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Calvin Seminary Forum

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In the margin of my notebook I wrote four words summarizing my impressions of the South Holland event: large, feisty, young, and united. The attendance was larger than expected. Besides some 300 delegates, there were many observers (including three of us from Calvin Seminary) and news reporters. The auditorium was nearly full. Of the 850 organized congregations in the CRC, 110 were represented in South Holland.

They were a feisty group, though in general not radical. Certain words, unfortunately, were harsh, judgmental and divisive. But they were offset by expressions of love for the CRC, pastoral concern for the next generation, and a desire to work for unity with integrity. The chairman, Rev. Andrew A. Cammenga, said the conference was called “to reduce further departures, lessen further erosion, preserve for our children the church that has been such a blessing to us, and encourage the discouraged.”

I was surprised by how young many delegates were. This was not a “gray haired” crowd that critics might simply discount as old and reactionary. Some of the strongest speeches came from men who graduated from Calvin Seminary not long ago. It is a remarkable phenomenon to see young men willing to risk their careers for what they believe is the good of the church. How refreshing it was that many were asking: “What can we do together? What do we believe?”

The Calvin Seminary Forum is an arena for discussing important issues confronting the CRC. It is a forum open to the variety of voices heard in that church.

This Forum is devoted to the meeting held in South Holland, Illinois, on November 6-7, 1995, a meeting organized by persons who disagreed with the 1995 Synod’s decision concerning the ordination of women as elders and ministers. In this Forum you can read the keynote address given by the Rev. Jacob Eppenga, and commentary on the meeting by persons who attended as observers. We hope that this issue will contribute to the unity of the church.

The Calvin Seminary Forum is sent free of charge to all councils and sent also to individuals who have contributed $50.00 or more to Calvin Seminary. This issue is being sent also to members of certain selected churches. We hope all readers find it both interesting and useful. The Christian Reformed Church needs the prayers of all of its members.
The Proposals Reviewed

How might our churches and synod respond to the South Holland proposals?

First, we note that the conference in South Holland was not an ecclesiastical assembly, even though it was called into being by Classis California South. Conferences were not delegated to the meeting in the way pastors and elders are delegated to a classis or synod meeting. The resolutions have no more official standing in the denomination than resolutions passed by a men’s society have in the official life of a congregation.

Having said that, however, we must acknowledge that a conference of this magnitude cannot and ought not be ignored in the CRC. The conferences can, and many probably will, write overtures to their councils, classes, and synod. These overtures will undoubtedly promote the ideas, concerns, and resolutions raised at the conference.

The resolution that calls the church to repent has a prophetic ring to it. It would be presumptuous to predict how synod 1996 will respond to this challenge.

David H. Engelhard
General Secretary, Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Surely synod could at least lead the church in a time of prayer and repentance for the way our protracted debates and conflicts have disrupted the church and have turned some away from Christ because of disunity among God’s people.

People and churches in the denomination have formed free associations before. Whether the Covenant Union is a positive, healthy, or necessary development, each will have to judge. Evaluating the results of recent ones like the Concerned Members and the Christian Reformed Alliance might be instructive in this connection.

The third resolution requires amending church order article 39. Presently classes are organized geographically (“a group of neighboring churches”), whereas the proposal requests permission for classes to be organized ideologically (“theological affinity”). This proposal is likely to be attractive to progressive churches as well as conservative churches. But is it a good idea?

While there are precedents for taking ethno-cultural considerations into account when organizing classes, there is none for organizing along theological lines. This proposal elevates “theological affinity” above the “confessional affinity” upon which the whole denominational structure is built. The theological diversity which exists among us is within the bounds of the confessions and therefore, to separate from one another in the deliberative assemblies would be detrimental to the well-being of the whole church. It is possible and may be necessary in a few instances to allow a congregation to join another classis in which its conscience is not violated.

Finally, a threat of secession as contained in the fourth resolution, certainly identifies a possible consequence of next year’s synod. But making such threats is not a noble way of living together as the body of Christ. It only diminishes genuine deliberation and promotes disunity. Rather, let’s pray together that we have the courage, humility, and patience to understand each other and God’s Word for our day.

Cover Story cont.

Roger Greenway

ago, and many of them sat beside elders not much older.

