious activities, and together they maintained the integrity of the church as a focus of the community. The informal meetings served to reinforce Calvinist doctrine beyond that of formal services as well as encourage friendships between the individuals. Through this activity, individuals were constantly reminded of their separation from the world and the reliance on each other for friendship, support and marriage prospects. While the people were geographically dispersed, the social and spiritual contact through the church bound them together in addition to their common heritage and kinship ties. Within this environment, the people could once more gather together to reconfirm their common bonds and continue a social network outside of the wider society.

In direct accordance to personal worship in the church, personal bonds were also constantly re-invigorated through contact. The great distances that some families had to travel and the rudimentary transportation network encouraged rather than discouraged contact. Families which lived a distance away and yet traveled to the church for religious fellowship stayed with friends between and after services, reinforcing personal contacts. Individuals saw their friends at least on every Sunday and, for the children, on one other night in the week, at Catechism classes. Parents who drove younger children took the opportunity to again associate with other parents while waiting for Catechism classes to be completed. For the older children, the evening of Catechism class allowed for interaction away from the scrutiny of most parents but still within an acceptable environment. Parents also commonly let children go to the homes of their friends between church services, picking them up again when they saw them at the second service. This
allowed for a certain degree of autonomy and freedom on the part of the children as it removed them from their direct supervision while at the same time it kept them in the environment desired by the parents. This again became useful later in courtship as it promoted a relaxed venue and, from even an early age, acquainted children with their prospective marriage partners.

Finally, because most churches were created through the work of only a few families, these families formed a central kinship network to which most others in a particular church were bound through marriage and kinship. The integrity of the religious and personal bonds were thus supplemented by kinship networks as most individuals could trace lineage to or have married into the original few families of the congregation. In this way, a complete social network that reinforced both personal friendships and kinship ties would arise through the direct observance of religious duties, binding the community together and separating them from the ‘outside world.’

While the cohesion that arose through close contact bound the community together, the church also allowed for the creation of a new social order. As the Calvinists in the Netherlands were heavily represented among the rural poor, there was little economic disparity between immigrants and, as many orthodox immigrants adopted a rural lifestyle once in Canada, much of this economic homogeneity remained. The prominence of religion as the basis of their community, together with the initial relative homogeneity of the people, allowed the newly arrived Dutch Calvinist immigrants to attempt to minimize economic distinctions and set up a social order that was based almost solely on religious involvement. The ranking of individuals in this community was then based on church participation and the promotion and protection of the community rather than economic or social position.

One of the consequences of removing themselves from the wider world and focusing their community on the church was that personal spirituality became a prime distinguishing feature of individuals. As the community was grounded in a common belief, individual participation was an

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33 From notes taken in an interview with C. DeBoer, September 24, 1991.
34 Calvinists in general included a relatively small number of intellectuals and workers, and was heavily concentrated among the poorer elements of the rural north. In general, they comprised rural and small town farmers and small businesspeople, and their emigration was closely tied to the problems of Groningen and Frisian farmers. Hofstede, p. 132 and notes taken in an interview with G. DeLong, September 17, 1991.
important part of peoples' lives. As congregationalists, it was essential that religious activity arose from within the confines of the individual church. Abiding in this environment ensured that individuals, while they may have been otherwise uneducated, received a sound basis in religious ideals which was continually furthered through their expected participation in the formal and informal activities of the church. Maturity therefore corresponded to full religious participation rather than economic independence. Within this environment, individuals received status and accolades through their ability to further the needs of the community and church. This organization of society further solidified the community and separated them from the outside world.

The social order established in the church also continued in the outer world. The Calvinism of nineteenth century Netherlands continued the rejection of French Republicanism with a repudiation of socialism for its perceived dependence on liberalism and the need to subordinate God to the ideas of man.\textsuperscript{35} This adherence to the authority of God was expressed by the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party which played a prominent part in late nineteenth century Dutch politics and further entrenched the division of society into separate spheres based on ideology. Within this divided society, the Calvinist community could function without hindrance or corruption by the other religions or secular elements of society.\textsuperscript{36} The legacy of this divided society to the post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants to Canada was a general disavowal of humanist concepts which gave human thought a legitimacy and authority, and a refocusing of their attentions on the church and the sole authority of God.\textsuperscript{37} This attitude led many to abstain from involvement in such things as unions and masons as they perceived that these organizations commanded a loyalty which attempted to supersede the loyalty that should be given unto God and thus was incompatible with church behaviour. The creation of a social order in the church by the new Calvinist immigrants permitted the fulfillment of personal aspirations that were irrespective of the outside world. As congregationalists, the Canadian Reformed churches were organized into a loose federation but this federation was maintained solely for mutual support and had little real authority — other than

\textsuperscript{35} van Oene, pp. 8-10.
\textsuperscript{36} Bratt, pp. 31-32.
\textsuperscript{37} Bratt, pp. 32-33.
simple persuasion — over the individual churches. Each congregation — not the church federation — was considered a manifestation of the bride of Christ and the source of all legitimacy. Each church thus stood alone and, within constraints, determined much of its own course, theoretically both in government and in doctrine, forming a small, closed community.

The legitimacy and authority of the individual church had particular consequences for individuals within that church. Within each Church, the orthodox Calvinist interpretation of the Bible allowed only male communicant members to participate in church government and to vote on church affairs. Although women were involved in discussions, voting was carried out in their absence. This placed the religious authority and legitimacy in the hands of a few male household heads within the closed community and commutted to them status, power and spirituality that merely reinforced the patriarchal relations in the home. The consistory or governing council of the church was also elected from among the male members who showed themselves to be exemplary in spiritual and social matters and, as the sole authority, these individuals were charged with the spiritual protection of the church. The Canadian Reformed Church liturgical forms in its Book of Praise specified that an elder's role was both to govern and maintain the integrity of the congregation:

As for their mandate, the task of the elders is, together with the ministers of the Word, to have supervision over Christ's Church, that every member may conduct himself properly in doctrine and life, according to the gospel.\[38\]

With such a mandate, male communicant members were given great responsibilities and the ability to fulfill personal aspirations that were independent from both the restraints of the world about them and their economic and social place in it.

Although women in the Canadian Reformed churches were excluded from official participation in church government by the conservative Calvinist interpretation of the Bible, the Dutch Calvinist ideology prescribed to women other, supposedly equal, roles. Women did not have an equal official role in the church but this was not from a perception that women were subordinate but from an ideal that almost solely presented women as wives and mothers. Just as

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the roles of men as leaders and as authority figures in the church was seen as an extension of their role as the representative of the family to the world, women were seen to be working for salvation — in the same way as men — through their role as mothers. As J. DeJong asserted in 1985 in his article "From Eve to Esther: Some Remarks on Woman and Her Place in Society" in The Clarion, women were still most important in procreation:

Within the church, and in the light of the gathering work of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, she has an extremely important place and task; a task of greater importance and responsibility than was given to the women of promise in the Old covenant. She bears children in Christ, children who are members of Christ. As such she is an instrument in Christ’s hand as He gathers His people.39

The predominance of a rural lifestyle among these immigrants, the determined withdrawal of many Dutch Calvinist immigrants from the wider Canadian society and a generally limited education through the lack of appropriate schools of higher education has allowed women few opportunities, both for the immigrant women themselves and their offspring, to expand into other roles. Women’s roles in the church were therefore extensions of the traditional roles in the home. While these roles did not give women equal participation in the government of the church, they were not considered secondary roles by a great proportion of the Dutch Calvinist community in Canada as the cultural mandate of continuing and extending the community was seen to be as important as its protection.

While involvement in the church allowed for both the reinforcement of personal, religious and kinship bonds, and the creation of a substitute social order, the church also was mandated by its members to protect the community. In order to maintain the community from corruption, the consistory was charged with the responsibility for its spiritual health and was empowered with the expulsion of inappropriate ideas and individuals. To the community, discipline was seen as the training to produce obedience, order and control in which the whole congregation was involved.40

In response to error, the whole congregation was expected to discipline the transgressor through personal censure. Only when this personal admonition failed to produce sufficient repentance was

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church discipline enacted through the consistory. The liturgical forms of the Book of Praise of the Canadian Reformed Churches again specified the duties of elders and the purpose of home visitation as the examination of the members of the congregation for unacceptable ideas:

They shall faithfully visit the members of the congregation in their homes to comfort, instruct, and admonish them with the Word of God, reproving those who have behaved improperly. They shall exercise church discipline, according to the command of Christ, against those who show themselves unbelieving and ungodly and refuse to repent.

Discipline within the church then became a corporate function that was not exercised by a single individual but by a senate of godly men who were chosen for moral supervision from among the congregation.

The mandate of the consistory expressly entitled the elders to investigate the conduct of every member of the church in order to disclose discordant ideas. Through ‘home-visitation’ the elders were actively to bring the presence of the church into the home. The obligation of the church to seek out problems even within the home was as prevalent in the 1990s as it was in the 1950s. As R. Y. DeJong advised in Diakonia: For the Work of Service, a magazine dedicated to advising elders and deacons in their duties, the duties of the officers of the church continued to be the inspection of the activities of its members, both in the church and in the home:

The church is deeply interested in the lives which her members live from day to day, particularly in the sanctuary of their homes. Not only are living members to make diligent use of the means of grace at the time of public worship, but the church through her officers must maintain a direct and close contact with those whose spiritual care has been entrusted to her.

After the church was instituted in Abbotsford in 1960, home-visits were decided upon by the consistory and "for some time there were two visits per month." Therefore, elders from the church would make official appointments every two weeks with every household in the church and inquire into their ideas, problems with the church, and family life. However, time constraints for the church elders together with the rapid expansion of the church reduced this schedule to two visits a year except in cases where the family was "having problems." Through their offices, the

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42 Book of Praise, p. 630.
Dutch Calvinist ideology empowered the consistory with the ‘keys of the kingdom of heaven’ — the preaching of the Holy Gospel and church discipline. Taught to each child, the Heidelberg Catechism of the Book of Praise again specified that the church has a distinct role toward those who would waiver in their faith:

According to the command of Christ and his apostles, the Christian church is duty-bound to exclude such persons by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, until they amend their lives. ... By these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and closed to unbelievers.45

This power of the consistory thus continued to subject the personal spirituality of an individual to public inspection. The protection of church and community thus permitted the elected consistory to expel an individual from the church and thus, it was perceived, from the kingdom of God.

The threat to eject an individual from the church, the community and the kingdom of God worked to maintain the strength of the community. Before being excommunicated, an individual was subjected to the personal admonition and censure of the entire congregation — made ever more arduous by the strong social and personal bonds of the community. In addition to the stigma to both the individuals and their families, the liturgical forms of the Book of Praise of the Canadian Reformed church also demanded that excommunication resulted in expulsion from the social and kinship networks of the tightknit community:

He [the miscreant] is now excluded from the fellowship of Christ and from His kingdom. ... As long as he persists in sin, let him be to you as a Gentile and an outcast. We exhort you, beloved Christians, not to look on him as an enemy. On the contrary, try to warn him as a brother. But do not associate with him, that he may be ashamed and come to repentance.46

The threat of excommunication thus entailed the very real ostracization of the individual from family, relatives and friends.

