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Summary

Mirror & Source of Tension

The shaping of opinion in Reformed churches about the evangelical movement and the charismatic renewal.

Since the second half of the sixties of the twentieth century, the evangelical movement (with the Evangelische Omroep (EO) [Evangelical Broadcast] as catalyst) among the Christians in the Netherlands developed into a group with a definite profile. The typical characteristics of the evangelical experience of faith resulted in a stream of shaping of opinion within Reformed churches. This varied from great appreciation to sharp criticism.

Around the turn of the century the charismatic renewal found increasingly more resonance in different Reformed churches, particularly by means of the Alpha-course, New Wine, and the Pentecost conference of the Opwekking [Revival] foundation. This stimulated the shaping of opinion about gifts of the Spirit such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, faith-healing, and exorcism of demons.

The formation of opinions about the evangelical movement and the charismatic renewal are subjected to a comparative research in this study. Thereby we receive insight into the developments of the shaping of opinions over the course of years. It also becomes evident which theological themes especially ask attention in the relationship Reformed and evangelical/charismatic. Is this theme important in the same measure in the several Reformed churches? The research focusses on the Gereformeerde Bond in the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN), the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, the Gereformeerde Gemeenten, the Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt), and the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken. We designate these Reformed denominations as the Reformed churches.

The research question is as follows: *How do the shapers of opinion of the Reformed churches evaluate the evangelical movement as it received a definite profile since the seventies of the twentieth century, and how do they evaluate the second phase of the charismatic renewal which became visible since crossing the threshold to the twenty-first century, as well as the influences of both developments on the Reformed churches?*

The research begins with a historical introduction (chapter 1) about the forerunners of the different revival movements. By way of five characteristics, it becomes evident how the evangelicals fall back upon diverging sources within the Reformed tradition. In the twentieth century, the line emerges from the Pentecostal movement, via faith-

healers, to the charismatic renewal. In this way, the roots of the charismatic renewal come to light, as this becomes visible in the twenty-first century in the Reformed churches as well. Since the seventies a clearly profiled evangelical movement was formed, especially by parachurch organizations such as the EO, the Evangelische Alliantie (EA) [Evangelical Alliance], and the Evangelische Zendingsalliantie (EZA) [Evangelical Missionary Alliance]. Hereby the strength of the evangelical movement increased. The activities of these organizations attracted members of the Reformed churches. The evangelical movement had an effect in church life, the so-called evangelicization of the churches. In parallel, the evangelical movement and the Pentecostal movement grew closer to each other. Evangelical and charismatic began to overlap each other more and more. By way of the evangelical movement, also the charismatic renewal entered the Reformed churches.

Chapter 2 deals with the reactions in the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk and Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland to the Pentecostal movement, the charismatic renewal, and the evangelical movement. In this way it becomes clear how the charismatic renewal in the Reformed churches was prepared by an earlier phase, which influenced precisely the large Protestant denominations.

The open attitude regarding the Pentecostal movement in general and the subject of faith-healing in particular, is striking especially in the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk. This holds true not only for the local church of The Hague in that denomination, but also for the national synod.

A remarkable appreciation for the Pentecostal movement is evident in the synodical reports *Vragen rondom gebedsgenezing* (1959) [*Questions regarding faith-healing*], and *De kerk en de pinkstergroepen* (1960) [*The church and the Pentecostal groups*]. The synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland was more critical in their report *Het werk van de Heilige Geest in de gemeente* (1967) [*The work of the Holy Spirit in the congregation*]. An open attitude regarding the charismatic renewal grew also in the Gereformeerde Kerken during the seventies.

Through the rise of the charismatic renewal, the theology of the Pentecostal movement moved into the view of academic theology. During the seventies and eighties, at a number of theological departments, there were virtually permanently professors present, who showed a special interest for the work and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the significance of this for the church. Two of them, J.P. Versteeg (1938-1987) and C. Graafland (1928-2004), belonged to the churches, which are subject in this investigation. Others, particularly H. Berkhof (1914-1995) and J. Veenhof, functioned in later years as guiding figures for the shapers of opinion in the Reformed churches that wanted to be open to the gifts of the Spirit. The theological department of the Vrije Universiteit [Free University] developed into a center of interest for both the evangelical movement as well as the charismatic renewal. Still, appreciation and criticism alternated.

