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After some controversies in Sweden, he was expelled and traveled to the Holstein area where the Danish king, Frederick I, supported him as a general evangelist. In Holstein, Hoffman moved theologically from Luther to Zwingli and possibly became aware of the issue of infant baptism. After a period of popularity, he came into conflict with the Lutherans and eventually engaged in debate with them on April 8 and 9, 1529. After this his goods were confiscated and he was banished.

Hoffman was briefly in Emden, East Friesland, with Karlstadt, Luther's former colleague. From there he traveled to Strasbourg, arriving by June 30, 1529. He soon came into contact with the Anabaptists and engaged in active rebaptizing, which he supported in his writing of "The Ordinance of God."<sup>14</sup>

In 1530, Hoffman returned to Emden and established an Anabaptist congregation. Among his converts was Jan Volkertszoon, or Trypmaker, who became the leader. He probably also traveled into the Netherlands. There one of his converts was Sicke Freerks, or Snyder, a tailor, whose martyrdom for rebaptism aroused Menno Simons to consider the issue of infant baptism.<sup>15</sup>

Upon Hoffman's return to Strasbourg in December 1531, he became increasingly enamored with prophecy and the millennium. He announced that Strasbourg was the New Jerusalem and that 144,000 prophets would proclaim the coming of the kingdom. He believed the time was ripe for the coming of the kingdom, that it would take place in Strasbourg, and that it would be done in some nonresistant fashion by God's direct intervention.

In the meantime in the Netherlands, Jan Volkertszoon was banned from Emden. He went to Amsterdam to form an Anabaptist congregation. Believing that no harm would come to him, he gave himself up to the authorities in November 1531. He also gave them the names of the other leaders of the Anabaptists. He and seven of his followers were arrested and executed on December 6, and another of the leaders was executed on May 11, 1532. When Hoffman heard of the executions, he was so horrified he declared a two-year moratori-

um on baptism, justifying it on the basis of Ezra 4:24, where the Jews ceased work on the temple for two years.

Hoffman had traveled to East Friesland but returned again to Strasbourg in 1533. He was arrested and imprisoned, spending the rest of his life there as far as is known but still expecting the coming of the kingdom and his deliverance.

After Jan Volkertszoon's execution and Melchior Hoffman's imprisonment, the Anabaptists in the Netherlands were at first in confusion. Jan Matthys, a baker from Haarlem, claimed a revelation by which he was to assume the leadership in Amsterdam. He proceeded to organize the followers of Hoffman. He sent twelve apostles to resume baptism and to ordain bishops (elders) in various parts of the country.

Münster was one of the destinations to which the apostles traveled. Because of the reception they received, including the support of the preacher Bernhard Rothmann who had already instituted a reform, Matthys came to assume that Münster, and not Strasbourg, would be the New Jerusalem.

Another location to which the apostles traveled was Leeuwarden in Friesland. Bartel de Boeckbinder and William Cuiper baptized Obbe Philips.<sup>16</sup> He and Hans Scheerder were commissioned to the office of preacher—to baptize, teach, and lead the congregation. The two of them immediately set out on a trip around Leeuwarden to carry out their task.

While Obbe and Hans were gone, another of the apostles sent by Jan Matthys, Pieter Houtsagher, appeared. Sometime between Kerstmis (Christmas) and Lichtmis (thus between December 25, 1533, and January 2, 1534), he baptized Dirk Philips, Obbe's younger brother.<sup>17</sup> Houtsagher came into conflict with the Sacramentarians and had a debate with them through which the Anabaptists came to the attention of the authorities. When Obbe returned to the city he had to go into hiding.

Obbe had another shock on March 22, 1534. That day the three apostles who had come to Leeuwarden, Bartel de Boeckbinder, William Cuiper, and Pieter Houtsagher, ran through the streets of Amsterdam. Waving swords and proclaiming that the day of the Lord had come, they called people to repentance. They were promptly arrested and executed shortly thereafter in Haarlem. The authorities placed their heads and the heads of others executed at the same time on posts as examples to the people. Obbe, with a traveling companion, probably Hans Scheerder, went to Haarlem to see if they could dis-

cover which of the three was among those who had baptized them and announced the great mission and promise. The heads were so disfigured by the fire and smoke that Obbe could not recognize them.<sup>18</sup>

The shock of the events in Leeuwarden, Amsterdam, and Haarlem probably started Obbe Philips on a different course from the followers of Jan Matthys. He continued to travel, going to Leiden where he baptized and apparently later ordained David Joris as bishop. Joris came out of the earlier Sacramentarian movement. In fact, he had a hole bored through his tongue for disrupting a procession on Ascension Day in 1528.

Obbe Philips was back in Amsterdam in the fall of 1535 where he had a critical discussion with the Anabaptist bishop in that city, Jacob van Campen.<sup>19</sup> They disagreed over the interpretation of Scripture. Jacob van Campen used a typological interpretation of the Old Testament, following the figure of a split hoof given by Melchior Hoffman. He contended that the Old Testament types must have both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment in the Christian era. The literal fulfillment was the justification for setting up a kingdom at Münster.

