

Repercussions of the Berlin Declaration in the Netherlands¹

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Introduction

This paper investigates the repercussions of the 1909 Berlin Declaration in the Netherlands. In the course of 1907 the Pentecostal Movement took off in Europe, including the Netherlands. The initial enthusiasm in some religious periodicals was soon reversed after alarming news from Germany reached the Netherlands. Irregularities in Kassel (1907) escalating in the Berlin Declaration (1909) had a negative effect on Dutch attitudes towards the Pentecostals.

We start with a brief sketch of the ecclesiastical situation, and then the impact of the Holiness Movement and of the Welsh Revival (1905) upon the churches in the Netherlands is identified. Hereafter the focus is on how the events in Germany influenced the churches in the Netherlands.

Ecclesiastical Situation

According to the 1909 national census, 95% of the population in the Netherlands belonged to a church (including 1,8% Israelites). About 89% of the population held membership in the larger churches: Roman Catholic Church (35%), Netherlands Reformed (44%), or other – more conservative – reformed churches (10%). The remaining 6% were Lutheran, Mennonite or belonged to a variety of small groups like the Free Evangelicals, Baptists, Darbyists, Salvation Army, Pentecostals etc.² As Catholics and Protestants

¹ Paper presented to the Internationale und Interdisziplinäre Tagung 100 Jahre Berliner Erklärung, Erzhausen, 27. und 28. März 2009.

² H. Faber e.a., *Ontkerkelijking en buitenkerkelijkheid in Nederland tot 1960*, Assen 1970, 28:

National Census 1909

	members	%
Roman Catholic	2.053.021	35,0
Netherlands Reformed	2.588.261	44,2
Gereformeerd*	567.171	9,7
Lutheran	81.833	1,4
Mennonite	64.245	1,1
Remonstrant (Armenian)	27.450	0,5
Other churches	78.557	1,3
Israelite	106.409	1,8
No church	290.960	5,0
Population	5.858.175	

*Gereformeerd refers to Gereformeerde Kerken, Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk, Gereformeerde Gemeenten and Oud Gereformeerde Gemeenten. Other smaller reformed churches are under Other churches.

had very little in common in these days, except in the political realm, it comes as no surprise that the Berlin Declaration was unnoticed by Catholics. For repercussions we therefore have to look at the Protestant churches.

The Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC) had suffered several secessions in the 19th century. The separatists were conservative believers who were dissatisfied with the influence of the Dutch government in church affairs, disliked the power of the Synod, but most of all felt the NRC had gone astray by accepting a liberal theology. A number of conservative reformed churches were the result, the two larger being the Gereformeerde Kerken ('Re-Reformed Churches' led by Abraham Kuyper) and the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk (Christian Reformed Church). The Vrije Evangelische Kerken (Free Evangelical Churches) were also an offshoot of these secessions. Not all conservative believers left the NRC. Those that stayed likewise opposed the liberal theology, but saw it as their responsibility to lead the sick church back to its sound reformed foundation. To this end the Confessionele Vereeniging (Confessional Association) was founded in 1865. They were also active in appointing itinerant evangelists.³ The Association worked within the NRC, but in time some of their workers and mission posts turned independent. In 1909 an even more conservative wing in the NRC organized itself into the Gereformeerde Bond (Reformed Union). The second part of the 19th century saw the influx of several new denominations coming from abroad: Apostolics, Darbyists, Baptists, Adventists, Salvation Army.

Of all the above mentioned churches the Re-Reformed Church, the Free Evangelicals and the Baptists as well as some independent missions showed clear awareness in their publications of the developments in the German Gemeinschaftsbewegung and reported about the Kassel irregularities and the Berlin Declaration. During the 1920's the NRC minister H. Bakker would use the Kassel events to ridicule the Pentecostals. This portrayal would serve as a caricature of the Pentecostals for years to come.

