



**Agenda for a Meeting of
CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

Date: August 30, 2016

Time: 7:30 PM

Venue: Calvary Christian Reformed Church, 265 Middletown Rd, Dundas L9H 5E1

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| Officers of Classis: Chair: Rita Klein-Geltink Vice Chair: Andrew Zomerman Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk | Synodical Deputies: James Dekker Stephen Tamming Hendrick Bruinsma |
| Reporter: Calvin CRC – Dundas Ken Benjamins | Ballot Committee: Calvary CRC, Flamborough |

EMAIL ADDRESS:

All communication to the Stated Clerk should go to: clerk@classishamilton.ca.

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DELAGATES AND ALTERNATES

| Church | First Name | Last Name | Title |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Ancaster CRC | Rita | Klein-Geltink | Pastor Delegate |
| Ancaster CRC | Gerry | Visser | Elder Delegate |
| Ancaster CRC | Mike | Wagter | Deacon Delegate |
| Meadowlands Fellowship | Judy | Cook | Elder Delegate |
| Meadowlands Fellowship | Marcia | Hosmar | Deacon Delegate |
| Meadowlands Fellowship | Kevin | Vander Meulen | Elder Delegate |
| Hope | Andrew | Zomerman | Pastor Delegate |
| Hope | TBD | | |
| New Street | Joel | Bootsma | Pastor Delegate |
| New Street | Peter | Semmelink | Deacon Delegate |
| Faith | Kevin | DeRaaf | Pastor Delegate |
| Faith | Ken | Mercer | Elder Delegate |
| Calvin | Ken | Benjamins | Pastor Delegate |
| Calvin | Jerry | Kranlt | Elder Delegate |
| Calvary | Nick | Vanberkel | Elder Delegate |
| Calvary | Adam | Vanberkel | Elder Delegate |
| Calvary | Nick | Burlie | Deacon Delegate |
| Calvary | Dan | Vanderkruk | Elder Alternate |
| Hagersville Community | Jeff | Klingenberg | Pastor Delegate |
| Hagersville Community | Henrietta | Heeg | Elder Delegate |
| Harersville Community | Henny | Arends | Deacon Delegate |
| First | Chris | Schoon | Pastor Delegate |
| First | JD | Alkema | Elder Delegate |
| First | Gary | Hutten | Deacon Delegate |
| First | Gina | Taylor | Deacon Alternate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | Henry | Kranenburg | Pastor Delegate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | David | Rumph | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | Martin | Joldersma | Elder Alternate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | Anthony | Elenbaas | Pastor Alternate |
| Mt. Hamilton | Bob | DeHaan | Elder Alternate |
| Mt. Hamilton | Greg | Schuurman | Elder Delegate |
| Mt. Hamilton | Daniel | Dekker | Deacon Delegate |
| Mt. Hamilton | John | DeMik | Elder Delegate |
| Ebenezer | Daryl | DeKlerk | Pastor Delegate |
| Ebenezer | Jack | Eggink | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Smc | Ernie | Rouwerda | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Smc | Mark | Vandervliet | Elder Delegate |
| Bethel | Bruce | Adema | Pastor Delegate |
| Bethel | Margaret | DeWeerd | Elder Delegate |
| Bethel | Jack | Traas | Deacon Delegate |
| Maranatha | Henk | Vaarkamp | Elder Delegate |
| Maranatha | Kevin | Vanderspek | Elder Delegate |

CLASSIS MEETING DETAILS

7:30 PM

OPENING WORSHIP AND EXERCIZES

WELCOME AND OPENING

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. OPENING DEVOTIONS | Rita Klein-Geltink |
| 2. PRAYER FOR THE HOST CHURCH AND THE DELIBERATIONS | Ken Benjamins |
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7:45 PM