And they were united in their commitment to the historic Reformed expression of Christianity and their opposition to what they perceived as the denomination’s steady drift into mainstream currents. For that reason, Rev. Jacob Eppinga’s call for “defining moments,” which clarify who-we-are and what-we-stand-for, virtually became South Holland’s rally cry.

After the dinner hour on Monday evening, delegates were divided into twelve groups and assigned the task of formulating proposals in six areas. After a marathon discussion the next morning, four concrete proposals were adopted:

1 Call Synod 1996 to repent of the actions of Synod 1995 in regard to the ordination of women and the maintenance of relations with the GKN.
2 Establish immediately a new organization, the Covenant Union of Christian Reformed Churches, to educate the churches in at least twelve areas of faith and order. (These are analyzed later in this issue.)
3 Encourage churches and classes to overturn Synod 1996 to allow the formation of classes based on theological affinity.
4 If these actions are rebuffed, reconvene in one year to consider the possibility of forming a new denomination.

Is this a formula for orderly withdrawal, or a way to maintain unity with integrity amid diversity? Time will tell. The worst mistake would be to regard South Holland lightly.
Affirming our Identity

I wish to thank the committee on arrangements for offering me this opportunity to speak. Being asked, and given time to consider, I found that I could not decline the invitation, even though this was my initial reaction. In Ecclesiastes the writer says that there is a time to speak as well as a time to be silent. Judging this to be a time for me to speak, I have put my thoughts on paper liberal on things that do not matter. After all, there are the adiaphora. To fill out a bit more still, I could say that there was a time when the CRC brought my liberal side in focus. (remember no movies, no card playing, no dancing, a stifling sabbatarianism) That same CRC, however, now brings my conservatism into the fore. Have I changed? Yes, but the CRC has changed even more. Indeed, there are the optimism of our major league baseball announcers this past season. As we all know, major league baseball shot itself in the foot last year, resulting in a greatly diminished attendance during the spring and summer days which have now drawn to a close. Nevertheless, the announcers, rather than focussing our attention on the empty seats, told us how the attendance was improving. I understand that this was at the direction of baseball's higher powers who wanted the announcers to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. It was, they said, good psychology.

Be that as it may, I do not think that this is good psychology when applied to our present situation. Men are not supposed to weep—at least not in public. But I am not ashamed to stand before you this day to shed some tears at what I take to be a crisis in our existence. A false optimism, therefore, doesn't serve us well. It is better, I believe, "to view with alarm" than to pretend that all is well. All is not well.

It is in this connection that I cite with appreciation the fall, 1995 issue of the Calvin Seminary Forum (vol. 2, no. 3). In it Richard Muller, professor of historical theology, writes that it is not easy to be Reformed today. It is so much easier to slide into a kind of generic Christianity, which despite good intentions, accommodates itself to the culture around us. I observe that he wouldn't write this way except for the fact that he has some concern.

David Holwerda, professor of New Testament, writes that the synod of 1995 attempted to honor the consciences of all the women in office issue by way of a compromise. He observes, however, that it was not a compromise, for one side lost. A candid assessment, and he worries how this, as we say, is going to play in Peoria. John Bolt, professor of systematic theology, in an article entitled "The Church, Love it or Leave It" states that if change is not...
To ask the question we are asking...

“are we in danger of losing some of our characteristics as a Christian Reformed Church?”

something so fundamental as the covenant? Professor Henry De Moor, professor of church polity and church administration, in an article entitled “The Church: A Business?” worries about our rapid loss of the biblical notion of the church’s identity. These are good articles. I applaud them all. But why do they appear? The whole issue’s aim, as stated, is to ask the question we are asking here—whether or not we are in danger of losing some of our essential characteristics as a Christian Reformed Church. Apparently, these writers think so.

So do I. I think so, too. I am glad they avoid the false note of optimism in assessing the state of our health. It alarms me that we have come to a point where, as in the issue just described, it is deemed a matter of importance to remind the church of the covenant and the importance of infant baptism.

