

# When the Breaker Calls

The Revival of August 1881 in Weerdingermond

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## Abstract

In August 1881 a revival started in the Baptist congregation of Weerdingermond (Drenthe). In this congregation more than a hundred people came to believe or to a deeper experience of their faith within a period of two weeks. On one Sunday fifty-four people were baptized on the confession of their faith. In this paper I will research which factors might have been important in causing the rise of this revival, and for that reason I will raise the following research question: *“Which factors in the second half of the nineteenth century influenced the arising of the revival of August 1881 in Weerdingermond?”*

After an introductory paragraph (§1), I will give a description of the revival in Weerdingermond (§2). Then attention is directed to the social-political context of the revival (§3), such as the political situation in The Netherlands following the constitution of 1848 and especially the social context of the poor peat workers, which led to issues like alcohol abuse. Furthermore, the ecclesiastical-theological context will be described (§4), together with the most important theological developments, like the emergence of modern theology and the orthodox counter response. Besides these the development of the Dutch Baptist history will be explained in main lines, and the influence of the holiness movement and the revival movement of Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey as well.

My tentative conclusion (§5) is that the social context of the peat workers, in combination with the theological countermovement (especially the revival movement) had an important influence on the rise of the revival in 1881 in Weerdingermond.

## §1 Introduction

In the Old Testament book Micah 2:12-13 we read about a 'Breaker' who opens a breach for the gathered remnant of Israel. With 'Breaker', the prophet seems to be referring to God or to a future Messiah-King.<sup>1</sup> What He is breaking and where He guides the people to, remains unclear in this passage. But it is written within a context of sin, oppression and disbelief among the landowners, prophets and leaders of Israel. And God proclaims them His judgment.<sup>2</sup>

The same expression 'the Breaker' is used in a tract that describes the revival of August 1881 in the Baptist congregation of Weerdingermond.<sup>3</sup> The writer of this tract is Berend Roeles, an evangelist in service of this congregation.<sup>4</sup> It is unclear if Roeles had Micah 2:13 in his mind, when he used the expression 'Breaker', but there is a striking similarity between them. Just like the Old Testament prophet, Roeles speaks about sin and disbelief and he emphasizes that 'the Breaker' needed to break down this resistance. However, there is also an important difference between them. Instead of referring to God or a future Messiah-King, Roeles uses 'the Breaker' as a reference to the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> This need not be very surprising, because it matches with the strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit of the holiness and revival movement. According to Roeles the Spirit was in control during the revival in Weerdingermond and He broke down the sinful resistance of people.<sup>6</sup>

An important question I want to address is how this revival arose. That is not an easy question to answer, because with these kind of situations no hard proof can be given. What I can do, however, is focus on the circumstances in which the revival started and try to delineate which of them might have had an important influence. In juridical terms, we could speak of 'circumstantial evidence', or: "Where there is smoke, there is fire". This leads to my research question, namely: "*Which factors in the second half of the nineteenth century influenced the arising of the revival of August 1881 in Weerdingermond?*"

In order to find an answer to this question, first I will describe what happened during the revival of August 1881 in Weerdingermond (§2). Then I will delineate the social-political context (§3) and focus on the ecclesiastical and theological context (§4). Finally I will give a tentative conclusion of my findings (§5).

## §2 The Revival of August 1881 in Weerdingermond

Around 1850, most peat areas in The Netherlands were excavated, save from the South-eastern part of Drenthe. So, the surroundings of Weerdingermond were a sparsely populated

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<sup>1</sup> Brink, Paul and Bette, *Studiebijbel online*. See also: Ridderbos, *Korte verklaring*, 71-72 and Grudem, *Study Bible*, 1699. For a different explanation, see: Eynikel, *Internationaal commentaar*, 1339-1340; they state that verse 12-13 are the words of false prophets with whom Micah is arguing.

<sup>2</sup> See chapters 2 and 3 of Micah for the context of this passage.

<sup>3</sup> Roeles, *Het genadewerk Gods*, 10. Weerdingermond is now called Nieuw-Weerdinge; which lies in the North-East part of The Netherlands, in the province Drenthe and near the border with Germany and the province Groningen. Officially it then was part of Groningen, but factually it was in Drenthe.