EXAMINATION SESSION

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 3. CALL TO ORDER | Rita Klein-Geltink |
| 3.1. Attendance | Dick Kranendonk |
| 3.2. Approval of Agenda | Rita Klein-Geltink |
| 4. EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE – Gareth Harker | |
| 4.1. Introduction of Candidate | Daryl DeKlerk |
| 4.2. <u>Practica</u> (<i>no time limit</i>) | Daryl DeKlerk |
| Inquiry into the Candidate’s relationship to God and commitment to ministry | |
| 4.2.1. Questions by delegates and synodical deputies. | |
| 4.2.2. Motion to proceed. | |
| 4.2.3. Concurrence by synodical deputies | |
| 4.3. <u>Sermon Evaluation</u> (<i>no time limit</i>) | Jeff Klingenberg and Elder? |
| Written and preached sermons to be evaluated (see Appendix #1 for preached sermon). | |
| 4.3.1. Questions by delegates and synodical deputies. | |
| 4.3.2. Motion to proceed. | |
| 4.3.3. Concurrence by synodical deputies | |
| 4.4. <u>Biblical and Theological</u> (<i>minimum of thirty minutes</i>) | Kevin DeRaaf |
| Inquiry into the candidate’s biblical and theological judgement, competence and soundness. | |
| 4.4.1. Questions by delegates and synodical deputies. | |
| 4.5. Executive Session: | |
| 4.5.1.1. motion to admit and preliminary consideration, | |
| 4.5.1.2. prayer, | |
| 4.5.1.3. synodical deputies leave for their own deliberations, | |
| 4.5.1.4. delegates vote by ballot, | |
| 4.5.1.5. synodical deputies return and present written statement. | |
| 4.5.2. Executive Session ends | |
| 4.5.2.1. Remarks | |
| 4.5.2.2. presentation of certificate (if approved). | |
| 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS | |
| 6. ADJOURNMENT | |
| 6.1. Closing prayer | |
| 6.2. Dismissal | |

NEXT CLASSIS MEETING:

Date: October 25, 2016

Place: Hope CRC, Brantford

Introduction: Trapped in Darkness

You might remember the 2010 story of the Capiapó Mining Accident in Copiapó, Chile. 33 miners were trapped 700 meters (2,000 feet) below the surface and 5 km (3 miles) from the mine entrance. Remarkably, the men survived 17 days on rations intended to last only 2-3 days. On that day, a small boring drill discovered their location. These men spent a total 69 days in complete darkness, remaining optimistic, but also recognizing the direness of their situation. At times, the outlook for their rescue seemed bleak. Yet, on October 13, 2010, one by one these men were lifted from their dark prison in special-designed capsule up a narrow shaft. Crowds cheered around the world as each man emerged from the capsule, nearly all in good health. One of the things that sustained these men through this ordeal was their faith. They were all Roman Catholic and many believed in a spiritual aspect to their entrapment and rescue.

Much like the time these men spent in utter darkness, many in our world today are living in a state of spiritual darkness. The prospects of rescue are bleak, without someone breaking into their darkness and shining a light of hope. Darkness is the metaphor often used by the Apostle John when talking about sin and evil in our world. Darkness is the state of those who do not know Jesus Christ, the “light of the world”. John’s gospel repeatedly uses the imagery of light and darkness to reflect the spiritual sight and blindness of those who place their faith in Jesus and those who don’t.

Our passage this evening brings the battle of light and darkness into sharp contrast. In this passage, the healing of a man born blind stands as a metaphor for the healing Jesus brings into our spiritual darkness. This story shows that it is in our darkness that the true light of Jesus shines.

I. Unbelief and Blindness

This story is set within the larger context of a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. The conflict begins at verse 12 of chapter 8 where Jesus claims “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” This claim would be very startling for his hearers on a couple of levels. Most notably, Jesus begins this statement with the words “I am”, an expression borrowed from Exodus 3 where God reveals Himself to Moses as “I am that I am”. Implied in this statement is equality with God Himself. No doubt this would have raised the hairs of his hearers, especially the religious leaders. In this conversation, Jesus refers himself as “the light of the world”, a designation he repeats in 9:4 but without the preceding “I am”. On the one hand, the words of Jesus are striking because this conversation likely takes place at night. But more than this, the claim to be “the light of the world” harkens back to the first words of God in the book of Genesis “let there be light”! Naturally, this stirs up controversy with the Pharisees, and they question Jesus on the authority of his teaching.

The first thing the Pharisees try to do is undermine Jesus’ authority by claiming that he has no supporter of his testimony. Jesus rebuts by claiming that his testimony is valid because his “Father”, the one who sent him, supports his testimony. The Pharisees press Jesus to reveal who his Father is, clearly not understanding that he is speaking about God. Jesus flatly points out that they do not know his Father because they refuse to accept his testimony.

