

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

In their 40-page document, the Wingham consistory quotes this from one of my radio messages: "We cannot know the grace of forgiveness in our lives, we cannot experience the joy of being forgiven, unless we show forgiveness to others." Wingham continues, "Rev. Kleyn puts man first, throwing into disarray the petition for forgiveness so that God must lag behind. Thus our forgiving others becomes the prerequisite for our being forgiven of God in our consciousness. Such teaching is clearly conditional." This is done in an attempt to prove that the errors condemned by Synod 2018 are still being preached in our churches.

Here is my response.

1. Though this radio message aired in 2020, it was originally recorded and aired in 2010, long before this controversy began. To use what I said in a message recorded in 2010 as proof that this "error" is still maintained and taught in the PRC is a misrepresentation.
2. The statement pulled from my radio message is taken out of context. In the main content of the sermon, I make very plain that we are completely undeserving of forgiveness, that God's forgiveness of us is all of grace, that the foundation of our forgiveness is the substitutionary atonement of Christ, and that we can only show true forgiveness when we know God's forgiveness of our sins. I do not make God to "lag behind" or make our forgiveness a "prerequisite" or "condition." In the immediate context of my statement, I emphasize both that this phrase does not make our forgiving of others a "condition" for God's forgiving of us, and that we must know forgiveness before we can show forgiveness. The quotations from the Heidelberg Catechism and from Herman Hoeksema that Wingham uses are my teaching in this sermon.
3. To say that in our temporal experience one thing precedes another, is not to make the first a cause or foundation for the second. Synodical decisions in 2020 and 2021 have made this point clearly. It is a logical fallacy to say that because one thing precedes another in time, it is therefore the cause of the second (*post hoc ergo propter hoc*). To say that we cannot know and experience forgiveness unless or until or except we first forgive others, does not make our forgiveness of others the cause of God's forgiving us, or the cause of our experiencing that forgiveness.
4. I would suggest that those with questions about what I have said read Herman Hoeksema and Prof. Hanko's treatment of the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (See Hoeksema in Triple Knowledge on this petition, Hanko in Mysteries of the Kingdom). If my statement is heretical, then there are also a number of statements in both of these expositions that would also have to be considered such.
5. It is disorderly, unloving toward me and divisive in the church to quote from me by name without having first come to me, either for an explanation of what I had said, or with a charge of false teaching. I had heard nothing about this from Wingham prior to reading this document, and had only read something of it in a document distributed by those who have left the PRC and are attempting

to sow further division in our churches. The chaos in our churches results from this kind of behavior, which is neither obedient to Christ (Matthew 18) nor loving (1 Corinthians 13).

6. Here are the words of Jesus, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matthew 18:35).
7. "You probably ask whether it means that God will not forgive my sins if I do not forgive the brother that sinned against me? And the answer to that question is an emphatic 'Yes.' It means exactly that. It means nothing else. God gives us the grace of forgiveness only, not on the ground or on condition that, but as we forgive one another" (Herman Hoeksema, Triple Knowledge III, p. 598).

In Christ,
Rev. Rodney Kleyn