Holiness Movement

The North American 19th century Holiness movement was an important antecedent of the 20th century Pentecostal revival. Inspired by Wesleyan Methodism, the Holiness movement emphasized revivalism and holiness. Donald W. Dayton and others have demonstrated how the emphasis on a second blessing led to a new interest in the work of the Holy Spirit and to the introduction of the term: baptism with the Holy Spirit.⁴

³ Cf. G. J. Mink, *Op het tweede plan. Evangelisten in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw*, Leiden 1995. These and other evangelistic activities were modelled after British and to a lesser extend after German examples (193).

⁴ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, Methuchen/NJ 1987.

American Holiness preacher Robert Pearsall Smith with his wife Hannah Whitall Smith accompanied by Moody and Sankey held successful Conventions for the Promotion of Holiness held in Oxford (1874) and in Brighton (1875). A small number of Dutch ministers, among them Abraham Kuyper and Pierre Huet (NCR), were present at Brighton. In *De Standaard* Kuyper wrote that Brighton had been a Bethel for him. The "holy presence of the living God had been revealed to his soul more impressingly than ever before".⁵ During 1875 Pearsall Smith held meetings in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. His message that justification should be followed by sanctification and his emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit aroused the interest of many.

Kuyper tried to integrate this message into Dutch Calvinism.⁶ However, immediately after the meetings the promoter of Holiness, Pearsall Smith demonstrated an improper conduct and fell into disgrace.⁷ This unfortunate turn of events seems to have caused Kuyper to abandon his efforts to harmonize Methodism with Calvinism.⁸ His interest in the work of the Holy Spirit developed along different lines and resulted in his three volume *Het werk van den Heiligen Geest* (1888-1889).⁹ Huet continued to propagate the Holiness message by means of his paper *Het Eeuwige Leven* and by revival meetings called "Samenkomsten tot opwekking van het geestelijke leven" (Meetings to revive spiritual life). J. G. Smitt (1845-1908) minister of the Christian Reformed Church in Amsterdam co-operated in these interdenominational meetings. When Smitt had to answer to charges of unorthodox teaching, he left his denomination together with the nearly 1 000 members of his parish and formed a very active Free Evangelical church (Weteringskerk). Smitt expected a new baptism with the Holy Spirit for all Christians, the latter rain. He distinguished between the "work of the Holy

⁵ J. C. Rullmann, Abraham Kuyper: Een levensschets, Kampen 1928, 81. Cf. W. F. A. Winckel, *Leven en Arbeid van Dr. A. Kuyper*, Amsterdam 1919, 64-67.

⁶ Rullmann, 78-94.

⁷ J. C. Rullmann, Kuyper-Bibliografie. Den Haag 1923, 189-90; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, Grand Rapids 1978, 178-79; G. Brillenburg Wurth, *De gemeenschapsbeweging en de beweging van Möttlingen*, in: *Beproeft de geesten*, Culemborg 1934, 178.

⁸ This suggestion was made by Winckel, 67.

⁹ A. Kuyper, *Het werk van den Heiligen Geest*, 3 vols., Amsterdam 1888-1889. In this work Kuyper turned against Pietism and Methodism. He distinguished eight (!) separate stages of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer: 1. rebirth (in Kuyper's terminology the implanting of the ability to believe); 2. preservation of the implanted new life; 3. calling; 4. conviction of sin and justification; 5. conversion; 6. sanctification; 7. complete deliverance of all sin at death; 8. glorification (2: 129-133). In his discussion of the spiritual gifts Kuyper simply ascertained that the gifts of tongues and interpretation and of physical healing no longer functioned. The gift of prophecy operated in the preaching of the Word (1: 244-250).

Spirit" at conversion and the "fulfilment with the Holy Spirit" as a subsequent empowering for service.¹⁰