Obbe insisted instead on a spiritual application of these types. This interpretation was to be more fully developed and applied in the writings of Obbe's brother Dirk at a later time.<sup>20</sup> At any rate, that difference seems to have resulted in a definitive separation between Obbe, the leader of the more quietistic Anabaptists, and the more revolutionary Anabaptists who supported the occupation of Münster. It seems Obbe returned to the northern part of the country, for the next trace we have of him is in the northeastern province of Groningen.

About this time Obbe came into contact with Menno Simons, who left the Roman Catholic church in January 1536.<sup>21</sup> Obbe probably baptized him and later, with others, recruited him as a bishop of the Anabaptists. It seems that Menno was placed in Groningen, Dirk as bishop in Appingedam, and David Joris in Delft. Further evidence of the break with the revolutionary Anabaptists was Obbe's insistence that he and Dirk did not participate in an attack on the Old Cloister (*Oude Klooster*) near Bolsward in March 1535.

In the meantime, the revolutionary Anabaptists had taken over the city of Münster under the leadership of Jan Matthys. They were besieged by the Catholic bishop, Franz van Waldeck. Jan Matthys was killed in a foray against the bishop's army and his body placed in a basket before the city walls. He was succeeded by Jan Boekholtszoon from Leiden. Under the extreme severity of conditions brought on by the siege, Jan van Leiden introduced communism, polygamy, and

harsh treatment of any dissenters. These practices brought scandal on the whole movement for many years to come.

Münster eventually fell to the forces of the bishop. The three leaders who survived were captured, put on public display, and eventually executed, their bodies hung in iron cages from the cathedral tower as an example to others who might consider similar attempts.

Some efforts were made after the fall of Münster to reconstitute the movement. For a time a remnant under Jan van Batenburg continued to use militant tactics, but eventually he was captured and executed, and the revolutionary Anabaptist movement came to an end. The more quietistic, nonresistant Anabaptist movement survived, though not without trials and difficulties of a different sort.

## A TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP

Dirk's activities and location after the fall of Münster are not well known. Aside from his functions as bishop in Appingedam, about the only clear record is a debate he had with a Joachim Kukenbieter (Nossiophagus) in Hamburg in 1537.<sup>22</sup> He probably was active in the general area around Emden. The problem of tracing the activities of all the Dutch Anabaptists during this period is complicated by the fact that they only used initials in their writings and apparently also took other names at times to prevent the authorities from identifying them. They also at times changed their clothing, as suggested by Kukenbieter.<sup>23</sup>

After his capture in 1538, Jan van Batenburg made a confession in which he placed Dirk third on his list of Anabaptist leaders. He put David Joris at the head of the list, above Obbe, who was second, and Dirk next. He apparently did not mention Menno Simons.<sup>24</sup>

In the latter part of the 1530s, Obbe Philips became disillusioned with his baptism and ordination as bishop and left the movement. He apparently took the name of Albrecht and became a spiritualist while feigning membership in the state church at Rostock. In 1560 he wrote a confession which is a primary source for understanding his position and why he left the movement.<sup>25</sup>

With the defection of Obbe from the movement and the disarray following the defeat at Münster, it was not clear if the movement would survive. The work and writing of Menno Simons was the primary factor in the survival and spread of the movement, but the work and writing of Dirk were second only to Menno's.

Dirk probably participated with Menno in the ordination of two

new elders, Gillis van Aken and Adam Pastor, in about 1542. The years following were to be ones of differences with Adam Pastor and David Joris over the direction the movement should go.

The next clear trace of Dirk's activities was in a dispute with Nikolaas Meyndertsz van Blesdijk. Nikolaas was at first a follower of Menno but later became convinced that David Joris had a special revelation. This led to a disputation near Lübeck in 1546. Menno Simons, Gillis van Aken, Leenaert Bouwens, and Adam Pastor also participated in it.

The issue was over the form of baptism and the church. David Joris contended that for the sake of avoiding persecution one could let children be baptized and could participate in the services of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed churches while still holding contrary views. Joris assumed that the external forms were of no real consequence since only internal faith mattered. Indeed, he had already gone to Basel in 1544. There he took on a new identity and lived under a cloak of respectability within the Reformed church, while continuing to write and foster his own movement secretly.

During the course of the disputation with Nikolaas, certain other differences between the Anabaptist leaders and Adam Pastor apparently came to the surface. Adam Pastor tended to unitarian views which questioned the divinity of Jesus Christ. As a consequence, a series of debates were held with him. The first was in Emden in 1547 where Menno and Dirk attempted "to blow out the spark" as put by the author of *Successio Anabaptistica*.<sup>26</sup> The issues included the incarnation of Christ, the rejection of infant baptism, and the place of avoidance in marriage. Since no agreement could be reached at the time, the participants agreed not to preach openly on these issues.

A second disputation was held at Emden in 1547. In addition to those Anabaptist leaders present at Lübeck, Hendrik van Vreden, Antonius van Keulen, and Gillis van Aken were present. The question of avoidance of those under the ban was discussed. On November 12, 1556, Menno wrote a letter to the congregation at Emden. It suggests that Menno and Dirk agreed it was best to avoid the banned person, even if the banned person was your spouse. If, however, a person's conscience did not require avoidance, the person was not to be compelled by a legal code.<sup>27</sup>

A second issue was the question of marriage outside the faith (*buitentrouw*). Dirk refers to it in the last of his writings, "About the Marriage of Christians."<sup>28</sup> Published in 1569, it makes reference to a discussion of "more than twenty years ago," which Nicolai guesses

was about 1547.<sup>29</sup> The final question was about the incarnation. Adam Pastor was apparently the main opponent of the position taken by Menno and Dirk.