The act of excommunication was also a very public ceremony which further separated the dissident from the rest of the community. After the consistory became aware of an individual’s alleged transgressions against the church and community, the officers of the church would personally admonish and censor the individual. As the church was a very closeknit group, others would also be aware of the problem and bring their personal persuasive ability to bear. After

45 The Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 82 and 83, Book of Praise, pp. 508-509.  
46 Form for The Excommunication of Communicant Members, Book of Praise, p. 612.
several months and further attempts at persuasion, the consistory would make it known to the deviant that unless a change of attitude was noticed, a public excommunication ritual would take place in the church. This ritual would entail the minister reading out an increasingly detailed announcement at every service for three weeks, progressively naming the individual, the 'sin' involved and invoking the congregation to admonish the individual. If the deviant did not reconcile before the third week, the individual was considered excommunicant and not to be associated with. The stigma attached to this event, both personally and to the family of the dissident ensured that those who could not reconcile usually just leave the church, fulfilling the need of the congregation to protect itself and sparing the family some of the public stigma. However, the family still bore some stigma for having a son or daughter that was not obviously brought up 'correctly.' The threat of this action, and its consequences is usually sufficient to convince all but the most recalcitrant to accept censure rather than expulsion.

The religious, personal and kinship ties which bound the people of the Canadian Reformed churches into their tightknit religiously-based community were indicative of the bonds between members of each of the Dutch Calvinist groups in Canada. Each of the three Calvinist groups — the hierarchial liberal Christian Reformed Church, the congregationalist orthodox Canadian Reformed Churches and the congregationalist ultra-orthodox Netherlands Reformed Church maintained these same ties to create their own community. While this conservative Calvinist ideology and social roles were maintained in the immediate post-war era, gradually changes began to occur. All three Dutch Calvinist streams in Canada were constrained to a 'traditional' view of the Bible and of the social roles that it presented. Immigration had reinforced this conservativism as the new immigrants sought to contend with the changes in their lives. As each group adhered to a slightly different doctrine, their relations with other groups in society have also developed in different ways. The ties that bound the orthodox group together were even more pronounced in the ultra-orthodox group. More conservative and afraid of the dilution of their community, the ultra-orthodox Calvinists withdrew even farther from society. The desire to protect their community has caused them to maintain almost all of the religious and social power and authority
at the level of the individual church. Social interactions and ranking were based almost entirely upon church participation and protection. This independence has allowed them to resist such cultural incursions as television, dancing, movies and a number of interventionist medical treatments, but it has also hindered their accommodation with other Calvinist groups and they have, in general, not developed many ecumenical or social connections.

However, the contact with the wider society and new interpretations changed some aspects of Dutch Calvinism in Canada, particularly for the established Calvinists of the American Christian Reformed Church. In the post-war era, their American majority became more concerned with the social, economic and political problems facing the United States. Nuclear weapons, Korea, the assassination of J. F. Kennedy, and the relevance of their religion to society were understandably of greater importance to them than the struggle for economic stability and places to settle that occupied the new Dutch Calvinist immigrants to Canada.47 In addition, the conservative nature of the new immigrants to Canada conflicted with some of the changing ideas of the established American community.48 The American majority, led by its more educated elements — particularly that of Calvin College in Grand Rapids Michigan — began to seek to make their religion more relevant to the modern society in which they found themselves. Many American leaders began to move away from the introspective, personal and predestinarian element of Calvinism to one which began to emphasize common grace and therefore evangelicalism. Through the start of these changes of ideology in the late 1960s and 1970s, the majority of the Christian Reformed Church congregations have begun to lose a great deal of their isolationism and take greater notice and interest in the world about them.

While the hierarchy and influence of a liberal American majority in the federation of liberal Christian Reformed Church expanded the limits of their community, many of the same forces and ties were at work in the creation and maintenance of their community, albeit in a weakened state. The ranking of an individual has continued to be based upon church participation and the

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47 Bratt, p. 189.
48 A particularly high proportion of the immigrants to Canada came from the very conservative Gereformeerde Kerken which were much against change in ideology.
promotion and protection of the community but this has been focused on the greater community rather than the nearer, local church.49 In the immediate post-war era, the position of liberal Calvinists was much the same as that of the orthodox Calvinists:

The purpose of discipline, whether in the home, the church or the school, is two-fold: the correction or betterment of the person disciplined and the protection of the institution concerned.50

They also did not consider that women were full members of the church, able to govern as J. Kuiper of The Banner asserted:

Voting is also an authoritative exercise and prohibitive in the Church for its female members.51

However, the ideas of the longer established and more numerous Christian Reformed Church in the United States became more 'modern' and they imposed their will on the more conservative minority which were heavily represented in the newly arrived immigrants in Canada. By 1970, women were enfranchised in the U.S.-dominated church federation and the active use of excommunication was generally discontinued, although the practice was discontinued only through great inner turmoil.52 The focus of this community has moved from the dominance of 'personal spirituality' that is maintained in the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups toward 'evangelical duty'. While this group maintains close community ties and, in Canada, a strong Dutch background, they have shed some of their doctrinal strictures in order to obtain ecumenical strength with other Calvinist groups throughout the world. External changes such as less uniform and formal religious services were matched with internal changes such as the desire for a greater ecumenical strength which opened them to other Christian communities.

However, while this relaxation of doctrine has allowed some accommodation with wider society and greater acceptance of modern ideas, it has caused problems, particularly with the conservati...
showed a greater reluctance to change. The more recently arrived immigrants to Canada were not as liberal as their American counterparts and there was considerable dissension between the regions. In 1984 the hierarchy of the Christian Reformed Church, led by their American liberal majority, allowed women to hold the office of deacon as it was argued that this office was not one of governing but one of ministering. As yet however, this has been greatly resisted and there are great contemporary fears that this will result in another schism where the Canadian conservative element will secede from the federation. Alarmed at the changes that were beginning in the Calvinist community in the post-war Netherlands, the new immigrants struggled to ensure that their ideology remained constant and unchanging. John Bolt, Associate Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer College, Hamilton Ontario and editor of the first volume of the *Christian Reformed Perspectives*, discussed some of the causes of the divisions within the Christian Reformed Church:

The CRC has a longstanding close relationship with the Dutch *Gereformeerde Kerken*. Many CRC members, especially in Canada, are children of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* and lament what they perceive to be the growing accommodation to worldly modernism in the GKN. Discussion in the GKN about biblical authority, such ethical issues as abortion, divorce, cohabitation, homosexuality, and nuclear weapons, and a general liberalizing trend in the theology faculties in Amsterdam and Kampen all cause unrest in North America as well as in the Netherlands. ... There is an impression "out there" in the CRC that we are doing, perhaps in a milder, slower fashion, exactly what the GKN has already done. Like a falling row of dominos the various pillars of our Reformed heritage are toppling one after another. And now we're going to add yet another, namely introduce women in office. Finally, so the argument goes, it's time to take a stand and stop the drift!

For a large number of the Christian Reformed Church members in the United States, 'Modernism' had collapsed as a credible threat. The positive Calvinist had legitimized the opening up to the American world. However, this sentiment remained dominant among many of the post-war immigrants who came to reside in Canada.

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53 From notes taken in an interview with B. Poortenga, December 8, 1991. This dissension rages between many of the third and fourth generation Calvinists of the American midwest and the first and second generation Calvinists of Canada. Some fear that this dissension will be great enough to cause another schism within the Christian Reformed Church as its more conservative element refuses to abide with the majority.

54 The role of deacon is now perceived to be one of ministry and not of governing, and therefore women are eligible. However, by 1991, there was only one female deaconess west of Ontario. From notes taken in an interview with B. Poortenga, December 8, 1991.

The post-war Dutch Calvinist community in Canada has remained particularly unwilling to change when compared to the rapid modernization and liberalization of sister communities in the Netherlands and the United States. In the Netherlands, a rapid breakdown of the verzuilen system in the 1960s and 1970s greatly changed Dutch society. Liberalization in the face of increasing secularism caused great turmoil and a mass exodus of the younger generation from the church. The loss of the strength of the columns broke up the cohesion of the social groups in Dutch society and their ability to maintain such things as endogamy. In Canada, the Dutch Calvinist communities have maintained much of the 1940s Calvinist ideals. Although they have made changes, these changes were made to preserve deeper values. These immigrants have been able to maintain their cohesion and resist change more successfully than the older communities of the Netherlands and the United States. As yet, such movements such as the appointment of women as deacons or in other offices, and a wider biblical interpretation have been for the most part successfully resisted. This resistance to change, based on a longstanding conservativism that has been bolstered by a new conservatism in immigration, has been so successful that the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups have maintained a great deal of the same ideology with which they arrived. Changes have distinguished the liberal Calvinists from the orthodox groups but this has not separated them in the main elements of their doctrine or their practices.

The church therefore played an essential role as the citadel of the community. Community for these groups was the manifestation of their desire to develop a complete social environment which replaced that which they rejected in the outside world. The church allowed for the creation of the social bonds and the continuation of kinship bonds within an atmosphere that continued religious ideals. It created a group of people which provided marriage partners and friends, and provided the external boundaries which maintained the integrity of their personal religious ideals.

The church allowed for the creation of community as it provided the focal point for the continuation and propagation of the social spheres and religious ideas which were maintained by its participants. Because of these religious ideas, the people were legitimized and justified in removing themselves from contact with the outside world.
The communities of the three Dutch Calvinist groups in Canada have therefore been able to preserve the continuity of their religious-based lives through the power of the church in everyday activities. The strong religious, personal and kinship bonds, the call to duty in the church, and the opportunities for the fulfillment of personal aspirations all preserved the integrity of the society. Mutually reinforcing, these bonds both captured and nourished an individual in the arms of the community. The church also allowed for the convergence of individuals of like ideas and heritage, and provided a focus for the creation of social bonds between them. Finally, the coercive power of the church, through its ability to expel an individual and destroy these bonds and ties, protected the people from the destructive influences of the outside world and maintained the purity of the community. While immigration certainly resulted in some changes, many post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants were able to continue an ideology and lifestyle which, in intent, closely followed its pre-immigration ideal.
As the new Dutch Calvinist immigrants began to understand and experience Canadian society, an increasing number began to find it wanting. As with many immigrant groups, the inability for many to fit into the established Protestant churches and the lure of kinship and familiar heritage had resulted in the congregation of Dutch Calvinists in areas of existing Dutch settlement. While theological problems had divided them, the desire to maintain a familiar fellowship had encouraged each group to withdraw from the wider society and create a community based on the church. However, some immigrants also quickly recognized that in order to maintain the cultural integrity of the new community, the protection and inculcation of Calvinist principles on the young was vital. The religious basis of the community and the separation of the community from the world, based on the immigrants' Calvinist ideals, required that children be protected from external corrupting influences. With the prominence and power of the family in Dutch Calvinist values, children were important and numerous. The church provided the social contacts that the family could not, while the family itself provided the moral and physical boundaries that delineated the outer world. Therefore, from the beginning, each of the Calvinist groups deemed a separate school system necessary to maintain the social and ideological purity of the young in the community. Although a separate Calvinist school system was a later development for the post-war immigrants, it was created to maintain a continuity in education, recreating the experience of a separate school system they had achieved in Dutch society and maintaining a complete Calvinist environment.