<sup>4</sup> Because it is a tract, Roeles in the first place is trying to convince his readers to open their hearts and minds for his revival-message. So it is not a descriptive document in pure form, but it does give us important information about the events that happened.

<sup>5</sup> However, it is not completely ruled out that Micah is referring to the Holy Spirit. Other Old Testament prophets – during that period and later – speak about the coming of the Spirit, see for instance: Isaiah 32:15, Ezekiel 36:26-27, Joel 2:28-29 [3:1-2] and Zachariah 12:10. Micah 3:8 also mentions the Spirit, but it does not specifically speak of His coming.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance: Roeles, *Het genadewerk Gods*, 4-10, 19.

area. During the last decades of the century however, Weerdingermond would become the largest peat supplier of The Netherlands. This started with the unlocking of the area by digging an access to a nearby canal, from 1872 onward. This would lead to a fast growth of the population, in particular since 1880.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, also church people moved to Weerdingermond. One of them was Philippus Lindeman, a peat boss who was member of the Baptist congregation in Stadskanaal. Lindeman became the elder of the Baptists in the area and he also committed himself to evangelisation. Because the group of believers was growing, a small church was built in 1875, which became independent from its 'mother-congregation' in Stadskanaal, with Lindeman as its pastor.<sup>8</sup> This Baptist congregation was the first church in Weerdingermond, in 1879 a Christian Reformed Church followed.<sup>9</sup>

In November 1879 the flourishing Baptist congregation appointed the evangelist Berend Roeles. But there was misfortune too. In May 1880 a peat fire burnt down the church-building. The members, however, were not discouraged and rebuilt their church. Then the Baptist pastor from Sneek – Johannes Horn – was invited to come and preach in Weerdingermond for a couple of days.<sup>10</sup> In May 1881 Horn had organized some revival-meetings in the area of Sneek and Heeg (Friesland),<sup>11</sup> and on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July he wrote that he would come to Weerdingermond on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August. So Roeles hoped that August 1881 would be a month of spiritual harvest, and Horn encouraged him and his wife to pray daily for his coming.<sup>12</sup>

What happened in the following two weeks Roeles describes in the tract that I mentioned earlier. Horn and Roeles would organize several meetings in Weerdingermond and Valthermond. When Horn preached, he did not use the text he read, but urged his listeners to surrender to Jesus.<sup>13</sup> Then, after the first Monday-evening meeting, Roeles – in his own words – describes what happened:

“The church was full, the after-meeting was heart-breaking. In, in front of, and behind the church, our whole house, in the front and back room, in the shed, behind the house, everywhere there were defeated people, calling to God because of the multitude of their sins. The ‘Breaker’ was passed away before our faces and there was nothing else to do but to take hold of the souls, to free them from their swaddling clothes and to let them go in freedom.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.historisch-emmen.nl/buitendorpen/nieuw-weerdinge/>, last consult on 22 May 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Van Dam, *Geschiedenis baptisme NL*, 50-51; Wumkes, *Opkomst en vestiging baptisme NL*, 219-221; <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/tijdschriften/view?identificatie=MMUBA10%3A001994022%3A00008&query=baptiste+n+weerdingermond&facets%5Bperiode%5D%5B%5D=1%7C19e+eeuw%7C1880-1889%7C&page=1&coll=dts>, last consult on 25 May 2018.

<sup>9</sup> <http://dominees.nl/search.php?srt=g&id=12320>, last consult on 22 May 2018. See also: <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/tijdschriften/view?identificatie=MMUBVU04%3A001927163%3A00006&facets%5Bperiode%5D%5B%5D=1%7C19e+eeuw%7C1880-1889%7C&query=horn+weerdingermond&coll=dts>, last consult on 25 May 2018. The Dutch Reformed Church came in Weerdingermond in 1911: <http://dominees.nl/search.php?srt=g&id=12321>, last consult on 22 May 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Wumkes, *Opkomst en vestiging baptisme NL*, 221-222. See also: <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?query=brand+baptisten+weerdingermond&coll=ddd&identificatie=ddd%3A010063107%3Ampg21%3Aa0048&resultsidentificatie=ddd%3A010063107%3Ampg21%3Aa0048>, last consult on 25 May 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Huet, *Het eeuwige leven*, 21-23