The above-mentioned Brighton convention gave rise to the annual Keswick conventions, initiated by Vicar T. D. Harford-Battersby in 1875. Keswick became the centre of British Holiness teaching. The initial emphasis upon eradication of sin was substituted by an emphasis upon the power of the Spirit for Christian service.¹¹ To a large extent the Keswick teachers had embraced the dispensational premillennialism of John Nelson Darby, which added an eschatological tension to the holiness message.¹² They came to expect a great world-wide revival, a second Pentecost, to precede the premillennial coming of Christ. Important exponents were Dwight L. Moody, Reuben A. Torrey, A. B. Simpson, A. J. Gordon, C. I. Scofield and Arthur T. Pierson. In 1895 Torrey in his *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit* presented the Spirit baptism as a definite experience for the purpose of empowering for service, subsequent to regeneration. Both the Wesleyan wing and the (non-Wesleyan) Keswick wing of the Holiness movement obviously paved the way for the later Pentecostal revival. Another area in which the Holiness movement was a forerunner of Pentecostalism was in the proclamation of faith healing. This message, though not generally accepted, was put forward much in the line with later Pentecostals by Charles Cullis, William Boardman, A. B. Simpson and others.¹³

The influence of the Holiness movement was strong in Germany, where in combination with elements of Pietism it gave rise to the Gemeinschaftsbewegung.¹⁴ Books by Finney, Mahan, Torrey and by the South-African Andrew Murray appeared in the German and Dutch language. In the Netherlands the influence was more limited to individual ministers in the NRC, free missions and smaller denominations. A new impulse arrived with the Welsh Revival.

¹⁰ J. Kuiper, *Geschiedenis van het godsdienstig en kerkelijk leven in Nederland*, Utrecht 1900), 486; J. Karelse, *Zijn takken over de muur*, Utrecht 1956), 72.

¹¹ Sandeen, 179; William M. Menzies, *The Non-Wesleyan Origins of the Pentecostal Movement*, in: *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*, 86.

¹² Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, New York/Oxford 1979), 41; Sandeen, 179.

¹³ Melvin E. Dieter, *Wesleyan-Holiness Aspects of Pentecostal Origins*, in: *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*, 67-69; Donald Dayton, *The Rise of the Evangelical Healing Movement in Nineteenth Century America*, in: *Pneuma* 4/1, Spring 1982, 1-18.

¹⁴ For a full discussion: Paul Fleisch, *Die Moderne Gemeinschaftsbewegung in Deutschland*, vol. 1: *Die Geschichte der deutschen Gemeinschaftsbewegung bis zum Auftreten des Zungenredens, 1875-1907*, Leipzig 31912.

Welsh Revival

In terms much familiar with the Holiness movement, but with an additional feature of fervent enthusiasm, the Welsh Revival of 1904–1905 intensified the existing expectations for a further outpouring of the Spirit among many circles of believers around the world. J. Cynddylan Jones noticed:

“The present Revival, however, whilst not obscuring the doctrine of the Cross, has brought into prominence the doctrine of the Spirit. Thousands of Christians, who had received the Christ, have now received the Holy Ghost”.¹⁵

In the Netherlands the expectancy was fed by enthusiastic reports in religious papers such as *De Nederlander*, *Maran-Atha*, *Jeruël* and *Ermelosch Zendingsblad*. In February 1905 six men, among whom were two NRC ministers, Bähler and Kuijman, and two lay evangelists, T. van Essen and Johan de Heer, spent one week in Wales. At London during meetings held by Torrey they met Jacob Vetter, co-founder with Jonathan Paul of the *Deutsche Zelt-Mission* in 1902. In Wales they were deeply touched by the ongoing revival. They conversed with Evan Roberts, who showed signs of overexertion.¹⁶ L. H. A. Bähler described his experience:

“Among the wonderful things enjoyed in Wales one thing unforgettable to me is a church meeting, where in one corner was prayer, in another thanksgiving and elsewhere jubilation and singing. It all seemed confusing, but it was not. It was a great forest where one hears all kinds of birds singing and warbling together and yet there is no disharmony. And it was as if I saw a leading of the Holy Spirit from the beginning till the end.”¹⁷

Back in the Netherlands Johan de Heer and T. van Essen were invited by different churches and circles to speak about their experiences in Wales. This led to numerous revival meetings throughout the country. As in the 1870th after Brighton these meetings were called: “Samenkomsten tot opwekking van geestelijk leven”. Several NRC ministers participated, a number of Free Evangelical and some Lutheran ministers as well as some independent evangelists. Netherlands Reformed minister M. ten Broek in his booklet *De Geestelijke Opwekking in Holland* (Spiritual Revival in Holland) described the spiritual awakening that followed the Welsh Revival. He saw two streams in the history of the church since the reformation that needed each other: dogmatism and Pietism. The first without the latter would become dry and dead, but the converse would lead to separatism and Methodism. In this context he welcomed the awakening as a move of God’s Spirit. The blessing Ten Broek personally received he called his “Spirit baptism”.¹⁸

¹⁵ J. Cynddylan Jones, Introduction, in: *The Awakening in Wales and some of the Hidden Springs*, Jessie Penn Lewis, London 1905, 6; Cf. *Evans*, 195.