A further disputation was held at Goch in Cleve in the same year. It was by then clear that Adam Pastor denied not only the divinity of Christ but the trinitarian view as well. The conclusion of the debate was the banning of Adam Pastor, with the sentence being announced by Dirk Philips. It is likely that Dirk was at that time acting as the elder or bishop in the area and thus was given responsibility on behalf of the others to pronounce the ban against Pastor.

Adam Pastor continued to preach and attract a following in the area. He no doubt prepared the way in the area for the coming of Socinianism, with its unitarian doctrine, at the end of the century. Dirk Philips wrote a poem or hymn of twenty-two stanzas against the teachings of Adam Pastor.<sup>30</sup> One letter, which was generally unknown until recently rediscovered by ten Doornkaat Koolman, was also written at the request of Dirk's followers to offset the teachings of Adam Pastor.<sup>31</sup>

The conference in Emden and Goch probably led Dirk to write his short treatise on "Confession About Separation."<sup>32</sup> In any event it was written in or before 1549, for Menno refers to it in 1549 in his *A Clear Account of Excommunication*.<sup>33</sup>

Sometime between 1547 and 1553, Menno and Dirk ordained Leenaert Bouwens as an elder, according to a report in *Successio Anabaptistica*.<sup>34</sup> Blaupot ten Cate gives the date as 1551.<sup>35</sup> Others would give a date as late as 1553, about the time Menno Simons wrote a letter to the wife of Leenaert Bouwens to console her in the face of the risks the office of bishop entailed in those times.<sup>36</sup> Ten Doornkaat Koolman believes that Dirk may actually have been the person who ordained Leenaert Bouwens as bishop.<sup>37</sup>

Adam Pastor seemed to feel he was not given an adequate hearing at the meeting in Goch in 1547 where he was banned. Upon his request another discussion was held with him at Lübeck in 1552. Participants included Menno Simons, Dirk Philips, Gillis van Aken, Heinrich Ebbink, and Leenaert Bouwens—all introduced only with initials preceded by B., which probably indicated bishop.<sup>38</sup> The result of the meeting was no more satisfactory than the previous ones since Adam Pastor persisted in his unitarian tendencies.

Another important meeting occurred in 1554 in Wismar, which probably indicates a relocation of Dirk from the area around Goch and Cleve to the northern part of Germany. Menno was living in Wis-

mar at the time as he mentions in a letter to Emden in 1556.<sup>39</sup> Seven leaders were present, including Menno, Dirk, Leenaert Bouwens, and Gillis van Aken. The principal subject was the ban, but other topics included marriage outside the church, the bearing of arms, the use of courts, and problems related to the activities of unauthorized itinerant preachers. Out of the conference emerged a statement of nine articles, though the various reports have some discrepancies which make the exact content of the articles uncertain.<sup>40</sup>

A secret meeting was held in Mecklenburg in 1554. Whether or not it was the meeting where the nine articles were drafted is not certain. The occasion for the meeting was that Gillis van Aken had committed adultery with some of the newly baptized women members. He was banned about the time of the earlier meeting at Lübeck in 1552, and perhaps even at that conference. At the meeting in Mecklenburg, Gillis repented and promised to reform. The leaders restored him to his office.

## **DIVISIONS INSIDE THE ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT**

Divisions had occurred prior to the mid-1550s, but they had largely been in movements outside of the main Dutch Anabaptist movement, such as the Münsterites, the Jorists, and Adam Pastor. In the mid-1550s divisions began which split the movement within groups that retained a similar Anabaptist orientation but differed over some issues, generally of practice rather than theology.

The first major evidence of the subsequent divisiveness occurred in 1555, a year after the conference at Wismar which had established the articles about which differences arose. Leenaert Bouwens had banned the husband of Swaen Rutgers in Emden for unknown reasons. He also insisted that Swaen Rutgers should avoid him. Yet she “would not shun her husband at the bed and table.”<sup>41</sup> Leenaert Bouwens proceeded to pronounce the ban upon her, even though otherwise she was a pious woman.

Henrik Naeldeman and Joriaen Heyns of Franeker defended her and were joined by Jacob Jan Scheedemaker of Emden. Menno was called on and replied in a letter to three brothers at Emden on November 12, 1556.<sup>42</sup> He referred to a decision which he and Dirk had arrived at in 1547 and to the articles drawn up at Wismar.

Menno was invited to a conference at Harlingen to try to resolve the matter, probably early in 1557. He traveled by way of Dokkum where Nette Lipkes, a minister, joined him, and also to Leeuwarden

where Apollonia Ottes joined them. They went to Franeker for the conference with Naeldeman and Heyns.