Also the rise and the growth of the evangelical movement in the Netherlands from the seventies drew the attention of church and theology. Particularly through the Evangelisch Werkverband (EW) [Evangelical Cooperation], subjects ended up on the agenda of the PKN, which are directly related with both the evangelical movement and the charismatic renewal. We mention baptism and baptismal remembrance, healing and liberation. In this way the evangelical movement received a recognizable and structural place within the PKN.

Chapter 3 takes inventory and shows how the Pentecostal movement, the charismatic renewal, and the evangelical movement drew attention in the Reformed churches. It is evident from the reactions, that the ideas and experience of faith in the Pentecostal circles were far removed from the Reformed churches. Criticism and warning dominated. In the Gereformeerde Bond people wrote quite freely about the themes from the Pentecostal movement, particularly G. Boer (1913-1973), who was chairman of the Gereformeerde Bond for a while, and whose work is repeatedly alluded to in later years.

The reflection about the charismatic renewal was accompanied by a critical view of spiritual life in their own churches. This led to appreciation for the attention for the work of the Holy Spirit in the charismatic renewal.

From this inventory it is also evident that the theme Reformed-and-evangelical was emphatically on the agenda of the Reformed churches. Shapers of opinion viewed the evangelicals as a movement, which at minimum confronts Reformed Christians with questions, also influences them, and possibly draws them away from their Reformed conviction.

Since the turn of the century, the subject of gifts of the Spirit received much attention as well in several Reformed churches. The charismatic coloured Alpha-course and New Wine proved to be popular, while reflection about the contents often only followed after enthusiastic adoption. This led to disgruntlement on the part of critics.

Chapters 4 through 8 shed light upon the shaping of opinion in the Gereformeerde Bond, the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, the Gereformeerde Gemeenten, the Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt), and the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken. Each time the beginning lay in the shaping of opinion in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century. This was the phase during which the evangelical movement arose. As the appeal of the evangelical movement grew stronger and the openness among the church members increased, the need grew for material reflecting on this. Therefore, the nineties, the period during which the evangelicalization of the churches became a theme, receive separate attention. The relationship evangelical-and-Reformed was experienced even more intensely in the twenty-first century. The evangelicalization continued. This was also accompanied with a growing openness for the gifts of the Spirit. The charismatic renewal obtained a foothold in various

Reformed churches. Hence light is shed upon this theme in separate paragraphs. The closing paragraph of each chapter describes the development in the shaping of opinion of the denomination, relates this to the character of that particular church, and shows the consequences of this attitude. Then follows an expectation how the evangelical movement and charismatic renewal will continue to appeal to the church and what choice of position this requires.

In taking a position regarding the evangelical movement and the charismatic renewal, in broad terms, three attitudes became manifest, namely struggling with, resistance to, and opening up to them. This threefold division is in turn related to the character of the Reformed churches. The first attitude we find in the Gereformeerde Bond in the PKN and the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken. The Gereformeerde Gemeenten are characterized by an attitude of resistance. The Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken and later also the Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt) are open to them.

In chapter 4 it becomes clear that the subject of evangelical movement had a growing influence in the Gereformeerde Bond. From the very beginning we see in the Gereformeerde Bond both an explicitly open attitude towards the evangelical movement as well as more reticence, among others in the board. The great appreciation of C. Graafland (1928-2004) for the evangelical movement sprang from a desire for spiritual renewal and a critical attitude regarding what he called an increasing spiritual rigidity in his own circle.

In the early nineties, the board drew up the position paper *Gereformeerd en evangelisch* [*Reformed and Evangelical*], to provide guidance to the hervormd-gereformeerde circle [a term describing the constituency of the Gereformeerde Bond], evidently from concern about the evangelical influences. The brochure led to critical reactions by hervormd-gereformeerde shapers of opinion.