As the conversation unfolds, Jesus and the Pharisees get into a dispute over who are Abraham’s legitimate children. The Pharisees claim to be Abraham’s children,

but Jesus rejects this on the basis of the fact they don't believe who he is. As they continue their back and forth, Jesus makes a bold and startling claim "before Abraham was born, I am!" At which point, the Pharisees pick up stones to stone Jesus for blasphemy. Jesus, however eludes them by slipping away under cover of darkness. Both literally and figuratively, the Pharisees are unable to see who Jesus is.

As the story of the blind man's healing unfolds, their perceptiveness does not improve. When word reaches them that this blind man has been given his sight, they bring him for questioning. They refuse to believe that Jesus could have healed the man since he was clearly a "sinner" for performing "work" on the Sabbath. Unable to come to grips with the idea the man had in fact been healed, they call in his parents to validate his identity. They confirm that he is their son, but refuse to answer how it is he received his sight.

The Pharisees call the man in a second time, and his story has not changed, nor has their opinion of Jesus. During the second conversation, the healed man calls them out. He is astounded that they refuse to acknowledge that Jesus is from God because only God could heal someone born blind. Logically, if God does not listen to sinners, then Jesus could not be the "sinner" the Pharisees believe him to be. In their anger, the Pharisees accuse the healed man of being a "sinner" and throw him out of the synagogue. Though their reaction may seem surprising to us, it certainly was not at the time.

When Jesus and the disciples first come across the blind man, the disciples ask whose sin resulted in the man's blindness, his own or that of his parents. This question reflects a common belief during the time that ailments like blindness were the direct

result of sin. In this case, either the man's parents had sinned or he had. Though it may be surprising to us, many Jews believed an unborn child could be guilty of sin if the mother visited a pagan temple while the baby was inside her. The text also tells us that the man was "blind from birth" but doesn't tell us how we came to know that. That he was blind from birth is important to the story, but how we know that is inconsequential.

This story is an enacted parable about the spiritual blindness of human beings. More specifically, it contrasts the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees with the restoration of both physical and spiritual sight in the blind man. This is the reality behind the words Jesus says in verses 4 and 5: "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world". When Jesus says that "night is coming" he is not referring to a return to darkness and blindness.

The "night" of which Jesus speaks is the time between his crucifixion and resurrection. This will be a very dark time for the disciples. They will see their savior beaten and nailed to a cross. They will watch him die and be buried in a tomb. They will wrestle with questions about who Jesus is and what he had been sent to accomplish. For a time, they will find themselves in the dark, until the light shines once again in Christ's glorious resurrection. But for now, the true light is in the world with the disciples.

II. Jesus Heals (Our) Blindness

In response to the question of whose sin resulted in the man's blindness, Jesus essentially says the disciples are asking the wrong question. He says this man's blindness "happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life". This is not to suggest that God intentionally makes the man blind just so that he can perform a

miracle. There is something much bigger than that going on here. Rather, this event serves to illustrate that God overcomes blindness in all its forms through the person and work of Jesus Christ. This healing proves that Jesus Christ was and is the promised Messiah of God, the Savior of the world. As already mentioned, this miracle is an enacted parable of not only the physical healing that Jesus brings to this man but the restoration of sight to the spiritually blind, especially in contrast to the “blindness” of the Pharisees.

In making the mud for the man’s eyes as part of the miracle, Jesus opens the door (perhaps intentionally?) for the Pharisees to accuse him of breaking the Sabbath because they cannot see the larger picture in view. Seemingly, without this step, the Pharisees cannot accuse of Jesus of being a “sinner” and would have less reason to doubt the validity of his testimony. But Jesus also commands the blind man to “go” and “wash in the Pool of Siloam”. Here, John interjects a seemingly pointless translation of the word “Siloam”. However, in the larger context of the story, John is pointing out that Jesus is the “sent” one from God, reinforcing Jesus’ words in verses 4 and 5. It is the “day” of the Messiah’s presence on earth, and he is performing the “work” of God, bringing light to someone whose life was cloaked in physical darkness. The blind man follows Jesus’ instructions and “returns home seeing”.