They disagreed on three major points: (1) The question of shunning in the family and marriage relationship (*echtmijding*); (2) keeping sins confessed in confidence a secret; and (3) the requirement that the three admonitions of Matthew 18 be omitted in case of heinous or criminal offense and the ban be instituted immediately. Menno conceded on a moderate interpretation of the third. It is reported that when he left the meeting Menno said, "If I also find them in the same way at Harlingen, I will jump for joy upon my crutch."<sup>43</sup>

Menno went on to Harlingen where a meeting was held which included Leenaert Bouwens, and Dirk Philips. Apparently Dirk was in agreement with Leenaert Bouwens and a different spirit from Franeker prevailed. Menno was overruled and the ban was pronounced against Naeldeman, Heyns, and Scheedemaker. According to a report attributed by Alenson to Apollonia Ottes, Menno was intimidated by Bouwens with the threat of the ban and further division.<sup>44</sup> The point of continuing contention was whether avoidance and shunning should be practiced within the family. The official decision favored the stricter position.

In despair over the continuing divisions and ruthless banning, a new and separate group known as the Waterlanders (after the low region where they were located in the province of North Holland) emerged. The Swiss and South Germans also raised questions when the report of the actions reached them. At conferences in Strasbourg in 1555 and 1557, they discussed and acted on questions of the ban, the incarnation, and other issues. As a result a delegation composed of Zylis and Lemke was sent to see Menno in April 1556. Subsequently a meeting of more than fifty bishops at Strasbourg resulted in adopting a more moderate view on the ban, but this did not include the Dutch.<sup>45</sup>

Menno and Dirk both published works on excommunication in 1558 in which they defended a stricter view than the South German conference had accepted. Menno's tract was entitled "Instruction on Excommunication." Dirk's is entitled "The Ban."<sup>46</sup>

It is ten Doornkaat Koolman's view that Dirk and Leenaert Bouwens were sent to meet with Zyles and Lemke at Cologne to try to resolve the issue between the Dutch-North Germans and the South German-Swiss.<sup>47</sup> Apparently the effort was not successful and Dirk and Leenaert proceeded to pronounce the ban on the South Germans and to refuse to recognize their baptism as valid. This probably



occurred in 1559. Ten Doornkaat Koolman also speculates that Dirk at the same time wrote his letter to Adriaentgen, the wife of Joachim the Sugarbaker, and sent it to her with elders who attended the meeting in Cologne.<sup>48</sup>

Sometime in the period after 1555, Dirk probably had relocated from Emden to Fresenberg, where Menno was located. There Dirk would have had access to a printer. More of his writings began to appear in print about this time, though some of them had probably earlier circulated in handwritten form. In 1555 a trial of seven people took place in Amsterdam. Among them was a certain Otto Barentszn. from Zutphen who knew Latin. He was not baptized nor had he partaken of communion. He had received a book from the wife of Henrick Janssen. At first he thought Henrick had written the book, but then he heard that Dirk Philips was the author.<sup>49</sup> Thus some indication is given that some of the writings of Dirk had circulated in handwritten form by 1555.

A pamphlet exists with three treatises of Dirk Philips, written in seventeenth-century handwriting. It contains the letter to the brothers about Christ's divinity and incarnation, "Confession of Our Faith (Concerning) God," "Concerning Spiritual Restitution," and "The Congregation of God."<sup>50</sup>

It is likely that, after the meeting at Harlingen in the spring of 1557, Dirk traveled to North Holland where he ordained Jan Willems as elder for the congregation at Hoorn. He may have again traveled to North Holland from Cologne in 1559 and ordained Lubbert Gerrits.

Other writings of Dirk Philips can be dated from this same period. "The Tabernacle of Moses" was printed in 1556. "Confession of Our Faith" appeared in 1557. "The True Knowledge of God" appeared in 1558. In the same year the admonition about "The Ban" was completed on February 5th. "The Sending of Preachers" appeared in 1559. J. ten Doornkaat Koolman believes that "The Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ" and "Concerning the True Knowledge of Jesus Christ" appeared about 1557.<sup>51</sup> "The New Birth and the New Creature" appeared before 1560 since it was opposed by Matthijs Wijer who died on April 25, 1560.<sup>52</sup>

## PRUSSIA AND UTRECHT

The area around Danzig in Prussia early became a place of refuge for Anabaptists from Flanders and the Netherlands. The shipping trade to the Hanseatic cities afforded transportation to the area. The

rulers were at the time fairly tolerant of diverse opinions and needed industrious workers to make use of the land. The experience of the Dutch with diking and making use of swamp land was useful for settlement and development of the Vistula Delta.

Dutch settlers had traveled to the area as early as 1527 to 1530, when the Sacramentarians fled persecution. Jacob van Campen was planning to flee to the area at the time of his capture in Amsterdam in 1535.<sup>53</sup> Vos gives a report from a captured Anabaptist in 1550, in which he says that many of the Melchiorites fled to the area after the revolt in Amsterdam in 1535.<sup>54</sup> The refugees were not allowed to settle inside the city of Danzig but instead located in the “garten” or suburbs.