What has brought about our present situation? I remember a lecture, given at Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, in 1959, presented by John Leith, expert on John Calvin and Calvinism. I was doing some work there at the time. He was presenting a rundown on the history of the old southern Presbyterian church. (The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.) He began with Thornwell who, as some of you may recall, was their Kuiper and Bavinck all rolled into one. He traced the changes over the years from what the church has been to what it had become. At one point in his lecture, he paused, looked at me, and said, “it hasn’t come to your church yet, Eppinga, but it will”—to which I, in smug isolationism, responded by saying that such changes of which he spoke would never happen and could never happen in the CRC. I was wrong. Leith was right. And so I eat the words I uttered then.

So I ask again—what brought about a present state of affairs which, at one time, I believed, could never come upon us? The answer would take more time and a great deal more of wisdom than I have. And yet it is an important question whose answer should not overlook this century’s unfoldings, WW II, Vietnam, the cultural revolution of the 60s and society’s accommodations to its new morality. Even our own affluence cannot be neglected in putting all the pieces together. And Satan.

I wonder whether the pew or the pulpit is more responsible for the problems that have come upon us.

Sometimes, in moments of reflection, I wonder whether the pew or the pulpit is more responsible for the problems that have come upon us. Sometime I think—the pulpit, that is to say,—me. And my generation of preachers—and the next. I wrote an article, about three years ago, a cabbage entitled “Catechism Preaching,” in which I asserted its importance. Soon after its appearance a fellow CR minister in town gave me a friendly call in which he expressed disagreement with my article. He said he had not preached a catechism sermon in five years in his church, nor did he see doing so in the foreseeable future. In assessing our present situation therefore, I can identify our leadership as largely responsible. And so it is our leadership on which we tend to focus as we seek the source of our problems.

But how about the pew on which, perhaps, we focus too little. When my fellow CR friend said he wasn’t preaching catechism sermons I wondered—where were his elders. And where were the church visitors who were supposed to inquire after such matters? And where was the laity?

I recall a sermon I preached years ago on Nicodemus (John 3). I said that in his meeting with Jesus, Nicodemus, a spiritual leader of the people, had to be reminded of some basic spiritual truths of which he seemed ignorant. My question to the congregation on that occasion was, “What produced such a weak spiritual leader? And my tentative answer was, perhaps a weak, spiritless laity.” For often, the people get the preachers they deserve. And so I urged the congregation to insist on sound spiritual leadership from the elders and from me.

I don’t know what mark you would have given that sermon, and I don’t think I would preach it again in identical form. But one member in the pew took great exception to my fingering the laity as it were, and reported my message to a fellow CR clergyman, asking for his opinion. Was it right to place so much blame on the pew? The other clergyman’s response was to say that when you have a dead fish, it is the head that stinks first. When I was told this, in triumph, by my critical parishioner, I readily agreed, but said that I had not been preaching about fish. Today, as I recall this incident, I believe that the other clergyman was right. But so was I. And so I lay the responsibility for our present situation, one that brings us here today, both at the door of our leadership—myself included, but also at the door of an increasingly discrediting membership.

Given the fact that all is not well with us and that the good ship CRC has sprung some leaks, what do we do? There are those who believe we can go blissfully on our way. The ship is too big and the leaks too small for concern. But this is an attitude, I believe, that imperils the ship, and, in the long run, sinks it. This is not my position, for the ship is worth preserving, and therefore worth maintaining.

There are others who say—abandon ship, and, indeed, many have. And many are continuing to do so. I regret their action. And I regret their loss. Their departures have weakened us. This, too, is not my course. After all, I took a public vow to do my utmost for the well-being of the
Our Common Convictions...With one Exception

It is our conviction that:

(1) The character of our Triune God—for example, sovereign, immutable, holy, just, yet merciful and loving—must shape the faith and life of the church.

(2) The Scriptures are the infallible, inerrant, authoritative, perspicuous Word of God.

(3) The ecumenical creeds and the Reformed confessions are a faithful and accurate statement of the Bible’s teaching.

(4) Reformed churches must preach and teach the whole counsel of God as taught in both the Old and New Testaments, seeking to make and nurture disciples for Jesus Christ.

(5) We are dedicated to living out the three marks of the true church: maintaining the centrality of the preaching of the Word as the primary means of grace, administering the sacraments faithfully, and using discipline to uphold the purity of the church and restore sinners.

(6) We must maintain the use of our historic form of subscription for office bearers.

(7) Reformed churches are called to be connected to and accountable to one another according to the biblical principles of our church order.