For many Dutch Calvinists, religious education was perceived as a necessary portion of an individual's religious development. As these immigrant communities were bound together through religious conformity as well as kinship ties, a strong grounding in Calvinist ideals was considered essential to both the survival and continuity of the community and the well-being of the individual. This need for religious education was seen to stem from divine edicts which charged the parents with raising their children in the knowledge of God. As Ewoud Gosker asserted in *The Clarion* in his discussion of teaching in the home and the school, education was a divinely inspired and directed duty:
He has commanded parents to teach children, and that is the first reason why we educate our children. We do not instruct our ... children because society comes with certain demands and requirements; we do not teach because the child itself expresses the wish to learn and to know and to develop itself, not because the church or the family of the state expect it, but because the LORD commanded us to do so.¹

The widespread acceptance of this divinely dictated duty among all branches of Dutch Calvinists in Canada resulted in a determined effort to educate the young both in Calvinist religious ideals and in a Calvinist environment provided a mandate for separate schooling.

In addition to the perceived necessity of religious education as an important part of an individual's development, the manner of immigration further reinforced its prominence. The importance of the church-based immigration societies and the vertical structure of Dutch society ensured that these immigrants were to be heavily influenced and led by a clerical rather than intellectual or economic elite. The dominance of this clerical elite continued in both the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups as this elite represented both the literate and the intellectual custodians of their communities. The strength of this clerical elite further encouraged religious education as such education became both an important indicator of personal status and an important component of the community.² Only with the liberal Calvinists, heavily influenced by their liberal American majority, did secular education take prominence. Therefore, the social and religious desires of this immigrant group dictated that the school be an institution with a very pragmatic agenda — it had to teach the Calvinist interpretation of the “necessities of life” to the young.

In the battle against external corrupting influences, the school played an important role. The communities of Dutch Calvinists in Canada, acknowledging their ideological and religious distinctions, believed that they were in a continuing life and death struggle to protect themselves from the rest of the world.³ In all aspects of life, the Christian world-view was in constant contention with the anti-Christian world-view. As F. Oosterhoff maintained in 1974, in education, this battle was again joined:

²From notes taken in an interview with A. Waagenar, October 20, 1991.
There are many divergent philosophies of man and of education. ... But it is also true that ultimately there are only two: the Christian-theistic one ... and the anti-Christian, anti-theistic one, which bases itself on the assumption of man's divinity and self-sufficiency. The most important thing about it is not what particular form an anti-theistic educational philosophy assumes, but the important thing is that it is anti-theistic.4

To Dutch Calvinists, the pervasiveness of this 'anti-theistic' philosophy tainted all the ideas and methodology of the modern world. The perception of an anti-theistic relationship between the community and the wider Canadian society demanded that the new Dutch Calvinist communities set up separate schools that maintained a religious basis and be built upon a Calvinist world-view. For these immigrants, every aspect of their lives was dominated by their religious ideals. Education was considered part of a divinely inspired decree. This parental mandate required that education, as well as other aspects of life, hold God at its focus. As Ewoud Gosker asserted in his discussion of the basis of education:

This knowledge, namely that the LORD in His providence uses parents to grant Him children, both through reproduction and education, makes us suspicious of the “wisdom” and philosophy of people who do not care about God, but who notwithstanding think they know all about education. When we search to know about the purpose, the object, and the contents of education, we turn to Him first, since it all started off with Him.5

The late nineteenth century Kuyperian ideology, greatly influencing Dutch Calvinist thinking, distinctly separated believers from the perceived apostacies and errors of the world. Education was yet another forum in which this battle had to be fought. In the Netherlands, separate education was a viable concern as there were schools at all levels which taught from the perspective of the Calvinist world-view. The post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants naturally desired this to continue in Canada. This focus demanded Dutch Calvinists reject, as soon as was possible, public, non-Christian schooling which did not base their teaching in the Bible in favour of Christ-centered philosophy.

Initially however, in Canada, education did not receive a high priority from the newly arrived immigrants. The small numbers and great dispersion of the Dutch Calvinist community in Canada ensured that even basic educational institutions were initially difficult to create. The

perception that they would quickly adopt a rural lifestyle mitigated both the need and the desire for most forms of advanced education for most immigrants. The ultra-orthodox Calvinists in particular did not hold education of all levels in high esteem and it received a particularly low priority. However, once many of the immigrants perceived that their religious heritage was best protected through the establishment of separate churches, separate schools also became an necessary institution. Separate schools became a necessity for all Calvinist groups to prevent the exposure of the young to the anti-theistic forces of mainstream society and ensure the separation from worldly ideas demanded of them. For most Dutch Calvinists, formal schooling in Canada was an institution of protection rather than a tool for social or economic advancement.

The importance of the perception of the anti-theistic relations in education between the community and the outside world could be readily seen in the attitudes to higher education. Each Calvinist group had much the same set of objections to secularized higher education. In the immediate post-war era, each group generally agreed with the sentiment of the warning given by G. VanDooren in his address to the 1981 graduating class of the Guido de Bres high school:

The secular university has abolished God, man and truth. It has abolished God because it proclaims man as autonomous. ... Also man as the image of God, as His officebearer, has been abolished and replaced by the individual, a number, who has to serve the idol of modern times: "society". In the process, truth, revealed and inspired truth, has been replaced by the wisdom of man, which is foolishness in the sight of God.6

Dutch Calvinists in general regarded that the potential for corruption of young adults entering such a secular institution was great and it could potentially undo all the teaching of the church and the family by exposing the student to worldly fallacies.7 Their view of the anti-theistic nature of the world determined that any secular institution would be a corrupting influence on the people of the community. Rev. VanDooren further warned that the secular education system directly aimed to re-mould those of a religious upbringing:

Do not underestimate the dangers of the secular university or so-called “neutral” higher learning. Against the background of the scriptural warnings ... I say the danger of the secular university is that it does not just train you for a certain job; and you can select what suits you and leave the

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other stuff for what it is. No, as much as church and family and school till now had the aim to mould and direct your soul and mind and spirit, so the university has the same aim: professors want the same aim: professors want to mould students after the model of their own secularized philosophy.8

Secular education then was to be avoided at all costs as it had the potential to lead an individual away from the community and therefore have dire eternal consequences.

In order for a Reformed education to protect the young, one of the main purposes of education and schooling was social preparation. The desire to maintain religion at the basis of education created a clear mandate for the school. Such fervent desire can be seen in the 1955 prayer of H. Berends, founding member and first president of the New Westminster school society, in the dedication of the Canadian Reformed churches' William of Orange school:

With our thankfulness, we shall also add our prayer that in our school all that can interfere with the education of our children in the fear of God will be taken away that also this school may continue to work and educate children of the Covenant in such a say that our youth may become better equipped citizens in God's Kingdom, that also this school may be a tool in the restoration of His order where God will be all in all.9

Rather than being constrained to preparing a student academically and teaching the basic skills for social interaction and survival, the school remained an important institution which inculcated the religious and moral ideals as well. Their first challenge was of course to maintain the spiritual basis of the community in their teaching. E. Vanderboom asserted that the essence of the work of the school of the Credo Christian High School of the Canadian Reformed Church was to create a proper Calvinist atmosphere in which further learning could then be accomplished:

We have the everpresent challenge of keeping the Bible at the centre of everything and training our children to evaluate all they see through the eyes of the Scripture. That's what schools are made of.10

One of the school’s main functions then became the integration of the students into the social and religious ideals of its founders.

Although the school was an institution with the conscious mandate to protect the community through the protection and inculcation of the young in Calvinist ideals, it could not be

seen as solely reactionary in nature. The communities of Dutch Calvinists in Canada perceived that they were faced with a heavy burden — how to maintain their community while at the same time maintain the heritage of introspection and personal examination. However, while this challenge could be overcome, it was perceived that it was not to be done in an isolating or strictly defensive manner, based on custom or superstition. Rather, its methodology was meant to ‘guide’ its students to understanding and service. E. Vanderboom revealed that the Orthodox Calvinists were fully aware that to be successful they must provide an alternative to the secular world around them:

> When the school is viewed as a haven of refuge, a means of shielding and isolating, we’re only patching old material with new cloth and not weaving the fabric of faith and service in the hearts of young lives.\(^{11}\)

The necessity to maintain the heritage of introspection and intellectual piety required that the school be an institution which provided an alternative to the surrounding worldview which at once allowed for the superiority of the community’s ideology to assert itself and for the protection of the young from external forces which were too strong for them to bear.

> To bring that message to our students, to equip them for that service in the kingdom of God, we need a Bible program that teaches a student to compare Scripture with Scripture, a program that might show the Bible to be a map for finding one’s way through life in cultural obedience, not in cultural accommodation.\(^{12}\)

The school then became an institution which continued the ideology of the family and the church by teaching a world view which maintained the Bible as its focus, integrated its students into the social and religious fabric of the community as its duty, and prepared the students for religious maturity as its purpose.

> While the school was a separate institution with a clear role in the community, it was clearly subordinate to the authority and legitimacy of the family. The school was not intended to be an alternative authority or legitimizing force to either the family or the church but was to assist these vital institutions in their work. N. Van Dooren asserted that the school, with the home and the church was the third component of a whole worldview:

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\(^{11}\)E. Vanderboom, p. 513.
\(^{12}\)E. Vanderboom, p. 513.
The school aimed to offer an educational program that is truly in agreement with our Reformed beliefs and that is educationally sound. Our schools join the home and the church in directing and guiding the covenant child to commit his heart to Christ, in order to attain understanding, wisdom and righteousness, so that competent and responsible service to the Lord may be performed in every aspect of life. As a result, the curriculum of our schools is therefore built upon the understanding that human life in its entirety is religion and that man thus must serve God everywhere. In other words, our schools strive to provide an education that is truly Christ-centered, teacher-directed and child-oriented.

With the Bible as its focus and the intent to integrate the students into the community, the purpose of the school did not conflict with the home in either its intent or in its approach. Indeed, the school was seen only to be derived from parental authority and their divinely inspired duty as F. Ludwig asserted in *The Clarion* in 1985:

> The idea of parents combining their educational efforts to form a school society and establish a school is a logical consequence of ... [their] divine mandate.

The school thus functioned in much the same way as the church, furthering the religious ideals of the family while at the same time creating the social interactions and environment that the family was unable to provide.