In the summer of 1549, Menno Simons visited the area according to a letter he addressed to them on October 7, 1549. He wrote:

To the elect holy children of God in the land of Prussia, grace and peace. You know . . . what grievous solicitude, care, trouble, labor, and sorrow we experienced in your midst this past summer, as well as how it ended; a matter that still at times causes us to be greatly troubled at heart on your behalf, fearing lest the disturber of all peace and Christian love, that is, that ancient coiled serpent which never ceases his raging, might by means of the past transaction once more sow his seed among many, and by means of all that follows, these might fall in God's sight and come to shame and our services of some weeks expended in your behalf be lost again; a thing which even though I write this, I nevertheless hope not.<sup>55</sup>

Menno had apparently settled some discord and possible division among the Anabaptists in Prussia. Mannhardt believes that Dirk Philips and Hans Sikken accompanied Menno on this trip to the Danzig area.<sup>56</sup> It is certain that Dirk was located in Danzig, but the time of his move there is debated. Kühler places the time as early as 1550, but that seems unlikely, given the number of conferences in which Dirk participated in the 1550s.<sup>57</sup> He could not have traveled back and forth from Danzig to the Netherlands that frequently. Mannhardt would place it after Menno's death, which would make it as late as 1561 or later.<sup>58</sup> Again, that may be too late.

The evidence for Dirk's location in Schotland, a suburb of Danzig, is fairly firm. In the church records from Danzig, the following is found:

The year 1567. Dirk Philips had been an elder here at Danzig, who in the time of division in Friesland was sent there and died there in the following year.<sup>59</sup>

In *The Beginning of the Divisions among the Doopsgezinden*, the author says that Dirk Philips “had also come from Danzig to Emden.”<sup>60</sup> J. ten Doornkaat Koolman also finds confirming evidence in the fact that about this time Dirk apparently translated his writings, “Concerning Spiritual Restitution” and “The Congregation of God” from the Dutch into the Lower Saxon dialect. He also cites a report from 1627 that Dirk was in Prussia from 1561-1568.<sup>61</sup>

Dirk’s stay in Prussia was not continuous. In 1561 he appears to have traveled to Emden to confer with Leenaert Bouwens, perhaps on the occasion of Menno’s death in January of that year. He may have gone on to Friesland by way of Appingedam, where he formerly was an elder and where he met Hoyte Renix in Bolsward. From there he apparently traveled to Hoorn, then baptized Willem Janszen in Waterland.

A court record establishes that Dirk was in Utrecht in late December 1561. He baptized and served communion to the congregation of thirty to forty people gathered in the basement of a fairly well-to-do citizen, Cornelius van Voordt. According to Willems Willemsz, a participant, they gathered about four o’clock in the morning and remained until about seven o’clock in the evening when it was again dark.<sup>62</sup> They hoped thus to escape notice as they gathered and departed.

One report suggests Dirk spoke Brabants, though that might have been because he had been so long in northern Germany and his Dutch was affected. The source was an unlettered household worker, Beatris, who would not be very reliable as an expert on dialects. She also said that he was clothed in black and had an ordinary round hat.<sup>63</sup>

Another witness, Anna Heinrick Emkens described him as “an old man with a gray beard with white hair, a medium built man.”<sup>64</sup> This is about as full a description as we have of Dirk Philips. J. ten Doornkaat Koolman guesses that Dirk waited until spring shipping started along the coast again before returning to Danzig.<sup>65</sup>

Dirk probably had the time and security during his stay in Prussia to revise previous writings and put them in publishable form. They appeared in “Handbook” form in 1564 as *Enchiridion* or *Handbook*.<sup>66</sup> It was probably printed in Emden.

## THE COVENANT OF THE FOUR CITIES

About 1560 the church councils and ministers of four congregations in Friesland, Franeker, Dokkum, Leeuwarden, and Harlingen,

entered into a *Verbond* or covenant. They kept it secret, so the exact details are not fully known. The four congregations agreed to cooperate on programs covered in nineteen articles. Kühler lists the three major areas of agreement.<sup>67</sup>

(1) If a dispute within a congregation could not be settled, the other congregations would assist. If they were unable to settle it, outside ministers would be called to help.

(2) Because of a large influx of refugees from the severe persecutions in Flanders, a financial aid program was carried out by the congregations. They agreed to cooperate in the program and appointed two deacons to supervise the program in all four cities.

(3) Ministers should serve all four congregations. No congregation would choose its ministers separately. Ebbe Pieters was appointed to divide the preaching assignments in all four congregations and to handle the discipline problems.

In 1565 two events occurred which led to division within the congregations and to Dirk Philips' bitter disappointment over the condition in the congregations. The first involved the choosing of Jeroen Tinnegieter as minister at Franeker. He was a refugee from Flanders, which some took to be the reason why Harlingen objected to his appointment.

In the dispute that followed, a gathering of ministers, including Dirk Philips, was held at Harlingen to try to resolve the matter. In the course of the dispute, the existence of the covenant had come to light. Dirk objected to it because he considered it a human addition to the Scriptures—and Scriptures alone should be the basis for actions in the Christian congregation. Some writers have suggested that Dirk's motives were not entirely pure but arose partly from his fear that Leenaert Bouwens was gaining more authority in the congregations than he.