<sup>12</sup> Roeles, *Het genadewerk Gods*, 1-2

<sup>13</sup> Idem, 4-7

<sup>14</sup> Idem, 10

He continues with saying: “In general the daily labour here stood still, the Holy Spirit seized all souls.”<sup>15</sup> Roeles writes that in the two weeks, over a hundred people were converted.<sup>16</sup>

The following Thursday, Horn started to focus on the alcohol abuse of the congregation, by saying that “the same lips with which you touch the Lord supper’s cup, some of you polluted with the drinking cup of the devil.”<sup>17</sup> Following their pastor Lindeman, the congregation members pledged their abstinence from alcohol. Even the peat shippers in the area were surprised about the quietness among people of Weerdingermond, who were known as restless people.<sup>18</sup> The next Sunday, there was a baptismal service in which fifty-four people were baptized.<sup>19</sup>

However, soon the triumphal mood would turn into disappointment. On 12 March 1882 Lindeman organized a congregation meeting, because he had second thoughts about his decision to swear off alcohol. With an appeal on 1 Corinthians 8 he asked the congregation if they could bear their alcohol drinking brothers and sisters. Many of them declared that they could, and a few that they couldn’t, including Roeles. Then Lindeman stated that they were cut off from the congregation. Roeles protested and was even willing to withdraw his words, but Lindeman was unrelenting. So, over seventy people were forced to leave the congregation, and a few months later Roeles started a new task in Deventer. Later Roeles and Lindeman were reconciled, but the damage in the congregation was already done.<sup>20</sup>

### §3 The Social-political Context

In 1848 King William II (1840-1849) accepted a new constitution, which gave sovereignty to the parliament, and which strongly reduced his power as king. This led to economic liberalisation, and also gave the long awaited separation of church and state.<sup>21</sup> This meant that the Dutch Reformed Church<sup>22</sup> lost its privileged position. But other churches like the Roman Catholic Church and small dissenter groups, such as the Christian Seceded

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<sup>15</sup> Idem, 10

<sup>16</sup> Idem, 11

<sup>17</sup> Idem, 13

<sup>18</sup> Idem, 14-15

<sup>19</sup> Idem, 17-19

<sup>20</sup> Wumkes, *Opkomst en vestiging baptisme NL*, 227-229, 232. It is unclear what the reason of Lindeman’s sudden turn was and why he was so anxious to cut off the other members from the congregation. A possible explanation is that Lindeman as peat boss also owned a shop and that he was afraid that he would lose a part of his income. In §3 I will write more about the forced shopping in the peat areas. It also is possible that he almost felt compelled to swear of the alcohol, because of the forcing character of Horn his speech and that later he started to doubt about his decision. A third possibility is that Lindeman and Roeles struggled with regard to the question who was in charge in the congregation.

<sup>21</sup> In fact this was already the case in the constitution of 1798, during the Batavian Republic. But during the period from 1801-1813, when The Netherlands were under the (direct) influence of Napoleon and especially during the reign of William I (1813-1839), church and state were tied together more closely.

<sup>22</sup> In Dutch: ‘Nederlands Hervormde Kerk’.

Congregations<sup>23</sup> and the Baptists,<sup>24</sup> finally enjoyed freedom of religion. But the Dutch Reformed Church had a hard time getting used to the new situation. Their officials still consulted the government in making important decisions<sup>25</sup> and their members strongly protested against the recovery of Catholic hierarchy.<sup>26</sup>

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of far-reaching social-economic transformations in The Netherlands, because the industrialization started. For a lot of people this meant a significant growth of welfare, but the working class could not benefit as much as other groups did. They had to work under tough conditions and made long working hours. These circumstances led to multiple problems, like health issues, alcohol abuse and developmental problems.<sup>27</sup> Also children had to work in factories, although a law on child labour in 1874 tried to stop this. But it was hard to maintain this law and it did not apply for work in the fields, like peat work.<sup>28</sup>