¹⁶ *Job. de Heer*, ‘K zal gedenken, Den Haag 1949, 35.

¹⁷ *De Heer*, *Gedenken*, 34–35.

¹⁸ *M. ten Broek*, *De Geestelijke Opwekking in Holland*, Ermelo 21905, 6–8, 46–48.

As a direct result some missions were formed and the interdenominational *Nederlandsche Tentzending* (Dutch Tent Mission) was founded. The latter followed the example of the *German Tent Mission*. In 1904 and 1905 Jacob Vetter had been in the Netherlands and reported about his tent mission.¹⁹ With the help of Vetter a huge tent was bought (2 000 seats, costs f 10 000,-). The official opening was held in September 1906 at Apeldoorn in the presence of Queen Wilhelmina. The revival meetings were continued in the tent. Netherlands Reformed, Lutheran, Free Evangelical and Baptist ministers worked together with lay evangelists like Johan de Heer and T. van Essen. In general, however, the Reformed and Re-Reformed clergy had no sympathy with the tent mission.

The intention was to evangelize the unbelievers. In practice those that were reached were for the most part faithful church-goers.²⁰ During the meetings those who were not certain of their salvation were invited to remain for the after-meetings, where many received the desired assurance. Believers that were blessed in this way were often no longer understood in their own church and therefore longed for fellowship with like-minded. The smaller churches: Free Evangelical, Baptist, Darbyist and free circles were ready to welcome the converts in their midst, thus benefitting the most from the results. Of course this annoyed the ministers of the larger churches. H. J. Couvée, one of the Reformed ministers who co-operated with the tent mission, commented:

"I have had so much sorrow from free circles and small churches, who very brotherly pray with you and evangelize with you, but behind your back take your church members, when they have come to the Saviour, away from your church, that although I believe that we will be able to live together in heaven, I do not believe that this is possible on this sinful earth."²¹

In December 1922, when the *Nederlandsche Tentzending* had declined, the *Nederlandsche Christelijke Gemeenschapsbond* was founded, modelled after the German *Gemeinschaftsbewegung*. Having learned from the experience with the tent mission, it was decided to work strictly within the "churches of the Reformation", i. e. Netherlands Reformed, Mennonite, Re-Reformed, Lutheran.²² H. J. Couvée explicitly called the *Nederlandsche Christelijke Gemeenschapsbond* a direct result of the Welsh Revival.²³ The *Nederlandsche Tentzending* and the *Nederlandsche Christelijke Gemeenschapsbond* had close contacts with the German *Zelt-Mission* and *Gemeinschaftsbewegung*. This greatly determined their negative attitude towards the Pentecostals. Since 1959 they are member of the *Gnadauer Verband*.

¹⁹ H. J. Couvée, Tien jaar Tentarbeid 1906–1916, in: Maran-Atha 7/7 (October 1916), 53.

²⁰ H. J. Couvée, Is de Gemeenschapsbeweging nodig? n.p.: Ned. Chr. Gemeenschapsbond, 1927, 4.

²¹ H. J. Couvée, De Nederlandsche Christelijke Gemeenschapsbond zijn ontstaan, zijn bedoeling en zijn beginselen, Amerongen, 9–10.

²² Ibid. 10, 14; Couvée, Is Gemeenschapsbeweging nodig?, 5.

²³ Couvée, De Nederlandsche Christelijke Gemeenschapsbond, 5.