The second event involved Leenaert Bouwens directly. It occurred as Dirk was on his way from Harlingen back to Prussia. He stopped in Emden where Leenaert was in conflict with his congregation. The main grievances seemed to be that Leenaert was absent too often from the congregation because of trips made to Friesland. He was also accused of drinking excessively. He enjoyed the hospitality of the cordial Flemish in the area; this offended the more stolid Frisians. Leenaert's own severity in cases of the ban, such as the one involving Swaen Rutgers and his wife described earlier may have added to resentment of him.

Seven ministers, including Hoyte Renix, Ebbe Pieters, and Dirk

Philips, sat in judgment on the case. They decided to suspend Leenaert Bouwens as an elder but not ban him. Probably out of fear of banning, Leenaert accepted the judgment and moved to a place near Harlingen. There he was well received, not by the Flemish, but strangely enough by the Frisians.

Ebbe Pieters apparently dissociated himself from the judgment by at least refraining from participating in the decision. Hoyte Renix at first concurred, but later retracted his decision to suspend Leenaert, as appears in a letter he wrote later to Dirk Philips.<sup>68</sup>

The next step in the dispute occurred when Jeroen Tinnegieter called a hasty meeting. With only about thirty out of the three hundred members of the congregation at Franeker present, they rejected the "Covenant of the Four Cities." The majority tried in vain to have that decision reviewed and reversed. Ebbe Pieters emerged as the leader of the Frisians who objected to the decision. The dispute began to harden along cultural and personal lines.

The Flemish people in general cared little about their household appearances but did like to wear fine clothes. They were also more temperamental than the Frisians, being quick to show anger but just as quick to change. The Frisians, on the other hand, cared more about their household appearances and less about clothing. They were also more reserved and slow to anger, but more likely to persist once aroused. These cultural differences contributed to the intensity and polarization of what seemed on the surface just a churchly dispute.

Hoyte Renix attempted to mediate the dispute, but he was suspected by the Flemish of being too favorable toward the Frisians. Ebbe Pieters further heightened the antagonisms when he presented seven accusations against Jeroen Tinnegieter on May 1, 1566. Mutual recriminations and suspensions proceeded. By August 1566, the different groups had mutually banned each other.

Dirk Philips learned about these events. On September 19, 1566, he addressed an "Epistle to Four Cities." To it he added an *Appendix* on the appointment of ministers.<sup>69</sup> The ministers who suspended Leenaert Bouwens in 1565 had drawn up the statement at that time. It also suggests that Dirk believed Leenaert Bouwens was active in the dispute behind the scenes. The letter expresses Dirk's great concern for the congregations and is nostalgic about his regard for the fatherland. Some writers believe that two others whose names are not known, V. B. and J. H., also signed the letter, but the initials are probably an abbreviation of "Your brother in the Lord," (*Uwe broeder inden Heeren*).

The dispute occurred at a time when the Calvinist reform movement, which would eventually surpass the Anabaptists as the major reform group in the Netherlands, was gaining headway. Dirk no doubt felt that the dispute would affect the reputation of the Anabaptist movement and cause persons to defect to the Calvinists. He offered to help resolve the conflict.

Instead of accepting Dirk's offer at that time, the congregations agreed upon an arbitration committee. It was headed by two ministers from Hoorn whom Dirk had ordained earlier. They were Jan Willems and Lubbert Gerrits. They were to choose ten others to collaborate with them. Before they began the task, they required the parties to sign a *Compromis* or commitment which in effect bound them to accept the decision of the committee.

The committee held hearings, then called a meeting to effect the reconciliation. It was held at Harlingen on February 1, 1566. Both parties were required to kneel, to confess their guilt, and to ask forgiveness. The Frisians were then permitted to rise. When the Flemish also began to get up, they were told they must be lifted by the hands of the Frisians because their guilt was greater.

The Flemish were incensed by what they considered a humiliation and thought the committee had tricked them. Furiously they denounced both the *Compromis* and their confession of guilt. The situation was much worse than it had been before. Now it involved the committee, as well as the congregations in the four cities originally parties to the dispute.

The Frisians now felt compelled to call on Dirk Philips to use his office and prestige to bring about a reconciliation. Hoyte Renix wrote a letter of invitation on behalf of the Frisians on April 17, 1567.<sup>70</sup> The tone of the letter was ingratiating but implied that if Dirk did not decide in favor of the Frisians he would not be welcome. Nevertheless, Dirk obtained a commission from his congregation. With two companions, Hans Sikken and a Geert H[arms], he journeyed to Emden to seek a solution to the dispute.

The Frisians probably knew of Dirk's unfavorable opinion of both the covenant and the *Compromis*, since he considered them human additions to the Scripture and therefore not valid. He also considered the two ministers from Hoorn too young and inexperienced to undertake arbitrating the dispute. He suspected them of being too tolerant since they had accepted into the congregation at Hoorn, without waiting for word from Prussia, a man whom the Prussians had banned.

At Emden, Dirk and his two companions sent a request to the

parties involved to appear before him to present their cases. Jan Willems and Lubbert Gerrits sent word that their congregation would not give them permission to be gone again. Dirk responded with letters to Hoyte Renix, Jan Willems, Lubbert Gerrits. He also sent a letter to the congregation at Hoorn which was to be read in all the congregations in North Holland.