(8) Reformed churches must not have ecclesiastical fellowship with denominations that deviate seriously from Scripture either in doctrine or in life.

(9) Women are prohibited by the Scripture from being ordained to the ecclesiastical offices with spiritual authority.

(10) That sexual behavior outside of marriage—and marriage is defined as a faithful, covenantal relationship between a man and woman—is not in accord with God’s will for our lives.

(11) We must preserve the biblical practice of using masculine titles and pronouns in references to the persons of the Trinity.

(12) We must live out our covenant and kingdom responsibilities by preserving for and passing on to the coming generations our historic Reformed commitments in doctrine, life, worship, and missions (such as maintaining two services on the Lord’s day, catechism preaching, and requiring a credible profession of faith before coming to the Lord’s table).

Read these twelve statements carefully!

Eleven of them are principles affirmed officially by the Christian Reformed Church and embraced by the vast majority of its members and leaders. By asserting them as its basic faith statement, the South Holland conference expressed its Christian Reformed character and its solidarity with the denomination. We should praise God for that!

Not all congregations apply these principles in the same way. Some shape their worship of the holy, Triune God with praise songs and guitars, others by singing Psalms and using organs. More socially progressive preachers probably do a better job of preaching “the whole counsel of God” on ecological and justice issues, more traditional pastors on Sabbath observance or Christian schools.

Leaders will disagree on what constitutes a serious enough deviation to warrant suspension of fellowship with another denomination, although they will agree on the principle stated. Sexual misconduct by high school seniors is handled differently, some say more leniently, in blue collar or rural Christian Reformed churches than in more professional congregations.

The point is only this: we share eleven of these principles in common, while we may apply some of them differently. As a confessional church we accent the shared principle that unites us more than the sometimes divergent application. As long as we share the principle, we can discuss the application openly and constructively. If we do not stand on common principles, we have no basis for working out a common approach to life. Thank God for our common basis!

Looking again at the twelve principles, we see that only number 9 divides us. Honesty compels us to admit that if synod had not decided to allow classes to determine whether or not to ordain women elders and pastors, there would have been no South Holland conference in November.

JAMES A. DEJONG
President and Professor of Historical Theology at Calvin Seminary.

We share eleven of these principles in common.
MAKE EVERY EFFORT

It's good that the Forum is devoting an issue to the meeting held in South Holland, Illinois, on November 6 and 7, 1995, because there is reason to believe that the future of the Christian Reformed Church will be determined by the way the denomination reacts to that event. That meeting was motivated by the desire to find a way for the conservative majority of the denomination to remain an active part of the church. The meeting's concluding reference to the possibility of secession was made only to insure that if the denomination does not take the South Holland meeting with utmost seriousness, this risky and unpleasant course of action will be evaluated.

What is needed now is that those who have brought the denomination to its present church order crisis must ask if they really want to make our church so uncomfortable for conservative people that over time such believers will find other venues.

Because the issue of women's ordination causes visible changes in church governance and worship, it immediately causes crises of conscience. What could possibly hold us together, now that this issue is dividing us?

First of all, we should cease suggesting that, if we would all adopt the proper hermeneutic, we will be able to agree. We who are convicted that women may not be ordained to offices of spiritual authority are aware of the arguments used to support this practice, but in our view these arguments require a way of handling Scripture that is unacceptable. We view departing from the centuries-long church practice of a dangerous accommodation to modernity which will impair the church as it responds to the rapid cultural degeneration that surrounds us. We hold our position strongly, as do those on the other side. We must be realistic about our differences and stop treating one another as if there is something wrong with our minds.

Second, we must learn to give one another the benefit of the doubt; we must not attribute base motivations to each other. This would mean that I would not assume that those who favor women's ordination are advocates of radical feminist theology, and those on the other side would not assume that those who oppose it have a comprehensible view of women.

Third, more positively, we should assume that all of us wish to achieve the same goal, namely, a use of spiritual gifts that will be most advantageous for the church. The church may not continue to relegate its female members to a secondary role in its ministries, as the Synod of 1992 made clear.

Fourth, we must recognize that the Scriptures which establish the positions we hold also summon us to express virtues of grace which will enable us to live together, even though we differ—"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

Fifth, we must work with utmost diligence for the church unity that not only will encourage denominational integrity but will also take into account the broader Catholic and Reformed church.