Johannes de Heer (1866-1961), son of a blacksmith, was brought up in the Netherlands Reformed church. He married in 1889. The death of his oldest daughter in 1896 led to his conversion. Through contact with the city mission *Jeruël* in Rotterdam he found peace with God. Nevertheless he first joined the Seventh day Adventists for a period of six and a half years. P. H. Ritter Jr. in his biography of Johan de Heer characterized this time with the legalistic Adventists as a period of penance and self-chastisement, which satisfied his need to bring sacrifices.²⁴ In 1902 De Heer broke with the Adventists and became an active helper of the city mission *Jeruël*. It was an independent mission, founded in 1894, that, like the Salvation Army, paired proclaiming the gospel with social welfare work. De Heer noticed the lack of unity in song within the free circles to which *Jeruël* belonged. On some conferences one needed half a dozen different songbooks. From the English "Victory Songs" and the various songbooks used at *Jeruël* he compiled a new songbook that was completed just before he visited the Welsh Revival in February 1905.

At Wales he received a vision while sitting on the platform during a meeting. Nearly 39 years of age he was called to work as an evangelist in word and song.²⁵ With some Welsh songs added to it his songbook became an immediate success during the many revival meetings and conferences that followed. In one of these meetings Arie Kok, the later Pentecostal missionary to China, who had also visited Wales, gave his testimony.²⁶ With the outbreak of the first World War the evangelist Johan de Heer transformed into a prophet of the end time. His eschatology was taken from Darbyism, rather than from Adventism. As from 1919 his "maranatha" message was carried by his own paper *Het Zoeklicht* followed by "Zoeklicht" conferences and tent-crusades. He saw his interdenominational work as a fruit of the Welsh Revival.²⁷ Johan de Heer was among the first in the Netherlands to write about the Pentecostal revival at Los Angeles and Christiana. After his initial enthusiastic reports the German evangelicals quickly informed him of the alleged diabolic origin of the movement causing De Heer to denounce his earlier statements.²⁸ Nevertheless, Johan de Heer contributed much to the Dutch Pentecostals by means of his songbook. From the start to this present day it has been widely used, supplemented with specific Pentecostal songs.

²⁴ P. H. Ritter Jr., *Over Joh. de Heer*, Baarn [1936], 14.

²⁵ *Job. de Heer*, 'K zal gedenken, 19-21.

²⁶ *Job. de Heer*, *Reiservaringen*, in: *Jeruël* no. 105 (August 1905), 3.

²⁷ *Job. de Heer*, 'K zal gedenken, 31. For life and work of Joh. de Heer see also articles by *Henk Fonteyn*, *Johannes de Heer: Prediker van de parousie*, in: *Religieuze bewegingen in Nederland* 9, ed. R. Kranenburg, Amsterdam 1984, 30-39; *Johannes de Heer: Een theologisch portret*, in: *Soteria* 3/3 (September 1985), 19-22.

²⁸ *Job. de Heer*, *Op den uitkijk*, in: *Jeruël*, April 1907 and January 1908. Quoted in: *Ermelosch Zendingsblad* 48/5 (May 1907), 1-4; 49/2 (February 1908), 5-11.

In summary it can be said that the Welsh Revival led to a modest spiritual awakening in the Netherlands during 1905 from which in the end the smaller churches and free circles benefitted the most. It also resulted in the founding of the *Nederlandsche Tentzending*, the *Nederlandsche Christelijke Gemeenschapsbond* and *Het Zoeklicht*. The Pentecostal movement in the Netherlands, which began during 1907, was only effected indirectly.

Pentecostalism in the Netherlands

The Pentecostal Movement in the Netherlands started with a small independent prayer group in Amsterdam led by the couple Gerrit and Wilhelmine Polman.²⁹ Most of the members were ex-Salvationists who had become interested in John Alexander Dowie from Zion, Illinois. Sometime during 1906 they heard of the revival in Azusa Street through the paper *Apostolic Faith*. They accepted the Pentecostal message of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues and started to pray for the same experience. In October 1907 Mrs. Polman was the first to receive this Spirit Baptism. Gerrit Polman received his Pentecost in Sunderland, June 1908. Polman attended the first Pentecostal Conference in Hamburg, Germany, December 1908, and would remain in close contact with the German Pentecostals.