Dirk was likely modeling his approach on the tactic Paul used when he wrote to Philemon and the churches in the area about the return of Onesimus. In the letter Dirk suspended the men from their office as ministers until they had appeared before him and were cleared of any guilt. Dirk insisted that the only fair way to deal with the situation was to have the parties appear before him in each other's presence.

The Frisians eventually did send a delegation of nine persons, four from North Holland and five from Friesland, to consult with Dirk. They met with Dirk and the others at Emden, but Dirk insisted that Jan Willems and Lubbert Gerrits be heard in the presence of the Flemish before he would act. He again suspended all the ministers from their office.

In the meantime the ministers of North Holland had met and decided to send a delegation of four, including Jan Willems, Lubbert Gerrits, Hoyte Renix, and Pieter Willems Bogaert. These four met the nine who were returning from Emden. They decided that all thirteen should go to Emden to meet with Dirk.

Dirk was adamant about meeting with them only in the presence of the Flemish and so refused to see them. They in turn refused to concede the point. Kühler believes that Dirk then issued an ultimatum which in effect would ban the entire group, or at least was so interpreted by them. Whether in anticipation of the ban or in retaliation against it, the delegation from Friesland and North Holland met and on July 8, 1567, pronounced the ban upon Dirk Philips. Four days later they announced it to the congregation at Groningen.

The situation was now completely polarized. No further reconciliation was possible. This resulted in some strange alignments of groups. Leenaert Bouwens, who got into trouble with his congregation because of the cordiality he had received from the Flemish, was now allied with the Frisians. Dirk, who represented a strict application of the ban, was now aligned with the more moderate Flemish.

Dirk remained at Emden and apparently was joined by his family, which is the only indication we have that he was married and probably had children (though we know nothing about any of them). He

spent his last days at Emden writing and publishing his defense of the actions in the Frisian-Flemish controversy.

Dirk also wrote a final tract "About the Marriage of Christians" in which he continued to struggle with the issue of marriage to persons outside of the Anabaptist congregations. In the preface he does express his feeling of failing strength, "In addition, we are aged [63], weak and ill in the body, and are looking to the Lord for our deliverance that we may enter into the blessed rest."<sup>71</sup>

The treatise was finished on March 7, 1568. Dirk Philips died shortly thereafter at a place called Het Faldern near Emden and was buried in Emden at the Gasthuys Kerck-hof.<sup>72</sup>

## DIRK PHILIPS' CHARACTER

Dirk never wrote an autobiographical account as Menno Simons did in his "Conversion, Call, and Testimony."<sup>73</sup> We have to infer much of his character from his activities and his writings. Some accounts from others may also give clues to his character.

Being the younger brother of Obbe and eight years younger than Menno, Dirk probably did not exercise much leadership in the early stages of the Anabaptist movement. He probably stood in the shadow of these older colleagues. He did show a persistence and steadiness that made them value his support and cooperation. Both Obbe and Menno at points indicated their agreement with Dirk and did so in a way which pointed to the value they placed on his collaboration.<sup>74</sup>

In later years, particularly as Menno's health and vitality diminished and especially after his death, Dirk assumed a larger responsibility for the direction of the movement. He did not always do so with the greatest success, which is indicative of other characteristics. Still, we must remember what the late Roland H. Bainton said about his work with Martin Luther: "It is a grave problem to psychoanalyze the dead."

Dirk appears not to have been as warm and outgoing a person as Menno. He was much more a systematic thinker than a person oriented to pastoral concern for people. Only his letter to the wife of Joachim the Sugarbaker shows a warm regard for persons. Otherwise his writings show some detachment and coolness.

As a theologian, Dirk was more a systematic and clear thinker and writer than Menno Simons. His writings are well organized and do not appear as roundabout and tedious as Menno's sometimes do. They do at times become repetitious because of his frequent citing or paraphrasing of Scripture passages.



Dirk's writings show his great command of Scripture. He makes constant reference to Scripture in his writing, either by direct quotation or paraphrase. He also refers in many marginal references to supporting texts. He ranges widely in the Old and New Testaments and includes many citations from the Apocrypha of the Old Testament.

Dirk does not show the tendency to vitriolic condemnation and name-calling of opponents common among other writers of the period. His style contrasts sharply in that respect with Luther and Calvin, and even with Menno Simons. Dirk rarely makes reference to other writers. He does refer to Erasmus, Luther, and earlier classical writers on several occasions, but always to indicate that he is not taking them as a greater authority than the Scriptures.<sup>75</sup>

Though he is obviously refuting some of the writings and thinking of persons such as David Joris and Adam Pastor, Dirk does not refer to them directly, but deals only with their positions. Sebastian Franck is the only adversary whom Dirk directly refutes (in answer to letters of Sebastian Franck long after Franck's death).

Dirk's firmness and tenacity in the face of the opposing forces he faced throughout his adult life seems sometimes to have degenerated into brittleness and inflexibility in dealing with controversy. His pursuit of an ideal church and the demand for moral perfection on the part of others probably contributed to the splits which occurred within the church. This was particularly true from the early 1550s on and in the controversy between the Frisians and the Flemish. Conflict mediation does not seem to have been his primary gift.