The school did not assume the responsibility for education from the family much in the same way that the church as an institution did not assume its religious legitimacy. Clearly, as F. Ludwig further argued, the school represented a subordinate force which took its directive from the family:

> The justification for the existence of Reformed schools remains that they assist the parents in the covenantal education of the children in the Church.

Rather than being a force which maintained the ideology and authority of the community, the school was seen as an institution which merely confirmed family suzerainty:

> Reformed education is rooted in the home/school relationship. We believe that neither the state nor the school as such carries primary responsibility for the education of children. This responsibility lies irremovably on the shoulders of the parents.

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Chapter Three: The School

The school then did not conflict with the legitimacy and authority of the family and indeed both maintained the prominence of the family as the foremost institution and strove to preserve its ideals.

While the school maintained a religious basis and was duty-bound to prepare its students for the lifestyle directed by the family’s religious ideals, it remained a distinct institution separate from the church. The school was seen as a separate institution which coordinated with the church but took its direction from the family. Although religion was at the center of their lives, education was seen as a parental and personal duty rather than a solely religious one. The acclamation of Rev. W.W Van Oene illustrates the distinctions between these two views:

New Westminster decided to abolish the collections for mission and for the school in the worship services. ... That is a step forward. The former is a matter which belongs to the regular obligations of the Church; the latter is a cause which does not belong in the worship services: as parents we help each other with the fulfillment of our obligations towards the education of our children, but we do so on a business basis.17

The school then formed the second pillar of the community but it was separate from the pillar of the church. Together, they supported the religious and social lifestyle of these immigrant groups but they were only connected together through the family.

As an important part of an individual’s development, Christian schooling became a priority almost as soon as the building of the church became a reality. The theological differences which had split the Dutch Calvinist community in Canada also affected education. Although the institutions of each Calvinist group maintained God as the basis of its education, other Calvinist groups perceived that the understanding of each of the other groups were flawed and therefore remained reluctant to use their institutions. The members of each of the Calvinist groups perceived that the schools of the other groups would also present a corrupting and unwanted influence and remained suspicious of their teaching.18 With the perception that the other Calvinist groups were theologically inadequate, each group ranked the educational institutions of the others only slightly above that of the rest of society. The attitude toward expediencies such as sending children to

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18 From notes taken in an interview with A. Waagenar interview, October 20, 1991.
schools of different denominations can be seen in the J. DeHaas's discussion of the need of the orthodox Calvinists to create their own William of Orange school in New Westminster in 1953:

It must be said that the teaching at Vancouver Christian at that time was good. Although the staff, as well as the whole board belonged to the Christian Reformed Church, the teaching was done in accordance with the Scripture and Confession, but it could not be foreseen what the future would bring.\footnote{The William of Orange School belonged to the orthodox Canadian Reformed Church while Vancouver Christian School belonged to (what would later become) the liberal Christian Reformed Church. At this time, their theology was very close. \textit{William of Orange Christian School, 1955-1980}, p. 7.}

This fear of the future teachings of the school gave the impetus to the Canadian Reformed Church to create their own institution in which they could control both current instruction and future changes.

In order to create their own school which would teach the view they desired, the orthodox Calvinists of the Canadian Reformed Church began organizing a school society in November of 1951, almost exactly one year after the church itself was instituted. For the members of the Canadian Reformed Church, newly instituted in New Westminster in November, 1950, there was a desire that there “should be a unity between the teachings in the family, church, and school.”\footnote{\textit{William of Orange Christian School, 1955-1980}, p. 7.}

However, with slightly over 100 members of all ages — most poor and newly immigrated — there was little chance for a school of their own. Initially, in 1951, some of the parents sent their children to the Vancouver Christian School, run, staffed and overseen by the Christian Reformed Church. The more numerous Christian Reformed Church, with the strength and organization of its established American congregations, had organized the Vancouver Christian school in 1949 to serve as an interdenominational school.\footnote{van Brummelen, p. 250.} With the large influx of Dutch Calvinist immigrants after the war, the school greatly expanded as a number of the new immigrants of all the theological groups sent their children there. However, although the orthodox Calvinists who formed the Canadian Reformed churches initially sent their children to the interdenominational Vancouver Christian School as well, this was seen as only a temporary solution. While they perceived that the environment within such schools as the Vancouver Christian School was much better than that of...
ordinary secular schooling, it still did not provide what they felt they needed. While their initial economic situation demanded that they use the Christian schooling then available, they quickly sought to form their own school which would maintain a proper social and religious environment. Although not all the members of the church saw the need for a school, “this has quickly changed. Almost everyone who at that time was not in favour of a Reformed School has changed his mind.” Differences in ideology and the perceptions of the inadequacies of the secular school system thus quickly provided the impetus for specialized school institutions.

In addition to such ideological factors, the desire for the creation of the William of Orange School also resulted from some more practical reasons. A number of the members of the Canadian Reformed Church in New Westminster lived on farms outside of the city and were unable to transport their children the distance to the Christian school in Vancouver. Some of the children who did attend were forced to board a bus or streetcar at seven o'clock in the morning and only returned at five o'clock in the evening. Other families, through financial or practical constraints, were forced to send their children to public school. The undesirability of this situation, together with the ideological reasons, created a demand for a Christian school in the agricultural areas further out in the Fraser Valley which would serve the orthodox Calvinist community. This demand resulted in the formation of the Canadian Reformed School Association of Surrey, B.C. in 1951.

Once it was decided that a school should be built, the immigrants made significant sacrifices in order to pursue this desire. The school society set out to raise sufficient funds and find a suitable location. Initially, members of the school society were charged one dollar per month, but by the summer of 1953 it was changed to one dollar per week. The membership fee was low because even such an amount was a hardship for the new immigrants. While the association had grown to thirty-one members, by the end of 1952 only $270 had been collected.

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In 1954, a location for the school was found in Burnaby and a building that had been used as a meeting hall was found in Surrey. However, as the building did not meet building specifications for a school, the only way to use the building was to demolish it, move each and every board to the other site and re-build it there to the specifications of the building inspector. This was accomplished in one year, using only free labour and working on evenings and on Saturday, for a total cost of $8,100. In the summer of 1955, the school on Armstrong Avenue in Burnaby was completed.

Once the school was built, there was also the problem of finding teachers. Many of the new immigrants were farmers and did not have the skills necessary. Advertisements for teachers were thus placed in "De Reformatie" and "Gereformeerd Gezinsblad", two Calvinist newspapers in the Netherlands. J. DeHaas, 1954-1956 president of the school society, wrote of his concerns:

We lived in suspense. Would Reformed teachers be found in The Netherlands, proficient in English and willing to take the risk of going to Canada and throwing their lot with a bunch of immigrants in faraway British Columbia?\(^{27}\)

On September 5, 1955, the school on Armstrong Avenue was officially opened with two newly-immigrated male teachers and fifty-eight students enrolled in eight grades, divided between two classrooms.\(^{28}\)

However, many difficulties were still to be overcome after the school was finally open. The older students had all come from different schools while many of the new students had little knowledge of English. For some Grade One students the problems were even worse — not only did some not understand English but neither did they understand 'Amsterdam' Dutch, having only understanding of a Dutch dialect. W. H. Bredenhof, boardmember for the school society from 1953-1958, related an example of this problem:

In Grade One the teacher had drawn a horse on the blackboard to have it copied by the pupils. After the assigned time the pupils' work was checked. When he came to Billy's desk, the teacher said, "Your horse needs a tail, Billy." He gave the teacher a blank look. The teacher repeated his words [in Dutch] with the same results. Finally the girl seated in front of Billy turned around and

\(^{28}\) DeHaas, p. 9
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said in a pure Overyssel' dialect, "Ut peerd mut hev a steert." Billy's eyes lit up. That was the language he understood!29

The new Dutch Calvinist immigrant community in Canada was then not simply a reconstruction of Dutch society. In Canada, the community was an amalgam of Calvinists from throughout the Netherlands. The long-held allegiances to provinces and dialects had to be dissolved before a new community in Canada could be created.

However, such transition problems could be overcome. What remained a problem was not lack of support but too great a demand. In 1962, a new four-room school was built on the same lot to accommodate the larger enrollment. This quick expansion revealed both the continuing desire for separate education and the increasing economic position of these immigrants. By 1966, more than 100 pupils were enrolled and it became necessary to obtain more teachers who were not only members of the Canadian Reformed Church, but were also able to teach in a Canadian Reformed School.30 Staffing again was a problem and was only alleviated by advertising in Calvinist newspapers in the Netherlands and encouraging qualified individuals to emigrate to the Fraser Valley and become teachers to the immigrant community. H. A. Berends asserted that this problem could only be alleviated by going back to the Netherlands to search for teachers:

In 1966, more than 100 pupils were enrolled in the school. This number made it necessary to search for more teachers. It was difficult to obtain teachers who were not only members of the Canadian Reformed Church, but were also competent to teach in a Canadian Reformed School. The result of our search was that two teachers were hired from the Netherlands, Miss W. Tenhove and Miss B. Van Voornveld. They started their Canadian career in September, 1966.31

Further, the membership was moving out of New Westminster and Burnaby and further up the Fraser Valley ahead of the increasing urban sprawl of the city. In 1972, this demand was acknowledged and the old building on Armstrong Avenue was sold. After the St. Peter Catholic school was rented for the 1973-1974 school year, the demand for a new school was met when a new school was opened on April 17, 1974 in Cloverdale. With another school built at the other end of the Fraser Valley in Yarrow by the Abbotsford School Society, a junior high school in 1973

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and a Senior High School in 1979 in Cloverdale, the orthodox Calvinists of the Canadian Reformed Church in the Fraser Valley were able to achieve their desire for a complete Calvinist educational system. It had been a long struggle to get suitable school facilities but the opening of a senior high school in 1979 marked the realization of their continuing desire for schooling with an orthodox Calvinist environment.

In the manner of the orthodox Calvinist group, each of the Dutch Calvinist communities in the Fraser Valley quickly created their own educational system in the post-war era. The Vancouver Christian School, maintained by the Christian Reformed Church, started with eleven pupils in 1949 but, by 1952, had grown to one hundred students in eight grades. Although the numbers of students dropped as the orthodox parents withdrew their children and sent them to the school they had founded, the arrival of more and more immigrants and the greater ability of the new immigrants to pay for private schooling also allowed this school to continue to flourish. The supporters continued to press on. By 1953 a second school was opened in Abbotsford and in 1967 a high school was also opened. The ultra-orthodox group was slower in creating its own school but this was more a function of its continuing lack of numbers and economic ability than will. However, to each group, formal schooling became increasingly more important as a necessary commitment for the protection of the young.