Sixth, we should humble ourselves in repentance for our sins. And what are these? Some are congregational, classical and synodical iniquities. Even more of them are sins in our personal lives. Possibly the greatest of our sins is the failure to engage in fervent secret prayer for one another and for our church.

Seventh, we will have to create new structures that will enable us to protect one another's conscience. The South Holland meeting has made suggestions along these lines, whatever their flaws, that should not be ignored.

If the Christian Reformed Church takes the South Holland meeting seriously, there is a possibility that this church will yet right itself and, after a period of some years, be free to pursue its divine mission more single-mindedly. If it ignores that meeting, the Christian Reformed Church will most likely become another manifestation of denomination.

Within the next seven months, the church has an opportunity to evaluate its current position. What will ultimately happen will be determined largely by what happens in our prayer closets where brothers and sisters of sensitive spirit will discover what God wants them to do.

As we pray, we may not forget this word of God: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3) This

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We must...stop treating one another as if there is something wrong with our minds. — Hederhood

JOEL H. NEDERHOOD
Director of Ministries, The Back to God Hour
AFFIRMING... cont.

JACOB D. EPPINGA

CRC. It is my view that our ship is still basically sound and certainly worth preserving. There is, however, cause for alarm, and a call for all hands on deck. I take this conviction to be such a call. But in my addressing myself to the question of what has brought about the felt need for this meeting, let me not address such matters which I am sure, will get your full attention—except, perhaps, indirectly. Instead, let me deal with a contextual concern—a malaise that I detect, in preaching here and there, among our people who need, I feel, to respond to the wake-up call.

In America there is a present disillusionment with politics and politicians. It is understandable. It is not unlike a spirit that I find presently among many of our people who can react to the decisions of a watered-down synod with a shrug—a far cry from a day when all across our denomination the people prayed for their consistory, classes, and synods as these dealt with their agendas. There must therefore be nurtured among us, as Prof. Bolt in his article suggests, a love for our church that combatst congregationalism and an indifference regarding matters denominational. We desperately need the fervent prayers of the laity for health and faithfulness in the time ahead.

Such a love for our church cannot exist and grow without an expressed love and concern for one another. We must guard against something we are very good at, namely adversarial relationships. These exist, and Satan does his utmost to promote and deepen them. Surely we need to admonish those with whom we are in disagreement and who, we feel, are on a wrong path, but we must ask, “Are we admonishable ourselves?” I remember how the synodical delegates of the Gereformeerde Kerken (GKN) took it ill of us when we admonished them. I was a part of the delegation. Yet we turned around in our own synod and took it ill of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) when they admonished us. “Who are they to tell us?” said the GKN of the CRC. And “Who are they to tell us?” said the CRC of the OPC. With such a spirit we sink in the mire. It is true that sometimes the pot should call the kettle black, but not by way of forgetting that it is black itself.

Returning to the malaise among so many of us, how can we sensitize the rank and file to the very real danger of drifting into the stream of the mainline churches. David Mills, editor of the Evangelical Catholic, and director of publishing at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, in an article entitled “A Hope Of Collapsing Churches,” has attempted a sociological rather than theological analysis of mainline churches which is rather pessimistic in tone. He sees more erosion and collapse as he peers ahead. He notes in his comparison study that when churches of a denomination lose their shared beliefs that held them together, they polarize and begin to decay, rather than transform themselves—which is more difficult. He traces, sociologically, a growing movement in the churches to accept practicing homosexuality to prior assumptions which tolerated easy divorces and remarriages and the ordaining of women. He says that! He notes those who argue that as male headship was a cultural expression, now outdated and oppressive, so the rejection of practicing homosexuality is equally cultural and outdated and oppressive. In all this he notes that the liberals inevitably fight longer and harder and yell louder than the orthodox believers (the latter, my comment, resulting in part from a malaise).

When drift begins in a denomination, Mills notes five stages or responses. First of all there is denial: “There is no problem.” Then, centralization: concentrating more power at the center for greater control. Then, homogenization: achieved by putting company men in control, working on the elimination of polarization. Fourthly, frantic activity: the invention of programs, projects, vision statements, and the like. Finally, there is cleansing, or the expelling of the so-called divisive members.