I noted earlier that the excavation of the South-eastern part of Drenthe started in the same period. For a long time, Drenthe was some kind of an outsider among the Dutch provinces. People from Drenthe were merely seen as second-class citizens.<sup>29</sup> This was especially the case for the workers in the peat areas of Drenthe – mostly people from Friesland, Groningen and Germany – whereas the gentlemen farmers from the sandy soils were more respected. The image of people from Drenthe was that they were retarded in their development, that they lived among sheep and dolmens and that their life was determined by peat, gin and suspicion.<sup>30</sup> It is hotly debated how poor the peat workers in Drenthe actually were, but there is little doubt that they worked under tough conditions.<sup>31</sup>

In accordance with the national economic growth, the peat industry flourished from 1850 until the end of the seventies. However, because of the growing competition with other sources of fuel supply – such as coal – and because of a crisis in the agricultural sector in 1880, wages

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<sup>23</sup> In Dutch: 'Christelijk Afscheiden Gemeenten'. These were the congregations that separated themselves from the Dutch Reformed Church in 1834 under the guidance of Hendrik de Cock. We call this separation the 'Afscheiding' ('Secession'), the first big schism in the Dutch protestant church since the Remonstrants were forced to leave the church in 1619. Later the 'Afscheiden' churches were called 'Christian Reformed Churches' (Dutch: 'Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken'). In 1892 most of these churches were merged together with the churches who separated themselves from the Dutch Reformed Church with the 'Doleantie' ('grievance/complaint') of 1886 under the guidance of Abraham Kuiper. Since 1892 these churches were called Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Dutch: 'Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland').

<sup>24</sup> The Baptists called their churches: 'Congregation of Baptized Christians' (Dutch: 'Gemeente van Gedoopte Christenen').

<sup>25</sup> For example, they asked the king to confirm their new General Regulations of 1852, even though it was unnecessary according to the constitution: Rasker, *Hervormde kerk*, 156.

<sup>26</sup> In a short period of time, this so called 'April-movement' in 1853, collected 200.000 autographs – there were 80.000 voters at that time – and they handed it over to King William III (1849-1890), instead of the parliament. Because the king received the autographs behind the back of the government, the prime-minister Thorbecke offered the dismissal of his cabinet. To calm down the emotions, his successor Van Hall would organize a certain supervision on the Catholic churches, but he did not change their freedom of religion, see: Selderhuis, *Handboek NL kerkgeschiedenis*, 647-650.

<sup>27</sup> The peat workers had to cope with comparable problems: Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 32-48.

<sup>28</sup> Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 10; Kennedy, *Beknopte geschiedenis NL*, 279-281, 287-290; Rasker, *Hervormde kerk*, 201-212.

<sup>29</sup> In the seventeenth century Drenthe was the only province not represented in Dutch parliament, because it was considered insignificant. See: Kennedy, *Beknopte geschiedenis NL*, 148-149.

<sup>30</sup> Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 11-12

<sup>31</sup> Paping, *Extreme armoede*, focusses on this debate and bundles several contributions of auteurs from both sides of the debate.

started to drop and workers started to lose their employment.<sup>32</sup> Besides this there was the rule of forced shopping, which meant that a peat boss was owner of the store where the workers bought their own groceries. In most cases this was a large disadvantage for the workers, because prices were higher. And in the winter – when there was less employment – they had to buy groceries in advance, so they were in debt to their employer. This created relationships of dependency, with far reaching consequences.<sup>33</sup>

The peat season lasted from April until autumn. During this season the workers had to work from sunrise until 4 or 5 p.m.<sup>34</sup> In the following months, most of them worked as guest workers in Germany or in other parts of The Netherlands.<sup>35</sup> In the winter it was much harder to find a job, so in the working season they had to earn enough money for the rest of the year.<sup>36</sup> The peat digging was tough work and was generally done by the men and older boys. The drying of peats was done by women and children, and men loaded the ships.<sup>37</sup> Because of the tough and monotonous work, and also because shippers and peat bosses sometimes paid the workers by giving them liquor, alcohol abuse was an important problem among peat workers. This could lead to multiple problems, but for those who stayed clear from alcohol abuse, life was more bearable.<sup>38</sup>