Polman introduced the Pentecostal message wherever he could. This was usually limited to small circles; for instance of Dowie adherents, independent missions, or Baptist believers in Sneek and Harlingen. His goal to be a blessing for all the churches was not attainable. Most church doors were simply not open to the Pentecostal messenger. Nevertheless the Pentecostal gatherings he led were frequented by members from all kinds of Protestant churches. Some NRC ministers who took the time to investigate the Pentecostal Movement personally came to positive descriptions, in particular G. A. Wumkes and J. H. Gunning, but they were exceptions.

From caution to condemnation

Among the first references to the Pentecostal revival found in the Dutch press was one by the lay evangelist Johan de Heer and dated April 1907. In the paper *Jeruël* he gave an enthusiastic report of the revival that quickly spread from Los Angeles throughout the world.³⁰ According to this report one hundred had received the Spirit Baptism in Sweden, many were healed and spoke and sang in tongues. The author referred to well known Jonathan Paul who in his paper *Die Heiligung* recommended the movement. A few months later, while on a business trip in Germany, evangelical

²⁹ Cf. C. van der Laan, *Sectarian Against His Will*. Gerrit Roelof Polman and the Birth of Pentecostalism in the Netherlands, Metuchen/N.J. 1990.

³⁰ Johan de Heer, *Op den uitkijk*, in: *Jeruël* nr. 124 (April 1907). Also in: *Ermelosch Zendingsblad* 48/5 (May 1907), 1-4.

colleagues informed Johan de Heer of the irregularities that had taken place at Kassel. In January 1908 De Heer felt obliged to denounce his initial positive response:

"How we longed that the spiritual revelation of Los Angeles would draw closer; what lovely confirmations of known women and men and yet ... Under the banner of the cross, with the battle-cry: Jesus is coming! has Saan brought in his angels and as A. Dallmeyer says in his brochure: Satan has come among the saints."³¹

De Heer quoted from the readily available German condemnations of the movement, including the more cautious Barmen Declaration of December 1907.³² To avoid being one-sided, in a following article De Heer quoted portions of the Azusa Street paper *The Apostolic Faith*, but added a repudiation of the movement by S. C. Todd, missionary in Macao, China, taken from the Keswick paper *The Life of Faith*.³³ In November 1909 the Berlin Declaration was translated in full.³⁴ In his maranatha periodical *Het Zoeklicht* (as from 1919) De Heer would regularly refer to the Kassel irregularities.

The Re-Reformed weekly *De Heraut* contained a column "Buitenland" (Abroad), which often mentioned deviating religious movements. W.F.A. Winckel, the responsible editor of these reports, followed the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung*, with both critique and sympathy. He supported their protest against liberal tendencies in the state churches, but regretted that they did not separate themselves like the Re-Reformed had done. Winckel also disapproved the great amount of freedom in the *Gemeinschaften*. It was this freedom that would give opportunity for the Pentecostals message. Already in March 1907 brief reference was made to Barratt's meetings in Christiana including the speaking in tongues, followed by a repudiation of the manifestations from Arthur T. Pierson in May.³⁵ During 1907 and 1908 no less than 25 articles or paragraphs (always quotations from foreign papers) were devoted to Pentecostalism.³⁶ Mostly they dealt with the German situation. The Kassel episode was extensively reported. Winckel

³¹ *Johan de Heer*, Op den uitkijk, in: Jeruël nr. 133 (February 1908), the article was dated January 21, 2008. Also in: Ermelosch Zendingsblad 49/2 (February 1908), 5–11.

³² The sources mentioned by Johan de Heer are: *H. Dallmeyer*, Sonderbare Heilige; *E. Schrenk*, Was lehrt uns die Kasseler Bewegung; *A. Dallmeyer*, Satan unter den Heiligen; *Joh. Seitz* etc., In kritischer Stunde; *J. Rubanowitsch*, Das heutige Zungenreden, in: Auf der Warte, 5 January 1908; Ev. Allianzblatt, 22 December 1907.

³³ *Johan de Heer*, Op den uitkijk, in: Jeruël nr. 134 (March 1908). Also in: Ermelosch Zendingsblad 49/3 (March 1908), 2–10.