While the dangers of secularized higher education were also acknowledged by each of the three Calvinist groups, their solutions to this problem were decidedly different. The liberal Calvinists, with their majority in the American Mid-West, commonly sent their children to existing Calvinist universities in the United States. In their struggles to maintain their distance from the wider world, the previous Dutch Calvinist immigrants to the United States had set up their own schools. By 1945, almost 20,000 Christian Reformed children were in separate schools, just

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32 van Brummelen, p. 250.
33 By 1960, more than 70% of North American Christian Reformed families who had access to Christian schools were sending their children to them. See van Brummelen, p. 171.
34 Calvin College in Grand Rapids Michigan, the ‘center’ of the Christian Reformed Church in the United States, is a common destination for those liberal Dutch Calvinists who desire higher education.
35 van Brummelen, p. 136.
less than one-half of those children eligible. In the post-war era, their philosophy had accepted the merits of higher education but they still maintained the desire that this education be religiously based. While there had been great concerns of the worldliness in the Christian Reformed school system, the 'fortress' mentality that had guided the schools in the inter-war period had maintained a viable elementary school system. Although higher education was a nascent and struggling concern for most Christian Reformed members, the church and school leaders viewed them as necessary defenses against the continuing attacks of secularism. By the end of the Second World War, the people were determined that the schools were to be a "bulwark against the mighty tide of worldliness in the decaying American culture." With increased prosperity after the Second World War, American Christian Reformed members were set to enjoy the economic advancement that could be achieved through education — as long as it was directed through schools with the proper Calvinist environment. In the post-war era, the burst of pedagogical and methodological thinking originating in Grand Rapids Michigan, together with increased prosperity of both Canadian and American members, allowed a separate university system to become a reality.

While the liberal Calvinists were able to establish their own institutions of higher education, the other Calvinist groups were unwilling or unable to also provide higher education for their members. The ultra-orthodox Calvinists asserted that there was little to be gained from higher education and much to be lost. This group refrained from participation in most forms of higher education and maintained its closed, rural lifestyle which allowed for strong boundaries to separate them from the world. The orthodox group stayed in between the extremes of the ultra-orthodox and liberal groups. Not numerous enough for their own institutions, they generally restrained the desire for higher education. In 1984, they established their own teaching college and theological college in Hamilton, Ontario, and therefore have attempted to deal with both some of the aspirations and the needs of the community. Up until this point in time, the demand for educated

36 van Brummelen, p. 159.
37 From notes taken in interviews with A. Waagenar, October 20, 1991; and B. Poortenga, December 8, 1991; and van Brummelen, pp. 172-173.
38 van Brummelen, p. 136-137.
39 van Brummelen, p. 137.
people — almost completely teachers or ministers — had been satisfied by attracting them from the Netherlands where there were both the institutions and the numbers.\textsuperscript{40} Other than these two professions however, there was little need for higher learning. Therefore, each of these groups, rather than allowing ‘the world’ to corrupt its children, have deemed that the struggle against corruption and assimilation required a separation from society in education in the same manner that they had separated themselves from the dominant society in other social aspects.

As an education system that catered to the explicit needs of the community was felt to be necessary, education was also distinctly separate from the greater Canadian society. While the schools were theoretically open to all, in practice, the nature of schools kept them relatively closed. Most of the Dutch immigrants did not want the schools to be perceived as either isolationist or Dutch. As their emigration had been greatly influenced by religion, they sought to open their schools to all who shared their convictions.\textsuperscript{41} The Vancouver Christian School, initially started by both Christian Reformed and Presbyterian parents, was intended to be interdenominational. However, the flood of new immigrants kept the new schools Dutch in manner and in theological distinction.\textsuperscript{42} For the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups, the acceptance of children from other churches presented the threat of theological dilution. In 1955, a Pentecostal minister requested to send his children to the William of Orange School of the Canadian Reformed Church but this caused great problems for the school society. W. Bredenhof described the turbulence in the next school society meeting that this request created:

Two motions were on the floor. The first motion was to accept children from outside the church after careful consideration. The second was to accept children only if the parents wanted Reformed education for their children and if they agreed to send those children to Catechism Classes and to church. ... It was midnight when the meeting ended. Scores of hours were spent in discussion of this same topic. At some moments it seemed as if this issue would destroy the association.\textsuperscript{43}

Therefore the desire to provide Reformed education with their theological underpinnings were a necessary component of the Dutch Calvinist communities in Canada.

\textsuperscript{40}From notes taken in an interview with G. DeJong, September 17, 1991.
\textsuperscript{41}van Brummelen, p. 246.
\textsuperscript{42}van Brummelen, p. 251.
The school's first duty was thus to maintain the ideology of the home and the church through a firm grounding in religious principles as the basis of life. Distinction from mainstream society and the maintenance of the separate community through the successful application of these ideals became as important as any other duty of the school. At the dedication evening of the orthodox Credo Christian High School in Langley, B.C., E. Vanderboom asserted:

The beginning of a Christian school is an expression of a way of life. The school is to be an expression of that lifestyle while at the same time it serves as preparation for that lifestyle. It is a lifestyle that is to be markedly distinct from that of the surrounding culture.\textsuperscript{44}

The school was an integral part of the maintenance of separation and the continuity of the community and its lifestyle. This agenda both distinguished their children from the world around them and inculcated the children with a Christ-centered education which was essential to the continued health of the community. Through the school environment, individuals could find friends and get to know those who would eventually become their marriage partners in an atmosphere that was pervaded with religious and moral training. The closeknit nature of the community was further enhanced as kinship ties were intertwined with personal ties. As the only other experience of most children were the domain of the family, the church and the school provided the only areas where personal interactions outside of the family could be satisfied. The school and the church worked hand in hand further to integrate children into the community as they mutually reinforced the ideals and the boundaries of the community. This situation also encouraged individuals not to leave the community as this would mean rejecting and giving up all such personal ties made during youth. The lack of experience with individuals of the wider world would also make it difficult to create these ties again after leaving the community. The school thus maintained and reasserted the religious basis of the community and the social ideals of the home and the church.

A complete Dutch Calvinist school system in Canada is but a recent phenomenon. The arrival of Dutch Calvinist immigrants in the post-war era stimulated the growth of a separate school

\textsuperscript{44}E. Vanderboom, "The Making of a School," (the main address at the 'dedication evening' for the Credo Christian High School), \textit{The Clarion, Year End Issue}, (1981), p. 513.
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...system as they actively sought to create an educational environment which protected their ideals. Although many of the immigrants' children were not able to avail themselves of a Calvinist education and were forced to enter the public school system for at least part of their education, the desire for a Calvinist school system for each group did not diminish but continued. The evolution of their own school system has required great sacrifices by the newly arrived immigrants but many children have now been able to avail themselves of it. Only with the advance of urban sprawl in the Fraser Valley has this begun to change. The constricting of the rural areas by the encroaching urban areas has not allowed the emerging generation to acquire land easily. Dutch Calvinists have responded to these changes in two ways — emigration to other rural areas and a changing lifestyle in which education has taken a greater prominence. The liberal Calvinists, with universities in the United States, have had the greater numbers and therefore the greater access, but all three groups have begun to pursue some elements of higher education. However, in the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups, higher education has usually been limited to practical and technical programs rather than education for economic and social advancement. As yet, the ambition for a higher secular education is lacking.
Chapter 4
The Home

As the third element of the Dutch Calvinist community in Canada, the home was also important in the maintenance of ideology. The links among the home, the school and the church illustrate the desire of Dutch Calvinist immigrants to maintain their religious and social heritage. While the church provided a focus for the creation of social bonds between individuals and the assemblage of people of common heritage and ideals, and the school helped inculcate the young, it was in the home where these ideals were nourished, strengthened and protected. The continuity of society, created in the church and the school, maintained and allowed for the propagation of the ideology of the home. In the home, the post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants strove to preserve the continuity of their lives.

For many of the new post-war immigrants, the lifestyle that they set up in Canada mirrored the lifestyle they left behind. The lack of available land in the Netherlands to support new families and the destruction caused by the war had encouraged people, particularly farmers, to emigrate. The perceived Protestant nature of Canada and the proximity of existing Dutch Calvinists communities in North America attracted the Calvinist element of the emigration in particular. However, the importance of religion in both the nature of the immigration and the destination of the immigrants ensured that it would continue to play an exceedingly important role in their affairs in Canada. For a large proportion of these immigrants, immigration entailed the search for a Calvinist-centered society as they had experienced in the Netherlands and the creation of such a community when it could not be found in Canada to their satisfaction.

In Dutch Calvinist ideology, the home represented the most basic component of society. The theological and social theorists of nineteenth and early twentieth century Dutch society argued for the prominence of the home and the necessity of its protection. The rhetoric of Abraham

Kuypers and the nineteenth century Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary party affirmed that the home was divinely inspired:

The basic unit of society was the family. It alone had its origins before the Fall and in the explicit ordinance of God. The home contained every type of relationship in society and taught all the skills and duties needed there. Thus its rights took precedence over those of any other institution and its defense constituted the first concern of sound government.\(^2\)

While Kuypers did not personally represent all aspects of Calvinism in the Netherlands, he was an important influence to them all. The Calvinistic mission to apply their principles to every sphere of their lives became the overriding influence in their acclimatization in Canada. In this ideology, the family was the sole social institution that had its inspiration in divine wisdom of God. Every other social institution, however well intentioned or carefully planned, was created after the ‘fall from grace’ and thus was tainted with the sin of mankind. As a result of its Biblical inspiration, the family was perceived as the final, legitimate source of authority in society and thus was an essential basis of any other institution. As Kuypers and the Anti-Revolutionary theory determined, the family was the building-block of society:

Besides being a microcosm, the family was also the seed for society, for the latter came into being through the simple extension of numbers beyond a single dwelling.\(^3\)

The church organization and the theological importance placed on the family gave the individual family both a great deal of power and the position as the ultimate source of authority and legitimacy. With this perception of the family, its preservation and strength was the first obligation of the church, the school and the community. Therefore the home was considered by many Dutch Calvinists as the essential building block of community and the first and final bulwark against the destructive and assimilative forces of the world.

As the home was perceived as the only institution in society that was divinely inspired, the post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants maintained it as an integral component of their religion-centered lives. The nineteenth century Kuypers-led view of the home was continued in the community that Dutch Calvinists set up in Canada. In an article in *Diakonia: For the Work of

\(^2\)Bratt, p. 33.
\(^3\)Bratt, p. 26.
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Service, a journal for church elders and ministers of the Canadian Reformed Church, P. De Jong's assertions of the relations between the church and the home is reminiscent of Kuyperian ideology:

It is of the very essence of Reformed religion to stress not the individual as an isolated person but rather the individual in his organic relation to human society. Since the home is the foundation upon which the whole structure of society is built, the proper spiritual contact between the church and her members should first of all be in the homes.⁴

This intertwining of church and home became an important feature of the Dutch Calvinist community that was set up in Canada. Based in this widely-held religious ethos, the nuclear family was further legitimized in resisting the 'evils' of the outside world, separating itself from the influences of mainstream Canadian society and creating their own community. Rev. C. L. Stam, writing in the Canadian Reformed Church journal The Clarion, affirmed this separation of the family:

We are not isolated from the culture in which we live. We undergo the influence of this culture in more ways and to a greater extent than we possibly realize ourselves. Of great importance is also the style which this community maintains, where everything is done to mutual edification according to the Word of God. If that Word is at the core of our life and if our striving is indeed mutual edification, we will have little problems ... even in the changing attitudes of our times. If these things are not the basis and purpose of our lives, we have already succumbed to the world and will be slowly but steadily enslaved by the forms of this world.⁵

The continuity of the ideology of separation and worldview entailed a close adherence to the import of Dutch Calvinism. Although all the influences of the outside world could not be denied, it remained the first responsibility of the parents to protect the religious and social beliefs of the home.