In 1990, the same year as the position paper, an Open Brief [Open Letter] was published voicing the desire for renewal of the congregations in a time of progressing secularization. The letter brought to light that the hervormd-gereformeerde people were internally divided about the themes, which are related to the evangelical movement. This was also true for the existing different emphases regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in personal conversion on the one hand, and the renewal of the congregation on the other hand. Questions about the appreciation of modern culture also played a role in the background.

Graafland, likewise in 1990, expressed his conviction that the Reformed churches have a 'charismatic lack', because they experience no charismatic renewal. For that reason, according to him, they emanated but little appeal.

Other shapers of opinion, particularly conservative ministers, saw confusion originating in the congregations where the evangelical influence was present. They asked attention for the theological differences, which, according to their opinion,

were associated. The evangelical experience of faith, for instance, influences the view of God and the view of man.

In the twenty-first century we see among the hervormd-gereformeerde people a constant struggle regarding the evangelical movement. Particularly with respect to liturgy, much was set into motion. Revival hymns were introduced. New song-books stimulated singing them. Critics saw a connection between the appearance of the song-book *Weerklank* and changes in the preaching. Particularly in the doctrine of salvation and man's place and his choices in this connection, the shapers of opinion observed differences between evangelical and Reformed.

Also with respect to the sacrament of baptism the evangelical influence exerted itself. Church members, even office-bearers, had themselves baptized again, while parents no longer wanted to have their children baptized. The board took the point of view that re-baptizing is more an error than a sin. In the twenty-first century, G. van den Brink, J. Hoek, and W. Verboom, were professors employed by the Gereformeerde Bond, who, although not without criticism, took an open attitude towards the evangelical movement. For Hoek this was also true regarding charismatic renewal. Among the hervormd-gereformeerde people there was for a long time an undercurrent which opened up itself for the subject of gifts by the Spirit.

M.J. Paul, among other things instructor at the Christelijke Hogeschool Ede (CHE), may be called a pioneer in thoroughly surveying subjects which are current within the charismatic renewal. This led to a thorough study of the Bible and early church history. Also J. Hoek taught at the CHE, whereby this was one of the hotbeds which stimulated openness for the gifts of the Spirit.

W. van Vlastuin, together with his colleague P. de Vries, was spokesman for the conviction that special gifts of the Spirit are limited to the apostolic period. Meanwhile, both now belong to the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk.

Chapter 5 directs itself to the shaping of opinion in the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken. Already at an early stage, several Christelijke Gereformeerde ministers were involved in governing the EO and EA. That stimulated the shaping of opinion. Crossing ecclesiastical boundaries stimulated this as well. The statistics of the annual church directories showed a continually increasing number of members that were lost to the evangelical groups.

A considerable portion of this shaping of opinion came from the instructors at their own institute to train ministers, the Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn. We already mentioned the name of J.P. Versteeg, who, in his denomination during the seventies, was a pioneer in seeking relationships with charismatic and evangelical Christians. Versteeg wanted to interrelate closely church, office, and gifts of the Spirit, in a desire for spiritual renewal of the church. He considered this renewal necessary in light of secularization.

Church historian W. van 't Spijker asked attention for the Reformed tradition, which,

in his view, is richer than the evangelical one. However, then the church must be truly Reformed, including the inner experience of Reformed theology. Others as well saw in the mirror of the evangelical movement the shortcomings of the church, where joy, assurance, and drawing power were often lacking. Remarkable in the nineties is the positive way in which several Christelijke Gereformeerde ministers wrote about the evangelical movement. There was also room for this in national periodicals of the denomination such as *De Wekker* and *Ambtelijk Contact*. At the university, however, J.W. Maris was especially critical towards the revival movements. After the turn of the century the subject of the evangelical movement came on the table of the general synod. The diverging judgments about the evangelical movement became evident there.

During those years, the instructors of the university at Apeldoorn took a reticent and critical attitude with respect to the charismatic renewal. Maris felt it as his calling to equip the churches and make them resilient regarding charismatic influences. He saw far-reaching changes taking place, whereas not so much faith, but experiences, threatened to become the core of Christian life.