## §4 The Ecclesiastical and Theological Context

In the nineteenth century theological academies and churches in The Netherlands were influenced by Enlightenment ideas. During the first half of the century, this would be in a moderate form, but in the second half it radicalized under the influence of modern theology, in particular German theology, such as Tübinger thinkers like D.F. Strauss and F.C. Baur. They used new methods, for example the empirical approach, evolutionism and historical-critical research. They questioned the historical reliability of the Bible and rejected the historical truth of Jesus' resurrection. For some pastors these insights led to the resignation of their ministry, but others wanted to use their new insights to modernise the church. Modern theology in particular influenced academics and people from the higher classes.<sup>39</sup>

This new theological direction led to a strong counter-response from the orthodox side of the church. In 1834 there already was a schism in the Dutch Reformed Church of orthodox churches who wanted to reclaim the prominent position of the church confessions. In their slipstream Baptists and other groups followed, and in 1886 again a large schism broke out.<sup>40</sup> But within the Dutch Reformed Church the opposition against modern theology and its

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<sup>32</sup> Idem, 65-66, 87-100, 103-110, 131-134, 207-209; Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 50.

<sup>33</sup> Idem, 97-98, 108, 125, 147; Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 17, 29-30, 51-52.

<sup>34</sup> Idem, 106

<sup>35</sup> Idem 90-91

<sup>36</sup> Idem, 96

<sup>37</sup> Idem, 87-89, 107, 121-123; Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 19, 32-38. So people with large families were in the advantage of getting a job in this industry.

<sup>38</sup> Idem, 74-75, 125-126; Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 18, 21-22, 38-41, 52.

<sup>39</sup> Rasker, *Hervormde kerk*, 113-124; Selderhuis, *Handboek NL kerkgeschiedenis*, 656-662.

<sup>40</sup> See note 23 for more information about these schisms and the relation between the 'Afscheiding' of 1834 and the 'Doleantie' of 1886 and their merging in 1892. The first Baptist church in The Netherlands was founded in 1845 by Johannes Elias Feisser. For the background of his turn from the Dutch Reformed Church (and a liberal view) to the Baptists (and an orthodox view), see: Stellingwerf, *Johannes Elias Feisser*.

forerunners was increasing too. This was mainly due to the Dutch Réveil-movement, which was a continental shoot of the Great Awakening.<sup>41</sup>

An interesting person connected to the Réveil-circle was the former Mennonite pastor Jan de Liefde.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, he would have an important influence on the Baptists in the second half of the nineteenth century, although he had an ambiguous relation with them, because of their strict view on baptism and church membership. His influence was especially through several students of his evangelist-school 'Bethanië', and in particular in two fields of ecclesial interest: more awareness of the missionary task of the church (internal mission), and the turn from the doctrine of particular election to the doctrine of unlimited atonement. Some of De Liefde's students were sent out as evangelist to the peat colonies and were connected with the Baptist congregation in Gasselternijveen.<sup>43</sup>

One of these students was Kors Holleman. He evangelized in the peat areas and then settled in Leeuwarden.<sup>44</sup> Here he also started a school for evangelists, just like his predecessor, and called it 'Klein-Bethanië' ('small Bethanië'). This school brought forward several future Baptist pastors and evangelists. One of them was Johannes Horn, who was baptized by Holleman in 1869. He started to evangelize in Sneek and founded a Baptist congregation there in 1880.<sup>45</sup> Horn came in contact with Berend Roeles and baptized him in 1879.<sup>46</sup> These men would soon become leading figures among the Dutch Baptists.<sup>47</sup> They became key figures who were involved in the foundation of the Dutch Baptist Union in January 1881.<sup>48</sup> In visiting congregations, they preached at regular meetings, which in some cases led to new revivals.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Through Switzerland it moved to The Netherlands. From 1845-1854 followers of the Dutch Réveil united themselves under the name 'Christian Friends'. Among other topics, they spoke about how to relate themselves to the developments within the church. But they had different approaches varying from a strict juridical approach – with a strong emphasis on the church confessions – to a more moderate ethical approach, with an emphasis on the conscience. On their 20<sup>th</sup> meeting – in 1854 – the different directions among Christian Friends would lead to a conflict, which meant the end of Christian Friends. See: Kluit, *Het protestantse Réveil*.