However, as the religious legitimization of separation gave the family special status and power, it could come into conflict with kinship ties. As the first duty of parents was the protection of the religious and social beliefs of the home, this responsibility and power meant that each family had control over its own religious path. When the schism in the Christian Reformed Church occurred in 1950, individuals were sometimes forced to choose between religious ideology and kinship. For example, in the case of the family of Martje DeBoer who had six married children in

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Canada, four and their spouses became members of the orthodox Canadian Reformed Churches while two and their spouses elected to stay in the Christian Reformed Church. As each church viewed the other as an 'untrue' church, there was constant concern within the family over each others' eternal fate. This religious split kept the family apart as each church maintained its own religious and social circles. However, kinship ties were maintained to such an extent that by 1958 all were living in the Fraser Valley in British Columbia within a 25 mile distance. Kinship could not overcome the religious authority of the nuclear family or break the community boundaries that each Calvinist group established, but it still was an important enough force to influence where these immigrants eventually settled.

In like manner to the attainment of communion as the fullest expression of religious and spiritual maturity, marriage and the setting up of a household was seen as the fulfillment of social maturity. The identification of the family as the only divinely inspired institution greatly stimulated the prominence of the home. The lack of economic opportunities, combined with a rural lifestyle and the low priority of education — especially among the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups — encouraged the prominence of marriage as a long-established pattern of life. The liberal Calvinists, through greater education and opportunity, did not have quite the predilection toward marriage of the more conservative groups but the cultural mandate of “filling the earth” as a part of God’s plan of salvation still made this an extremely popular if not mandatory institution. With the great importance placed on the family by Dutch Calvinists, marriage and children were natural convergences of life. Marriage then was a primary symbol of social maturity.

This prominence of marriage can be seen in the process of church creation. The post-war Dutch Calvinist immigration was characterized by family groups. When the Canadian Reformed Church was created in Abbotsford on February 24, 1961, its 106 charter members comprised 18

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6The few individuals that deviate from this norm are usually teachers. With the need for at least some education and the opportunity to work for an extended period without social pressure toward marriage, some individuals put off marriage. However, in the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups, the social pressure, the extended marriage pool through contact with other churches, and the perceived norm of the marriage state means that only an extreme few are not married by age thirty.

couples and their children, one widow, and one single man who had come as an exchange student from the Netherlands — 38 adults with 68 children. Of the 18 couples, 4 couples were recently married, having met in Canada as the children or siblings of immigrant families. Each of the maturing families had immigrated to other places in Canada first, usually Alberta, before continuing on to British Columbia as was the experience of Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Huttema:

God has richly blessed them in their new homeland which they came to in 1951, first as beetworkers in Coaldale [Alberta] till the fall of the same year when they too settled in New Westminster. From Sprott Street to Second Street, from coal worker to digging peat. The first move to their own property was to Cloverdale where much work needed to be done to transform the acreage into a farm but it was a start. Their move in 1958 made Banford Road, Chilliwack known to many members of the church in the [Fraser] Valley.

Therefore, the church started as a mix of families, some just formed, but all attempting to establish themselves on farms in the local agricultural area.

For the post-war immigrants, the initially prescribed duties in marriage were clearly delineated gender roles. The liturgical forms of the Canadian Reformed churches clearly laid out the purposes of marriage in the marriage vows:

First, husband and wife shall live together in sincere love and holiness, helping each other faithfully in all things that belong to this life and to the life to come. Second, by marriage the human race is to be continued and increased, and under the blessing of God, husband and wife will be fruitful and multiply.

The first responsibility of marriage, the need to protect the home and nourish its beliefs, determined the function of each individual. Following a literal Biblical interpretation, the family was strongly patriarchal and maintained separate but complementary roles for males and females. Men were usually ascribed the activities which brought them into contact with the outside world — husband, father, family representative, spiritual leader, guardian and provider. Through these roles, men were to direct each member of the family to salvation and protect them from the

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8 The single exchange student liked Canada and one of the girls here so much that he started work on his immigration papers right away. He went back to the Netherlands in October 1961 but returned in 1962 and was then married.


10 One man decided that such a life was not a great choice and became a bookkeeper, first for an agricultural equipment company, and later moved to Winnipeg to be involved in the Calvinist Reformed Perspective magazine.

11 Book of Praise, p. 636.
corruption of the world. Women were usually ascribed the roles which maintain the home as a bastion of religious and social ideals — wife, mother, ‘home’-maker, spiritual constant, teacher and steward. These ‘home-stabilizing’ qualities were to create the security which maintained the family and the continuity in the face of the aggressions of the outside world. Together, these complementary roles in marriage allow for the continuation of their community and the fulfillment of religious ideals through the mutual striving for salvation.

Although there were significant intellectual divisions among the Dutch Calvinist communities in North America in the post-war era, their attitudes toward the family were almost united. Even The Banner, the popular magazine of the most positive, outgoing Calvinists of Grand Rapids, Michigan — the intellectual capital of Dutch Calvinism in the United States — reflected this conservative ideology. The accepted pattern of life, closely guided by the Biblical prominence of the family, pervaded all groups from the established liberals to the newly arrived conservative immigrants. In the 1950's, the branches of Calvinism were not ready to deviate from these ideals. Only with the adoption of a more evangelical stance which also attempted to be more in tune with modern changes have the liberal Calvinists started to move away from this pattern.

In Calvinist ideology, the role of husband thus placed men at the head of the family. The function of the husband as family head was not perceived as a privilege but as a duty. As family head, the male’s role was that of the family’s responsible representative to the outer world. In a 1952 discussion series on the roles of the family in his weekly article “The Christian Home and School,” editor Henry Schultze of The Banner clearly stated the expected roles of the husband:

He [the husband] will conduct the affairs of the family in such a way that each member will be directed to the type of Christian citizenship God requires. ... The husband as head of the family must protect his family against any and all forces that would despoil it.13

Thus men were also charged with the role of the protector or guardian through their position as family representative. While this duty clearly entrusted the husband with the physical protection of

the family and the necessity to provide for it, his duties also extended to the spiritual protection of
the family. As Schultze further explains:

[The family] will be subject to the ravages of ignorance, evil aggression, immorality, and
disturbing religious influences. The head of the house must stand on guard against [these]
destructive forces and fight them off.14

Men were deemed physical and moral sentinels which were duty-bound to intercede between the
world and the family. Viewed in this manner, men only were allowed to vote in church affairs as
this duty was perceived as predominantly concerned with the protection of the church from outside
influences and the continuation of existing ideas — responsibilities which dealt with the outside
world and fell within the realm of the representative of the family. The duties of the husband then
encompassed the creation and maintenance of the boundaries between the world and the family.

The necessity of the husband to mediate and protect the family from the outside world was
perceived to be complemented by the wife’s duty to maintain the central beliefs and create a refuge
to which the husband and children returned. Because men were exposed to the wider world, they
were the most vulnerable to the world’s corrupting influences through this continued contact. As
women were perceived not to feel these corrupting influences of the world in the private sphere of
the home, they were seen as an essential bulwark against the attacks of assimilation. In 1952,
Henry Schultze of The Banner also clearly asserted this as the primary role of women:

Woman places in the home, as no man can, the spirit of beauty, security and happiness. She
makes it an asylum from all the troubles that beset the family. ... Her word and touch are the
most healing. ... She makes the home a place of retreat and refuge for all the members of a well-
adjusted family.15

Therefore, for most Dutch Calvinists in North America in the immediate post-war era, women
were the essential guardians of belief as they were presumed able to reinculcate religious ideals in
the men and children who must deal outside the family confines and return contaminated. Schultze
further contended that through this role, women had a special duty which was essential to the
continuing existence of the church and community:

162.
None have equaled her in the ability to instill in earliest life and on through life the spiritual values which are of prime importance to every Christian.16

While men maintained the role of protector of the family from the physical intrusion of the outside world, women ensured that this struggle against the world did not infect the community. Their role withdrew them from interacting with the wider society but women were still an essential part of the maintenance of community, forefront in the struggle against the world.

While this continued active assertion of religious ideals certainly constrained women into a quiet, temperate role, it was not seen to prescribe submissiveness or subordinate status. Women's duties in church affairs were perceived as extensions of their duties at home as they were seen to form a background of belief which functioned as a support service for the church's activities. The perception of a woman's place in the world and society among the more conservative groups of Dutch Calvinism in Canada remained much the same in the four decades after the Second World War. As J. DeJong asserted in a series of articles entitled "From Eve to Esther: Some Remarks on Woman and Her Place in the Church and Society," in The Clarion, only in this Biblically determined role were women equal:

In Christ we see women restored fully, so that she takes her God-given place in marriage, family and society, and above all, in the church.17

The role of women then clearly called for them to struggle actively in the preservation of the community, not to maintain a diminutive position for esoteric reasons alone. However, women were still charged to maintain their nurturing role in a patriarchal society. J. DeJong further asserted that only women who were active within their role in the church and in the home became the true expression of womanhood:

Clearly, the “real” or “total” woman is not the one who follows textbook standards of submissiveness which reduce women to “playthings” of men; the “liberated” woman is not the one who has broken loose from clearly set out directives to care for home and family. The total real or liberated woman is the one who maintains “the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit.”18

18DeJong, “From Eve to Esther ...,” p. 3.
Chapter Four: The Home

The need for J. DeJong to write these articles on women's place within society was clearly a response to the attraction for some women of a role outside of a patriarchal construct. However, the continued equation of women's in a patriarchal construct with 'real' and 'Christian' illustrates the continuity of ideals with that expressed in *The Banner* in the 1950's by Henry Schultze. Women were then to maintain the 'gentle and quiet spirit' in the calm certainty of religious ideals, and the active operation to infuse the family with these ideals once more as the foremost duty in their lives.

While these ascribed roles of both men and women could be perceived as constraining or confining, within the community they did have advantages which made them popular and ensured their propagation in new generations. For a number of people, the clearly defined roles allowed them to go through life with little ambiguity or uncertainty — their life was usually well laid out for them. The preponderance of farmers among the more conservative Calvinist groups meant that for many men, their future occupation was already determined and they could begin to strive for this career while still young. For many women, the dominance of motherhood as their prime responsibility also focused their direction in life. Groomed for this role from childhood, few girls would look beyond the home and the family for their identity. The anti-thetical relationship with the world would also empower individuals. A father's duty as family representative gave him the power to reject worldly ideas or unwanted change. A mother's duty to create an environment free from worldly influence empowered her and gave her status and satisfaction through raising a family with the proper religious ideals. Duty in the church also provided for a strong direction and focus in life both with respect to their spiritual and personal selves. For these individuals, the ascribed roles and protection of the community had great benefit. The hard struggle to be continually on guard against the corruption of the outer world was difficult and demanded great energy but these roles provided a firm focus and a personal certainty which was perceived to result in great personal rewards — both in this life and the next.