Other professors tried to extract teaching moments from the encounter between Reformed and charismatic. Within the denomination, the minister J.G. Brienens was more or less the leader of the opinion of having a definite positive appreciation of the charismatic renewal. His ideal was a church wherein the gifts of the Spirit are fully practised.

The Gereformeerde Gemeenten are discussed in chapter 6. In the seventies and eighties more attention was focussed on the EO than on the evangelical movement in general. There were also but few points of contact between that denomination, with an emphasis on the Scriptural-experimental preaching, and the evangelical movement. The objections against the evangelicals were chiefly theological in character and directed themselves to subjects such as universal redemption and free will. Shapers of opinion saw a danger for self-conceit and felt called to warn against this. After the turn of the century, the shapers of opinion observed stronger influences from the evangelical movement upon their own church members. For instance, the number of changes of membership in the direction of evangelical groups gradually increased. Evidently, a portion of the members were susceptible for the evangelical faith-experience. Shapers of opinion explained this from the attractive elements of the evangelical faith-experience, which, in their view, easily leads to self-deception. The urge to warn increased thereby. Even though it was regularly remarked that the evangelicals hold up a mirror, still, the movement was mostly considered as a danger. The mirror-function of the evangelicals regarded especially points such as concern about our neighbour, the urge to spread the gospel, and mutual love in the congregation.

The attention for the charismatic renewal was stimulated more by developments on

the outside than within the denomination. Criticism was fundamental. The emphasis was on the unique and once-for-all character of the apostolic time. During that time God gave new revelations, which were basic for the Christian church. These revelations received their due in the books of the New Testament. That gave a great reticence about gifts of the Spirit, particularly gifts which seemed to go into the direction of new revelations.

The shaping of opinion about the evangelical movement in the Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt) (chapter 7), reflects the development which this denomination experienced since the seventies of the twentieth century.

In the seventies and eighties, the denomination formed a tight bulwark, characterized by their vision on covenant and baptism, confession and church. From these firmly anchored points of view, the evangelical movement was critically judged. The professors at the Theologische Universiteit Kampen, along with the national periodical *De Reformatie*, had an authoritative position in this shaping of opinion. The view of C. Trimp (1926-2012), that the special gifts of the Spirit served to strengthen the developments in the beginning period of the apostolic church, was passed on for a long time as an authoritative view.

The critical attitude began to meet resistance in the nineties. It was a signal that the unity of the denomination was beginning to experience pressure. Among the younger generation, a need developed for a more personal experience of faith, over against a rational approach to faith in their denominational tradition. This need fit with what the evangelical movement had to offer. This resulted in the older generation especially continuing to hold unto the old points of view, while the younger generation took an open attitude toward the evangelical movement. Particularly around the person of W.G. de Vries (1926-2006) this led to a considerable collision. As a minister with authority, he used his influence to the utmost to preserve the inheritance of the Vrijmaking [i.e. the name of their 'liberation' in 1944 from the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland] and to defend it against evangelical influences. From the reactions, however, it was evident that the younger generation wanted to digest this inheritance in an independent and open manner.

In the twenty-first century, this development became increasingly clearer. The openness regarding the evangelical movement increased, and, as a consequence of this, room developed for singing revival hymns during the worship service. The national synod trailed the events. Local churches kept stretching the synodical guidelines, hence the assembly could do little else but follow what the churches were already doing. The synod of Ede (2014) continued this trend by allowing the local churches to choose their songs. This meant a foundational change in the way how the churches are governed.

Regarding the subject of baptism as well, the evangelical influences became visible. Voices arose in the denomination to leave room for members, who do not want to

have their child baptized. Especially for this denomination this is a crucial issue, because infant baptism and the covenant had always been closely tied together. Conservative shapers of opinion had much difficulty with all these developments, from concern that the distinctive character of the denominational tradition would be lost even more.

Charismatic renewal attracted much attention during the twenty-first century. Particularly in the period of 2004 and 2008 the amount of shaping of opinion is remarkably large. It is also remarkable that in the discussions about the charismatic renewal, the theological and church historical arguments were not always decisive anymore. Personal experiences persuaded several ministers to open up themselves for charismatic renewal.