Naturally, the reaction of the blind man’s peers is a mixture of astonishment and disbelief. These are recurrent themes in John’s gospel, where people respond in either faith or disbelief to the person and works of Jesus Christ. In fact, John goes so far as to say it is the purpose for writing down these stories, so that people may believe who Jesus is. The curious neighbors ask where Jesus is, not so that they can validate the

man's testimony, but so they may go and meet this remarkable person. After all, it is not every day that a man born miraculously receives his sight.

In our world of amazing technological advances, recovery of sight for the blind might not seem as miraculous as it once was. Surgeries to restore sight are becoming more and more commonplace, although not always with great success. One of those stories is that of Michael May. May lost his sight at the age of 3 due to a chemical accident and spent most of his life in darkness. In 2000, at the age of 46, May had his sight restored through new medical procedures. As May himself later reported, though he could once again see, his brain was having difficulty understanding the sensory data he was taking in. Things like facial expressions or distinguishing between shapes or gender were very difficult. The part of the brain that processes the information had been unused for 43 years. Compare this to the man in John's gospel who returns home with his sight fully restored. This shows not only the power of Jesus over physical blindness but the completeness of the healing that goes beyond even the most modern technical knowledge. In that respect, this miracle is still utterly remarkable.

This miracle serves to prove the point, beyond the "shadow" of a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah, the one sent from God to save the world and restore sight to the blind. This restoration of sight is metaphorical, because it means the restoration of sight to the spiritually blind: those in darkness because they do not know Jesus. Jesus was physically in the world for a time. That time, he refers to as "day"; the time where Jesus, in a very important and special way does "the work of him who sent me". Notice, however, that Jesus says to the disciples "**we** must do the work of him who sent me". He is including the disciples in the work that he is performing. That work, is to show the

world Jesus' true identity – the process of recovering sight for the blind. As the one “sent” by God, Jesus is the “light of the world”, bringing people out of their spiritual darkness into “his glorious light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

The image of light and darkness is popular for the apostle John. It is one of the key themes he introduces in the prologue to his gospel. There, he refers to Jesus as “the light” and “life” for all humanity. This is important because John is writing these words after the resurrection of Jesus. And so when we look again at Jesus' words in verses 4 and 5 of chapter 9, Jesus cannot possibly mean that his light no longer shines after his physical absence from the earth. The resurrected Jesus is now in heaven, sitting at God's right hand. Yet by the power and presence of His Holy Spirit, he continues to shine through his people, though in a different way than in John's gospel.

III. “Let Your Light Shine”

At the end of John 9, Jesus finds the healed man and reveals himself. The man places his faith in Jesus. Jesus explains that the reason he came into this world is “for judgment ... so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind” (Jn. 9:39). Offended by this, the Pharisees ask Jesus if he is implying that they are blind. To which Jesus responds “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains” (Jn. 9:41). In other words, because the Pharisees refuse to acknowledge their spiritual blindness and recognize who Jesus is, they remain in their state of blindness. It is in recognizing our blindness that we begin to see who Jesus is.

The first point of the “five points of Calvinism” is “Total Depravity”. Before we can come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, we must understand that we cannot be saved by

anyone or anything other than Jesus because we are born in a state of total spiritual blindness. This understanding comes by faith, which is itself a gift from God. This story from John's gospel shows the sovereignty of God over creation and salvation – that he not only restores physical sight, but spiritual sight as well – “so that the work of God might be displayed” in our lives as well.

Although the “we” of verse 4 refers specifically to the disciples with Jesus, this does not mean that Jesus cannot or does not shine his light through us today. In fact, Jesus' light shines through us best when we acknowledge our darkness. In acknowledging our darkness, our lives can only point to Jesus as our risen Savior and Lord. Because of the light of the new day of the resurrection, Christ light shines in us as his children.

If you travel to New Zealand at Christmas time you will notice that there are little to no Christmas lights on the houses. The reason for this is New Zealand is in the southern hemisphere; Christmas falls in the summer. The days are longer and brighter, so if you put Christmas lights up, they can't be seen due to the brightness of the sun. So it is with Christ and his children: even in our light, his light always shines brighter. But it is not in our light that Christ's light shines brightest. Rather, it is in our darkness – in our recognition of our need for him – that the true light of Christ shines brightest. When we acknowledge our blindness that is when we truly see. May the light of Christ shine on us so that the light of Christ may shine through us!