However, while these roles provided a great deal of safety and certainty for those who would accept them, they also could result in a great deal of pain to those who did not. Clearly,
individual temperament dictated that individuals were not always suited to their ascribed roles but there were few avenues for rebellion. In the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups, the predominance of farmers and the limited access to education ensured that there was little other opportunity. For men, a rural lifestyle was a cultural construction rather than a Biblically determined role and therefore those who were not content to be farmers could venture into other occupations. The limit of education and the ties of the community to a rural lifestyle meant that their opportunities were also usually tied to rural areas and therefore were usually such occupations as mechanics, carpenters and labourers where skill could overcome the handicaps of the lack of higher education. However, for women in these groups, their roles were more restricted. As their primary roles as wife and mother were seen to be Biblically directed, there were few other occupation or roles that they could achieve. The predominance of marriage and the importance of children meant that for most women there was little long term choice. In the liberal group, the access to education in the United States and the adoption of a more evangelical and modern Biblical interpretation has allowed both men and women a great range of occupations but the continued acceptance of a 'traditional' family structure has also curtailed their opportunities. The Biblical ordinances were perceived to clearly set out social roles and rejection of these roles was equivalent to the rejection of the ideology of the church and community. The exclusionary attitude of the community — particularly of the more conservative communities — forced individuals to either conform or be ostracized by both friends and family. In this instance, bonds of kinship were forced to compete against the desire to protect the community — to the pain of both the 'deviants' and their relatives in the community.

While the first responsibility of marriage in all three Dutch Calvinist groups was the mutual striving for salvation through the protection of the family from corruption, the second responsibility was procreation. For Dutch Calvinists, children took on a special role. As 'gifts of God', children were the natural extension of the marriage state — the result of a 'God-given'
Each new married couple was expected to reproduce in spite of social or economic difficulty as the struggle to have and care for children was the same as the struggle to protect and maintain the community. Parents were expected to raise and educate their children in the community as there was perceived to be no greater blessing to a parent than to have their children achieve true maturity — their proper place socially and spiritually. While there certainly has been a change in attitudes concerning procreation — many completed Dutch Calvinist immigrant families in the post-war era had seven, eight or nine children while the next generation tends to have approximately four to five children — marriage and children remain the common experience.

Because these traditional societal roles were an influential part of Dutch Calvinist ideology, a central experience was childhood. As reproduction was one of the purposes of marriage, it was no wonder that children formed a substantial part of the community. The importance of children among the Dutch Calvinist communities could also be seen in the proportion of non-communicant members in the congregations of the Canadian Reformed churches. As there were active attempts to remove corrupting influences from within the church and non-attendance was considered a sin which resulted in excommunication, there were very few individuals at the peripheries of the congregation. Also, the perception of a lack of maturity and the stigma of being of sufficient age and yet not a confirmed member meant that such people were usually excluded. Therefore the proportion of non-communicant members in a church was a good estimate of the number of people in the church under the ages of 20-21 years old who had not yet confessed their faith and become eligible to take communion.

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20 Confession of Faith (becoming a communicant member) occurs between 18 and 22 years of age depending on the readiness of the individual. This means that the proportion of non-communicant members in each of the churches to be a fair representation of the proportion of children to adults — there are almost no adult non-confessing members. For example, in the Abbotsford congregation of the Canadian Reformed Churches, there are only three non-communicant members over the age of 25. The exclusionary policies of the congregations usually drives away such individuals.
Therefore, in 1989, children below the age of twenty made up at least 43 percent and up to 55 percent of each congregation — there were about as many people under 21 years of age as there were over it. The prominence and power of the family, together with the predilection toward marriage, maintained this community pattern and made it one of the fastest growing religious groups in Canada.\textsuperscript{21}

As "Gifts of God," the culmination of a child's future was the attainment of full membership into church and community. Because of the perception that their children were born into an elite, parents were expected to protect and guide children until they are able to partake of their heritage. W. Pouwelse compared a child's life to a sea voyage:

Our young people are like a ship that has to go to sea. It must first go through the rough rolling waves near the coastline before it reaches calmer and deeper water. Sometimes a pilot is needed in order for it to leave the harbour safely. If the ship is wrecked on the rocks, it will never reach its destination; but if it passes the coastline, it often comes into calmer water and can continue its trip without too many troubles.\footnote{22}

The duty to guide their children in life was always overshadowed by the perception that the ultimate consequence of disobedience was eternal damnation. This perception that disobedience — both to parents and to God — was punished with eternal damnation was further reinforced within the communion service itself. Before each communion service, the minister read the \textit{Form For the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper} which included excluding all those "who are disobedient to their parents or others in authority over them."\footnote{23} The principle of obedience therefore resulted in the necessity of shaping and disciplining their children as disobedience toward the parents was equated to disobedience towards God.

To ensure that their children achieved salvation, the duty of parents was to protect the child throughout childhood from external forces. With the perception that they were in an ideological struggle against the world, parents sought to instill in their children both the religious and cultural ideology that they felt distinguished them from the world. As W. Pouwelse, editor of \textit{The Clarion} asserted that this was a necessary part of a child's education:

\begin{quote}
They [the children] must be equipped when they are confronted with the problems in life and with the attacks of the power of darkness.\footnote{24}
\end{quote}

This protection included religious education, choice of friends and potential marriage partners. The church played an important part in this protection as it allowed for social interactions that maintained the religious environment desired by the family but that the family was unable to create alone. The school also helped protect against external influences as it was considered an extension of the family and not an authority structure beyond it. The parents therefore attempted to maintain a protective atmosphere around their children which not only isolated them from corrupting influences but also focused all authority in the family and their religious ideals.

\footnote{23}{Book of Praise, pp. 235-36.}  
While it was the parental role to care, love and teach, it was the child's role to learn and obey. In order to instill the proper religious and cultural ideals in their children, parents were to 'guide' their children. This need for direction was also alluded to by W. Pouwelse:

Parents have to be aware of the fact that their children need guidance, assistance, and advice, not to prevent them from becoming mature and independent, but to help them to pass the most turbulent part of their lives.25

However, this guidance and assistance was to be given to ensure that the children accepted these ideals. Therefore, children had to learn to obey and accept the parental precepts even as parents had to strive to inculcate the children with the proper values. In another article, W. Pouwelse also dwelled on parental duty:

Parents have the duty to teach their children a proper value system. In this teaching corporal punishment takes an important place. It is necessary in order to keep them away from going in the wrong direction in a world which is infected by the influence of sin.26

Childhood was therefore seen as a time of training and immaturity which lasted until the child was ready to attain full participation in both church and community.

The patriarchal relations and the religious ideals of the family thus placed children as subordinate. This subordination and protection not only characterized the inculcation of religious ideals but continued through all aspects of life. The aspects of life that could not be made available in the family — friends, peers and marriage partners — were found in the church and the school which functioned under the auspices of the family authority. Contact between young men and women was restricted in order to retard both moral and spiritual corruption. W. Pouwelse again pointed out the duty of children and the necessities in dating:

Sometimes the question has been asked: Are you supposed to tell your date right away, the first evening you go out, to which church you belong and to ask him or her about his or her faith? ... The answer should be: No, of course not. But don't get me wrong now. I do not suggest that this question is not important. On the contrary. You should know about it before you go out or arrange a date.27

As well as children being guided with respect to their relationships, other activities were also subject to restriction. Dancing, going to movie theatres, and card playing are examples of activities

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which are also frowned upon. For example, W. Pouwelse again pointed out that dancing was seen as awakening individuals to the evils of the world:

It was heathen culture which first discovered and subsequently deformed dancing into blatant eroticism, connecting it with courtship, puberty and fertility rights.28

Behavioural changes were evident between the first and second generation immigrants. A change in values could be seen in the number of children between the generations. In the case of the descendants of Martje DeBoer, the four sons and one daughter that arrived between 1951 and 1954 had 19 children among them upon immigration, the oldest being 14 years of age. These five families would have 21 more children in Canada for a total of forty.29 The change in values could be seen from the families of the DeBoer immigrants and those of their children. From an average of 6.67 children in the immigrant generation, the second generation has had an average of only 3.8 children (although not all families of this generation are complete). The family size of the second generation can be seen on the graph below.30

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29 By 1960, only 3 of the 40 children were over twenty years of age and none were yet married. Therefore this generation had their children from the late 1960's to the present.
30 Of the five families with one or two children, only 2 are ‘completed’ families. Of the four with no children, one died single in his early twenties, one is a single 21 year old, one is a 34 year old woman with Down's Syndrome and the last is a single 29 year old 'black sheep' who has left the church and community.
Although there was a drop of an average of two children per family between the generations, the numbers of children still significantly outweigh that of the wider Canadian society. Children remain an important part of Dutch Calvinist society. Young people were also charged to restrain themselves from the excesses of dress and appearance of the world:

We are living in a time in which the difference between the style of the kingdom and the style of the world is very obvious, also in dress and appearance.\textsuperscript{31}

The relations between young adults and their activities were thus monitored and directed until they were deemed sufficiently mature to take their place as an adult — partaking of communion and the setting up of a household.

\textsuperscript{31} J. DeJong, "From Eve to Esther...," p. 5.
Marriage and the setting up of one's own household was a primary responsibility. Because of this expectation, it was difficult for these immigrants to deal with those individuals who attempted to pursue education or other activities which delayed marriage. Young adults who were not married had little real place in society as "the community extended honour only to those who were willing to serve its purposes and standards.32 Because they had not yet set up their own household, they were regarded in the same way as children — lacking maturity. Children who were tied to the farm as the inheritor commonly moved to another house on the same farm so that they could have had an autonomous household and therefore achieve maturity. As the 'nuclear' family was the ideal, the instances of extended families were usually determined by economic factors rather than cultural ones.

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While all three Calvinist groups in Canada were constrained in their interpretation of societal roles, changes have occurred. Perhaps the most fundamental change occurring in the Dutch Calvinist community has been the effects of increasing urbanization. In the new community in Canada, the move to an ever-increasing urban lifestyle has begun to affect the roles within each Calvinist community. Rural life had allowed the family, particularly of the orthodox and ultra-orthodox groups, to maintain their societal roles. In Calvinist ideology, children were to be taught and brought up by both parents. Neither father nor mother was to be burdened with the responsibility of teaching the children alone. The semi-flexible schedule of rural life and the proximity of the father to the home allowed him to partake equally of the education of the children as was demanded by the ideology. Farm life also had justified the existence of large families as the self-sufficiency of large family units in terms of labour and production meant less interaction was

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32van Brummelen, Telling the Next Generation..., p. 264.
necessary with the wider world. A large proportion of the orthodox and ultra-orthodox Dutch Calvinist groups attempted to maintain rural life as a barrier against spiritual contamination.