<sup>42</sup> It was especially Jan de Liefde - who stood outside the Dutch Reformed Church – who clashed with the ethical-orientated pastor Daniël Chantepie de la Saussaye at the last meeting of Christian Friends, because he thought it was too much orientated at the Dutch Reformed Church. After his break with the Christian Friends, Jan de Liefde more strongly moved into a Free Church and congregational direction. In 1856 he was the founder of a Free Evangelical Congregation (Dutch: 'Vrij Evangelische Gemeente'), which was united in a union with other Free Evangelical Congregations in 1881. Because of his ambivalent relation to the topic of baptism, they both baptized children and adults (on the confession of their faith). See: Kluit, *Het protestantse Réveil*, 476-480, 494-497; Wumkes, *Opkomst en vestiging baptisme NL*, 97-102

<sup>43</sup> Wumkes, *Opkomst en vestiging baptisme NL*, 102-141; De Vries, *Gelovig gedoopt*, 119-120. The congregation of Gasselternijveen – the first Dutch Baptist congregation – was later continued in Stadskanaal. An example of one of the students of De Liefde is Eduard Gerdes, a German who studied Dutch literature and who evangelized among the German peat workers in Drenthe. He became the pastor of Gasselternijveen from 1858-1859 and he baptized Philippus Lindeman in 1858. But, because he had a different opinion about an 'open' or 'closed' celebration of the Lord's Supper (the Baptists had the stricter view), Gerdes and the Baptists in Gasselternijveen went their separate ways.

<sup>44</sup> Before he went to the peat areas, he evangelized in the surroundings of Haarlem.

<sup>45</sup> Idem, 124-125, 194-216

<sup>46</sup> Idem, 221-222. Roeles came to faith under the guidance of D. de Gilde, another student from 'Klein-Bethanië', who trained Roeles as an evangelist.

<sup>47</sup> Another leading figure worth mentioning was Hendrikadius Z. Kloekers, who urged several starting congregations to build up their community with Baptist principles of baptism and a closed membership (only baptized people could be a member and only members could join the Lord's Supper).

<sup>48</sup> Wumkes, *Opkomst en vestiging baptisme NL*, 243-247. Although Roeles was absent at the actual moment of foundation, he was present in the pre-stage of development and he was a member from the beginning.

<sup>49</sup> Idem, 232-242; Huet, *Het eeuwige leven*, 133-135.

Especially in the late seventies and early eighties Dutch baptism was influenced by the Anglo-Saxon holiness and revival movement. In 1875 there was a conference in Brighton with speakers like Dwight L. Moody and Pearsall Smith. Here several Dutch church leaders were present, such as Abraham Kuyper and Philippus J. Hoedemaker. Although at first some were optimistic, most orthodox leaders responded negatively,<sup>50</sup> while others, for example the Dutch Reformed pastor Pierre Huet,<sup>51</sup> tried to start a revival movement in The Netherlands. Together with like-minded people he organized conferences and started a magazine in order to exchange experiences and write about topics related to revivalism and sanctification. Also involved were Horn and the Baptist pastor J. De Hart.<sup>52</sup> The major contribution of the holiness and revival movement to Dutch baptism was that it started to emphasize themes such as the work of the Holy Spirit, the idea of resistance and subjection, alcohol abstinence, unlimited atonement, instantaneous decisions of faith, the use of after-meetings, and revivalism.<sup>53</sup>

## §5 Conclusion

Now that I gathered some decisive information, I will come to my conclusion. My research question was: “Which factors in the second half of the nineteenth century influenced the arising of the revival of August 1881 in Weerdingermond?” I will list the most important factors – in random order – below:

- In §2 I noticed that the population of Weerdingermond grew rapidly from the seventies and eighties onward. This might have been a reason why more people would visit the meetings of the Baptist congregation. Besides this, there were probably people among them who were already church-related. The Baptist congregation was the first church in Weerdingermond, which could have been the reason for several to visit this church.<sup>54</sup>
- In §3 I described the life of the peat workers. They had to work under tough conditions and were committed to heavy and monotonous work. On top of this there were poverty and alcohol abuse. Revivalist theology may have offered them an opportunity to strive for emancipation and a purpose to live for. The emphasis on alcohol abstinence, for example, could help free themselves from their alcohol addiction.<sup>55</sup>
- In §2 and §4 I mention that there were several evangelists who worked with the peat workers, of whom Roeles is one example.<sup>56</sup> The fact that the workers already knew the

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<sup>50</sup> Idem, 217-218; Algra, *Wonder 19e eeuw*, 281-289. Kuyper was positive at first, he even used the Brighton conference as a positive example in a speech in the Dutch parliament. But most orthodox leaders thought it did not match with the Calvinistic election doctrine and thought it was too extravagant.