Dirk's contribution to his labors and his writings were probably equal to Menno's in bringing into existence and maintaining the Anabaptist movement during the difficult years of struggle and oppression. Some of his writings are still the best expression of the positions which led to the founding and survival of the church. If anything, he has been neglected unduly because he stood in the shadow of Menno, whose writings and labors have been more fully recognized.

## DIRK'S THEOLOGY<sup>76</sup>

Dirk's theology tended to have a double focus: one focus was on the words of Scripture and the other on the Word incarnated in Jesus Christ. Because of that double focus, he sometimes had difficulty separating the letter from the spirit of the law. However, he generally resolved any conflicts between the two with a Christocentric interpretation of the Scripture. He gave Christ preeminence in his theological thinking.

A major problem for all the reformers was how to deal with the Old Testament. As noted earlier, Hoffman tried to resolve the problem with the metaphor of the split hoof. The Old Testament was to be fulfilled literally and spiritually. Dirk agreed with Obbe in finding the Old Testament figures and symbols as types to be fulfilled spiritually in the New Testament.

Dirk found support for this view primarily in Hebrews 1 and 10. The preeminence of Jesus Christ came from Hebrews 1 where it recognizes that God spoke in diverse ways in times past through the prophets but now through Jesus Christ. It was further explained by Hebrews 10, where Jesus Christ is seen as the true reality of which the Old Testament types were only shadowy images. In Christ, Dirk believed, one can now more fully understand what the Old Testament types were intending to reveal, though inadequately in comparison with the fuller revelation offered by Christ. He shows great skill in using Old Testament and apocryphal texts, as well as typology, in supporting a given point.

The incarnation became a central concept in Dirk's theology because it was the Word become flesh. Another theological problem which arose early in the Christian church and persisted among the reformers was how Jesus could be truly a person, yet escape original sin. Hoffman resolved the problem by the concept of the "celestial flesh." The Word came down into Mary and was born out of her—but did not partake of her substance. Hoffman used the figure of heavenly dew deposited in an oyster, out of which came a pearl. The pearl did not partake of the nature of the oyster.

Dirk accepted the process though he did not use the crude metaphor from Hoffman. Jesus was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. His nature was not from her, but from the Father. She nurtured him and he was born out of her but did not partake of her nature and so was free of original sin. He was, however, truly human in that he partook of the nature of Adam *before the fall*; he was created a true human being as was Adam. Thus he became the second Adam. At the same time, because his substance was from God and not from Mary, he remained truly divine in a way other human beings could not be.<sup>77</sup>

Because Christ was the second Adam and free from the taint of original sin, he could offer himself for the salvation of other persons. Through his sacrificial death he offered freedom from original sin.

Salvation is in a certain sense the reverse process of the incarnation. Just as Christ became human in Jesus, so human beings could partake of the divine nature in Christ (cf. Irenaeus, d. 202). If they

repented and believed, the Holy Spirit could work in them a new creation. They could partake of the nature of Christ and grow in likeness to him through trust and obedience. But because they did not have their substance from God, they could never share fully in the divine nature. They were always subject to sin, even though in principle sin, hell, and death had been overcome through the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

In this conception of salvation, the Anabaptists differed from the other reformers. The other reformers saw salvation as a change in status. Through justification by faith, the person's status was changed from guilty to innocent. This "forensic change" was brought about by God's acceptance of the person. The Anabaptists saw the transformation as a real and continuing change in nature. It was not simply a change in status. For the Anabaptists justification began a dynamic process by which the believer partook of the nature of Christ and so was enabled to live increasingly like Jesus.

The work of the second Adam also resolved the problem of infant baptism. Since the Anabaptists held that the sacraments did not have a magic ability to directly produce change in the person, they had to deal with original sin in infants. Dirk resolved the problem by accepting the work of the second Adam as covering the innocence of infants. While they have original sin, which is the tendency to rebellion against God, it does not become actual sin until they reach the age where they know they rebel and consciously choose to do so. At that point original sin becomes actual sin. Jesus' death on the cross as the second Adam takes care of the innocence of children.

Dirk did not accept that sacraments worked in and of themselves. He understood them to symbolize spiritual realities which occurred in the life of the believer but were invisible. The sacraments, which he preferred to call ordinances, served two functions. They were a manifestation of the readiness of the believer to be obedient to Jesus Christ as Lord. Jesus had commanded that they be done. If the believer was obedient, the Holy Spirit was enabled to create the new nature in the believer.

The ordinances were also needed to make visible to other believers the spiritual reality which was within the believer. Through the visible witness, the believers could recognize one another and be gathered into a fellowship which was the church.

Baptism was the symbol of the death of the old nature and its cleansing by the Holy Spirit. It was the beginning of the new creature or new life in the believer. That was a once-and-for-all experience.





cution. Martyrdom then becomes a seal of faith to be accepted with thanksgiving. Only those enabled by the Holy Spirit and worthy to undergo martyrdom will be subject to it. It is not something to be sought, but when it comes can be accepted with rejoicing.

This understanding of the meaning of martyrdom gave Dirk and others the endurance to persist and remain faithful despite the daily dangers which they faced. They could live victorious lives even in the midst of such terrible times.