We desperately need the fervent prayers of the laity for health and faithfulness in the time ahead.

I note again that this is a sociological analysis with largely Mills’ own Episcopal church, but some others as well, in mind. I mention these stages because I find in them something that is descriptive of us, and therefore helpful for us in achieving an objective view of what is happening with us.

To combat drift, a malaise that has replaced a zeal for the Reformed faith among so many, is not easy. Indeed, there are those who say it can’t be done. Nevertheless we must try for with God all things are possible. To achieve this goal we need, for one thing as a denomination, a defining moment. This is a phrase or an expression that has lately crept into the common parlance of the day. We need such a defining moment because it is becoming increasingly difficult for us to know who we are. Who are we, really? What is our identity? I know the slogans and the pious phrases, but as polarity increases among us, identity diminishes. Martin Luther, standing before the Diet of Worms and saying, “Here I stand, I can do no other” (if that, indeed, is what he said). That was surely a defining moment.

When our forefathers founded the Christian Reformed denomination in 1857, for reasons lost on many today, that was a defining moment. When, in my maturing years I heard my spiritual leaders talking about the “antithesis” or “the five points of Calvinism,” which far fewer of our young people hear about today, those were for me defining moments.

Today we seem to have more undefining moments. I believe that the synod of ’94 gave us a defining moment. But the synod of ’95 took it away and blurred our image by attempting to satisfy both sides of the debate on women in office. I believe that a recent synod which was held in Iowa, and which considered the creation-evolution issue, gave us another one of those undefining moments by making a decision one day and effectively mutating it the next. I believe that the most recent meeting of Classis Grand Rapids East, considering the homosexual matter, ended, for the time being, in ambiguity. Another undefining moment. When I hear...
I remember 1957. We observed our centennial as a church. We knew who we were—in what now seems an innocent time. There were celebrations, special sermons and events, and a renewal of faithfulness to God and to each other as members of the CRC. In Grand Rapids we presented our heritage and history in pageant form, three times to packed houses of 5000 each time. I was on a sub-committee working on a sight-sound presentation of the Heidelberg Catechism for distribution among our churches. There was a great enthusiasm for who we were and thanksgiving to God who had brought us on our way. Much of that enthusiasm and commitment has dissipated in these post-centennial years to where we’re not sure anymore of who we are. Can this assembly be useful for a recovery of what was lost? Could this assembly initiate an annual denominational heritage day, in which there is a yearly recommitment to God’s Word, as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Confession of Faith, and the Canons of Dort? It could be an alternative effort at least, against an ever increasing fragmentation—which is a poor witness to the world.

The founders of the CRC were so committed to the Reformed faith that they, justly, established our church. They half-froze to death in their sod huts in the wintertime. They were half-eaten to death by mosquitoes in the summertime. The infant mortality rate among them was high. Disease took its toll from among their ranks. And they were dirt poor. Yet with only nickels in their pockets they built the schools and churches we have inherited from them. They gave us a heritage. Have we lost their love? In the women in office debate, it is said that the passage in I Timothy 2, prohibiting women in office, refers only to the feminists who were taking over the church in Ephesus. There is, I think, little to substantiate such an interpretation. But one thing about Ephesus is beyond dispute, and that is that it became a church of the main stream. A church, that is, that had lost its first love. (Rev. 2:4).

You have an opportunity in this assembly to take a step in the direction of returning the CRC to its first love, by dealing not only with such immediate issues as have called you together, but with underlying causes. For the issues are but symptoms of a deeper malady.

I wish to thank the committee on arrangements for allowing me to speak, and I thank them, and you, for your indulgence. I pray that God will lead you and grant you wisdom that you do will have his blessing and be a blessing for the church we love—CRCNA.

Common Convictions—Continued from pg. 5

When we share so many basic, clearly held convictions, does it please God or speak well of us if we allow an issue as exegetically ambiguous as women’s ordination to divide us? The answer is obvious. Particularly because “office” and “ordination” are more theological constructions than biblically clear ideas!

Hopefully those present in South Holland will affirm more strongly the eleven convictions that join them to the rest of the denomination than the secondary point that still divides many in the church. It would be healthy if the sponsors now spend their time, energy, and money in openly, constructively facing and helping to resolve the remaining theological questions on women’s ordination.