<sup>51</sup> This Huet wrote the word of recommendation for Roeles’ tract on the revival in Weerdingermond.

<sup>52</sup> Wumkes, *Opkomst en vestiging baptisme NL*, 217-219. But in 1882 there was an argument between Huet and the Baptists about the importance of (believer) baptism, so each went their separate ways: Huet, *Het eeuwige leven*, 185-190;

<http://hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&mizig=210&miadt=39&miaet=1&micode=42&minr=821636&miq=1051183638&miview=inv2&milang=nl>, last consult on 25 May 2018.

<sup>53</sup> De Vries, *Gelovig gedoopt*, 133-151.

<sup>54</sup> See also, Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 16, 23; about the absence of the Dutch Reformed Church and the high attendance at church services in peat areas.

<sup>55</sup> The ‘emancipation’ argument is also sometimes used with regard to the ‘Afscheiding’, ‘Doleantie’ and the upcoming of socialism during the same period.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example:

<https://www.delpher.nl/nl/tijdschriften/view?identificer=MMLIND01%3A001091001%3A00008&query=roeles+>

evangelists and their message, may have lowered the bar to join the meetings and have an open attitude towards the gospel.<sup>57</sup> In addition: there were other revivals in the area going on that may be interrelated.<sup>58</sup>

- §4 shows that Baptists were open to holiness and revival theology. One of the reasons for the openness may have been that it was the attractive third option for the (lower educated) working class,<sup>59</sup> besides the elitist option (modernist) and the rigid option (orthodox). I have already shown that Baptists turned from the Calvinist particular election doctrine to the evangelical doctrine of unlimited atonement. With the holiness and revivalist theology, they also developed more attention for sanctification and personal emotions.
- In close connection to the former point stands the observation that in Moodian meetings there was a strong focus on instantaneous decisions. This also became visible in the preaching-style of Horn. His invitation to repentance had an almost forceful character. There was a strong focus on emotions on the spot and decisions that had to be taken right away. This may have pushed people into certain directions.
- The last factor I mention is a theological one. In §2 and §4 I notify that the holiness and revival movement strongly focuses on the work and person of the Holy Spirit. This observation implies that believers tried to depend on the work of the Spirit, instead of depending on themselves. The emphasis becomes quite clear in the dominance of prayer, as Horn urged Roeles and his wife to pray daily for the meetings they were about to organize when he announced his coming to Weerdingermond.<sup>60</sup> Such focus on the Holy Spirit may have actually resulted into a strong contribution of the Spirit during the revival.

As I noted above, these factors are no hard evidence. They are pointers at the possible ‘smoke’ and ‘fire’ of the historic revival in Weerdingermond. However, if we would have asked Berend Roeles what caused the revival, I think he would have been less cautious and clearly state that it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Because: when the Breaker calls, resistance will turn into surrender.<sup>61</sup>

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[weerdingermond&facets%5Bperiode%5D%5B%5D=1%7C19e\\_eeuw%7C1880-1889%7C&page=1&coll=dts](#), last consult on 25 May 2018.

<sup>57</sup> See also, Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 16; about the importance of Evangelists.

<sup>58</sup> For example in Groningen, 't Zandt (North-eastern Groningen) and Hengelo: Wumkes, *Opkomst en vestiging baptisme NL*, 232-242; Huet, *Het eeuwige leven*, 133-135.

<sup>59</sup> Siewert, *Representatie Drentse arbeiders*, 26

<sup>60</sup> See also: Huet, *Het eeuwige leven*, 1-5, 133-135; for the importance of prayer.

<sup>61</sup> This paper is a lecture that I held on 1 June 2018 at the ‘Religious Revivals and their Effects: Perceptions, Media and Networks in the Modern World’ conference, organized by the Amsterdam Centre for Religious History (ACRH) at the Vrije Universiteit. I want to thank Henk Bakker, Teun van der Leer, Jos Jumelet and Chris Dykstra for their comments on this paper.

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