It remained rather quiet regarding the thorough theological document *The Candlestand Statement*, with a critical view of charismatic renewal. Within the churches there seemed to be more a feeling of being at a loss with the document than that there was joy about it. These developments had as a consequence, that the younger generation appealed but little to their predecessors and even criticized their work. This led A.N. Hendriks to begin using the arguments within his own denomination, which he had used in the eighties of the twentieth century against the charismatic movement. A generation-gap developed, whereby people had difficulty understanding each other.

In the twenty-first century, a new generation of academic personnel came to the fore at the Theologische Universiteit Kampen, that met the charismatic renewal in a sympathetic-critical manner. They wanted to stand within the Reformed tradition, but at the same time sought room to integrate charismatic thought into the Reformed tradition.

Chapter 8 describes the shaping of opinion in the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken, the denomination which, from its origin in the late sixties, had an open attitude, also towards the evangelical movement. This became evident in the crossing of ecclesiastical borders with the evangelical movement. That developed in the direction of a balance between incoming and departing members.

For the denomination, the seventies and eighties were a time of building up their own church life. This is also the reason why the shaping of opinion about the evangelical movement only really started toward the end of the eighties. The attitude toward the evangelical movement was nearly always explicitly sympathetic, while the shapers of opinion did want to maintain the Reformed element. A. van der Dussen took a leading position in shaping opinion about the evangelical movement. He stimulated theological analysis of the Reformed and evangelical tradition in the light of the secularized time.

The ongoing discussions about evangelical themes were continued in the twenty-first century, particularly about infant baptism and revival hymns. J. Mudde emphasized

the unity of faith of both Reformed and evangelicals in such a way, that concrete points of difference, also regarding baptism, became subservient to this. Other shapers of opinion yielded less room for dedicating children instead of baptizing them. The shaping of opinion about the evangelical movement as a whole, soon came to an end after the nineties, whereas the attention was focussed on the activities of the church of Houten. The local ministerial couple, D.A. Westerkamp and J. Westerkamp-Stegeman, played a large role in the introduction of the charismatic coloured Alpha-course and the charismatic renewal movement New Wine. Westerkamp presented these as concepts, which did not overthrow the Reformed conviction, but rather complemented it. That complementation could also actually be experienced at conferences and retreats. In this manner, the charismatic renewal reached many local churches.

From the theological reflection, among others by W. Smouter, it became evident that the charismatic renewal influenced several parts of the doctrine, such as Christology, pneumatology, the doctrine of creation, and eschatology. In this fashion, a harmonious theological concept developed around the charismatic renewal.

The research question is further developed in chapter 9. The appeal of the evangelical movement and the charismatic renewal is related to societal and cultural developments. The revival movements were on the one hand a counter-weight against societal development, but on the other hand interacted with them. In both cases this increased their attractiveness. Societal tendencies such as individualization, subjectivation, internationalization, and the erosion of authority, decreased the bond to the Reformed conviction. The emphasis on man with his experience and the choice of man render the evangelical movement and the charismatic renewal precisely so attractive.

This sensitivity for culture gives to the evangelical movement and the charismatic renewal more possibilities to reach the secularized man with the Gospel. As secularization continued, the need also increased for signs that God is working. The signs of God's Spirit are then also needed to remain standing in the severe struggle against the powers which draw away from God. Healing connects with a culture, which has a strong affinity with health.

The societal and cultural developments require a continual reflection, which is worked out by way of these concepts: becoming conscious, being concerned, and being dependent. Afterwards we express the expectation that evangelical and charismatic influences will exert an abiding pressure upon the Reformed churches. But it is even thinkable that secularization is going to become dominant in both the evangelical movement as well as the Reformed churches.

The evangelical movement and the charismatic renewal present themselves as Biblical movements which want to call attention to God's Word, including those portions, which, according to their conviction, remain underemphasized in the

traditional churches. Both critics as well as proponents of charismatic renewal – and they especially – appeal to the early church. Critics appeal more to the Reformation and particularly to Calvin. After all, he places the work of the Holy Ghost entirely in the context of Christ's redemptive work. The sometimes contradictory appeal to sources necessitates a continual reflection upon the theology of the early church, the Reformation, the Reformed confessions, and Puritanism.