While the desire for the continuation of a rural lifestyle was evident, a large proportion of these immigrants were overtaken by urban expansion. The initial post-war Dutch Calvinist immigrants to the Fraser Valley usually settled at the peripheries of Vancouver and New Westminster. As they often sought a rural lifestyle, many quickly took labouring jobs in the surrounding agricultural areas. With the capital earned in such ventures, the immigrants were able to buy or rent farms. While this was a successful strategy for the immigrant generation, problems arose for the second generation. Rapid urbanization encroached on the agricultural area near Vancouver. In order to maintain their rural lifestyle, many families moved further up the Fraser Valley. This trend can be seen in the institutions of the Canadian Reformed churches. From the first church in the urban area of New Westminster, the other churches were established only in agricultural areas, increasingly further up the Fraser Valley. Indeed, so many people had moved away from the environs of New Westminster, the church itself moved to agricultural Surrey in 1974 in order to better serve its members. By this time, the immigrants had almost completely abandoned the urban area for the rural. By 1990, urbanization had also overtaken Surrey and the church there is again languishing as its members move away. This trend has continued as some members of the community have now left the Fraser Valley completely, seeking to escape to rural life in Alberta or the Okanagan Valley. The establishment of the Canadian Reformed church at Vernon B.C. was a direct result of this trend.

Those immigrants who could not escape urbanization were faced with a shift of roles in the family. Wage labour has brought men into much more contact with corrupting influences than was present in rural life. Rather than the husband being able to merge the roles of provider and father/educator into one that was allowed in a rural setting, the advance of an urban lifestyle required more and more Dutch Calvinists to adopt a worker role that took him away from the

home. This increased the contact between both the husband and the world through his work and the family and the world due to proximity. In response to these pressures the role of the wife has also been influenced. In conjunction with her role to maintain the home as a stronghold, the wife created an environment designed to nurture and maintain belief and community — ‘home-making’.

For those who left a rural lifestyle, the wife bore most of the burden of raising the children herself. In addition, the wife was demanded to re-inculcate the husband into the central aspects of the community after his ‘contamination’ with the forces of the outer world that he met through his work. While this was present within a traditional rural lifestyle as the husband was the mediator between the world and the family, the increasingly common urban lifestyle required much more effort and a change in social roles to achieve their goals.

Changes in lifestyle for many Dutch Calvinists also occurred because of changes in agricultural practice and cost. Increased mechanization has begun to cause problems for farmers with large families as farms could be managed with fewer people. This has caused problems for the inheritance for the third generation. Large families made division of farms unfeasible. The high start-up costs of farms in other areas also preclude this as an effective measure to alleviate inheritance problems. Therefore, this next generation’s inheritance has been increasingly threatened as costs have arisen. This may eventually force this generation out of the rural areas and into the wider, urban world.

The three groups of Dutch Calvinists have also begun to diverge in ideology. In 1984, Calvinists of the Christian Reformed Church, led by their American majority, allowed women to become deaconesses. In order to gain ecumenical strength, these Calvinists have also begun to open their doors to other evangelicals, both socially and doctrinally. While they retain a Dutch Calvinist character and a separation from the greater society, their Calvinism has changed in the almost two hundred years since their first migration. In post-war Canada, however, the Canadian branch of the Christian Reformed Church has resisted many of these changes since their migration. Their inherent conservatism had been redoubled by an immigrant conservatism as had that of most Dutch Calvinist immigrants of the post-war era, but a large proportion of the older, immigrant
generation has maintained this conservatism. In the Christian Reformed Church, the Canadian element — particularly that of British Columbia — is considered to be the most conservative and reactionary element of their federation.

The other Dutch Calvinist groups have also changed but have been more successful in retarding change. The orthodox Canadian Reformed Church has also acknowledged a changing society and maintained discussions in such issues as sexual abuse and a changing role for women. In the magazine, *The Clarion*, under the theme "From Eve to Esther," they also re-examined what they perceive was the growing contrast — the contrast between the woman as *mother* (Eve) and as the *woman in the world* (Esther). While discussion continues, they are also dependent on Biblical authority and therefore they remain constrained to the more traditional interpretation of societal roles. U. Krikke voiced the desire of many of these immigrants to achieve and maintain what they perceive the proper role of women was and continues to be:

> It can be a dire necessity that married mothers with young children have a job outside the home. In times past it happened that in the agricultural sector and also in the sector of the self-employed grocers the mothers often had to work on days to keep the business going and to provide enough income for the family. It was experienced as a blessing when, because of the increasing standard of living, that was not necessary any longer. But the emancipation movement [of women] turns the clock back. Motherhood comes something of the second rank.34

These Calvinists, with the ultra-orthodox Calvinists, have been able to translate their redoubled conservativism into the maintenance of a community which preserved the deeper values of their lives.

As the third element of the Dutch Calvinist community in Canada, the home was an essential component in the maintenance of ideology and religion. In the home, Dutch Calvinists strove to preserve the continuity of the social and religious ideals they maintained through migration. Through a deep conservativism, bolstered in migration, these immigrants have been able to retard or avoid change. Using the home as a base and citadel against corruption, it allowed for the nourishment, strength and protection of Dutch Calvinist ideals.

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In Canada, the emigration of large numbers from the Netherlands after the Second World War was a situation distinct from previous Dutch emigrations. For the first time, a significant proportion of the Dutch population desired to seek their fortune elsewhere and Canada was a country of choice. However, this emigrant group did not represent a cross-section of Dutch society but was composed of only a particularly narrow slice of it. This 'skewed' emigration resulted in the presence of a significant ethnic community — a community not based on common birthplace but on religion. The resilience of this ethnic community resulted from their ability to maintain their covenant community strong and free of corruption.

The Dutch emigration to Canada in the post-war era was a function of the turmoil and changes in the Netherlands after the Second World War. The economic disruptions as a result of the war, together with a growing pessimism over the post-war world resulted in a restlessness and desire for emigration. Each group in the religiously-dominated Dutch society was affected by this situation, but the desire for emigration was not the same across its breadth. Dutch Calvinists were particularly prone to emigrate and, because of traditional emigration patterns and the desire to maintain their religion, Canada became their country of choice. Although Dutch Calvinists composed only one-tenth of Dutch society, they were to make up half of all Dutch emigrants to Canada.

While emigration certainly placed the lifestyle of these people at risk, they clearly intended to preserve their way of life based on faith. Although the pre-war emigration patterns were a major influence on this migration, the particular circumstances of their emigration caused the initial arrivals to be dispersed across Canada. However, after a short time in which they attempted to merge with Canadian society, these new immigrants began to favour concentrated settlement. In short order, they recreated closed, family-centered communities.
Dutch Calvinist immigrants in Canada thus embarked on a new voyage — a voyage of definition, building and self-discovery. Although economic incentives had encouraged their emigration, religious concerns became most important once they arrived. As they could not find in Canada an environment that they perceived maintained their religious ideals and the heritage of Dutch Calvinism, many of these immigrants vociferously resisted change and the perceived tide of liberalism in Canadian society and set out to create their own. The political and social conservatism of these people was redoubled with immigration as a fortress mentality took hold, allowing for the rejection of all incompatible ideas from the wider society. For many, the preservation of their religious-based lives entailed a psychological withdrawal from mainstream Canadian society and the creation of institutions and personal boundaries which could maintain this separation.

Through the three institutions of the church, the school and the home, the Dutch Calvinist communities in Canada sought to ward off ideological change and assimilation. Although they could not recreate all of the structures of Dutch society that had protected and nourished their religion, they could, through an increased religious and personal conservatism, defend their ideals. The church allowed for the maintenance of religious ideals and the formation of personal bonds which could replace those given up as they withdrew from society. The school allowed for the protection of the young. Through a Calvinist environment the young could learn the ideals and the need for separation as free as was possible from the corrupting influences of the outside world. The maintenance of the traditional home, complete with traditional roles which clearly delineated personal and family boundaries, again allowed for these immigrants to maintain their separation from the wider society. Through this separation, the ideals of the Dutch Calvinist family could be maintained as they would only associate with like-minded immigrants and could easily stop the entrance of unwanted persons or ideas. This creation of a covenant community was only accomplished through the strong personal determination and agency
Conclusion

on the part of particular sub-sects to rediscover and recreate the roots of Dutch Calvinism in North America and a strong desire to defend this ideology against all change.

However, this voyage of creation and building was not without peril. Although the subsects of Dutch Calvinism in British Columbia's Fraser Valley were able to develop strong and rapidly growing communities, aspects of their lifestyle is changing. Their desire to maintain a rural lifestyle was in part personal inclination, but it also allowed for an increased separation from society as the family could more easily restrict contact with the wider society than in an urban environment. However, the increasing urbanization has quickly pushed many of these immigrants away from Vancouver and higher up the Fraser Valley in an attempt to maintain at least a semblance of their rural lifestyle. Indeed, some immigrants have begun to move to other areas, as is the case for members of the Canadian Reformed Churches. In the Okanagan Valley of central British Columbia, they could again create a rural environment.

Other, more traditional aspects of their lives were also under attack. Mechanization and the increased capital costs in farming also became problematic for these immigrants. The large families of some Dutch Calvinist families have created severe inheritance problems. When H. Winklar of Abbotsford, B.C., died in 1984, his two sons had sixteen children between them — twelve of them boys. Although their farm is large, it is unfeasible to divide it and, in the future, it will be unable to support them all. Increasing mechanization in the dairying industry also has caused a decline in the number needed to work the farm. One method that could be used to relieve this problem would be to start up farms in other areas but the high start-up costs preclude this as an effective measure. Although the immigrant H. Winklar could provide for himself and his family, the third generation is facing a definite threat to their way of life. These circumstances may eventually force this next generation into the wider world and therefore expose them to much greater assimilative forces.
However, the desire to preserve their way of life is considered by these immigrants to be a continuing struggle. While they face problems with the next generation, they take solace in the fact that they have preserved their faith to this point. In the Netherlands, the dominance of religion in people's lives has crumbled and church adherence has dropped dramatically. In the United States, the increasing appearance of positive Calvinism has begun to open the community there to the wider world. In the Fraser Valley, there are also a number of Dutch Calvinists that desire a greater openness with the world but as yet they are a very small minority. If these immigrants had not emigrated, they would be facing a very liberal society and mass defection of the young. Now they go beyond what they would have had in the Netherlands — a growing, vibrant if reactionary, community. The defensiveness of their religious conservatism and of their immigrant society has allowed them to preserve many of their deeper values.
Appendix A


Calvinists: 38.5%
Roman Catholics: 17.1%
Dutch Reformed: 3.7%
Others: 31%
No religion: 9.7%


Calvinists: 41%
Roman Catholics: 25.5%
Dutch Reformed: 7%
Others: 2.5%
No religion: 7%

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