In the meeting between evangelical-and-Reformed, specific theological themes are also involved, such as the relationship between the Old and New Testament, the sovereignty of God, free will, the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, the relationship justification and sanctification, the view of the church, and the doctrine of the sacraments, especially infant baptism. Shapers of opinion, who seek to approach the evangelical movement, are inclined to emphasize the similarities more than the differences. They also tend to see the points of difference, for instance regarding baptism, as secondary matters. Critics of the evangelical movement relate the opinions about baptism to subjects as covenant and free will. Hereby the weight of the subject increases and the difference of insight becomes more serious. The core of the difference lies in the difference between the view of God and the view of man. In the evangelical movement, an optimistic view of man dominates, which goes together with the doctrine of free will. In the doctrine of God, His holiness and righteousness come little to the fore. The expectation is quite general that evangelical influences in the Reformed churches are lasting. This evangelicalization is promoted by the evangelical concept of the church, which fits with the modern network society.

In view of the continuing secularization, several shapers of opinion see the differences between the Reformed and evangelicals diminishing, also on account of the decrease of doctrinal knowledge of one's own tradition. A diminishing connection to the Reformed tradition yields more room for decision at the level of feeling.

Also in the relationship Reformed-and-charismatic, numerous theological subjects are involved. G. Riemer mentioned the doctrine of revelation, the view of Scripture, exegesis, the doctrine of the covenant, the history of redemption, Christology, pneumatology, the doctrine of the offices, the doctrine of the church, Christian life, the practice of prayer. J. Veenhof posited that from the charismatic renewal, 'actually all parts of the doctrine of faith' end up 'in a new perspective.' The core of the discussion regards the way in which the Triune God reveals Himself. In addition, the finished Surety-work of Christ as a work of the Triune God and the unity of Christ's Surety-work, in all the events of redemption, is important.

Next, the question is discussed whether theology remains Reformed, if there are evangelical and charismatic influences which are not negligible. Shapers of opinion, who are open for these influences, see in Reformed theology room to integrate that which is evangelical and charismatic. According to them, the evangelical and

charismatic theology can correct Reformed theology. Both proponents as well as opponents of evangelical and charismatic influences call themselves Reformed and want to remain so. Evidently, they differ among themselves in opinion what it means to be Reformed. While for the one to be rightly Reformed means that there is also room for gifts of the Spirit and that it is good for the church to strive for this, yet for the other to be rightly Reformed means that these gifts of the Spirit are typical for the apostolic period and for special situations afterwards. The conviction that the gifts of the Spirit should have an essential place in church life is then harmful for Reformed theology. At the same time, it is evident that the concept Reformed is in development within the Reformed tradition.

Upon the question whether theology remains Reformed, if there are evangelical and charismatic influences which are not negligible, we give personally no affirmative answer. When it concerns the relationship between God and man, there is, in various revival movements, too little attention for the decisive initiative from God's side, and structurally the emphasis lies too much upon the answer of man. An optimistic view of man affects various parts of the doctrine and practice of faith.

The concluding chapter continues with suggestions for further study. This pertains to the character and the extent of evangelical and charismatic influences in the Reformed churches, as well as the ecumenism of the heart for the doctrine of faith which is delivered unto us. Research is also desirable into the policy of consistories with regard to evangelical expressions in one's own ecclesiastical congregation. Another field of research concerns evangelical songs with the significance and influence of this for the experience of faith and preaching.

More thorough research of the sources to which the charismatic renewal appeals, is desirable as well. This regards also continuing Biblical-theological research about the dogmatic subjects in the relationship between Reformed and evangelical/charismatic. Finally, systematic research is important into the relationship between God and man, particularly in evangelical theology, and this relative to the view and experience of baptism.

In the epilogue, we emphasize the relevance of foundational disputes in church history, especially those which concerned the relationship between God and man. Only if that relationship is purely seen and experienced, there is truly Spiritual renewal, as the apostle Paul wrote about this in Romans 8:6-14.