³⁴ *Johan de Heer*, Op den uitkijk, in: Jeruël nr. 152 (November 1909).

³⁵ *Winckel*, Buitenland: Noorwegen, in: De Heraut van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland no. 1525 (24 March 1907), 3; Idem, Buitenland: Dr. Pierson over het spreken in tongen, in: De Heraut no. 1533 (19 May 1907), 3.

³⁶ German periodicals mentioned: „Allianzblatt“, „Reichsbote“, „Allgem. Ev. Luth. Kirchenzeitung“, „Philadelphia“, „Barmer Sonntagblatt“, „Hess. Post“, „Brüderblatt“, „Reformierte Kirchenzeitung“, „Gemeinschaftsbote“, „Die Heiligung“, „Pfingstgrüsse“.

saw it all as fanaticism and heresy. The notorious Berlin Declaration from September 1909 was completely translated into Dutch and warmly recommended.³⁷ Hereafter the interest in the matter declined and within a few years the reports from abroad had ceased. Although Winckel was aware of the Dutch Pentecostals he deliberately never discussed the Dutch situation.³⁸

While the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Union within the NRC showed no awareness, at least in their periodicals during this period, of the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* and Pentecostals, the Confessional Association within the NRC twice mentioned the new movements. In their weekly *De Gereformeerde Kerk*, J.P. de Bie, editor of the column "Buitenland" (Abroad), reports in May 1907 of the meetings led by Barratt in Norway, where speaking in tongues occurs.³⁹ In this first report De Brie takes a neutral position, mentioning both positive and negative results. In January 1908 De Brie printed a longer and negative report of the problems occurring in Kassel.⁴⁰ No other reports followed. M. J. Beukenhorst in the Reformed periodical *Stemmen voor Waarheid en Vrede* warns against the contemporary manifestations of glossolalia in 1908. He extensively refers to the Kassel episode, but seems unaware of the existence of a Dutch Pentecostal movement.⁴¹ It became a pattern among Reformed and Evangelicals to condemn the Dutch Pentecostals on basis of one-sided information from Germany.

The Free Evangelical ministers kept good relations with the German Tent Mission and the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung*. They connected with the Diaspora Mission in Mülheim, where C. A. Gerhard laboured among Dutch people. They followed those in the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* that came to reject the Pentecostals. The Free Evangelical monthly *Erme-losch Zendingsblad* regularly printed warnings against the Pentecostals, often quoting Johan de Heer, culminating in the translation of the Berlin

³⁷ Winckel, Buitenland: De leiders der Gemeinschaftsbewegung over de Pinksterbeweging, in: De Heraut no. 1661 (31 October 1909), 3.

³⁸ That Winckel was aware of the existence of a Dutch Pentecostal movement is evident from a remark he once added to a report from abroad: "We feel that the men and women, also in our nation, who follow the so-called Pentecostal movement, should consider this word of Philip Mauro. We feel it is sufficient." Winckel, Buitenland: Philip Mauro over het spreken in tongen, in: De Heraut no. 1725 (22 November 1911), 3.

³⁹ J. P. de Bie, Buitenland, in: De Gereformeerde Kerk 19/970 (9 May 1907), 2-3.

⁴⁰ J. P. de Bie, Buitenland, in: De Gereformeerde Kerk 20/1005 (9 January 1908), 2-3.

⁴¹ M. J. Beukenhorst, Het spreken in "tongen", in: Stemmen voor Waarheid en Vrede: Evangelisch tijdschrift voor de Protestantse Kerken 45 (1908), 295-318; another example of unawareness of the Dutch Pentecostals is: J. L. Wagemaker, De glossolalie in het N.T. (Thesis, Amsterdam: Kweekschool Algemeene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit, 1913).

Declaration.⁴² Also the Free Evangelical periodical *Ons Orgaan* printed warnings against the Pentecostals based on German stories, denouncing it as “deceitful” and the work of “misleading spirits”.⁴³ Some years later (1919) the editor A. Winckel came to a negative assessment of the Pentecostal Movement. He admitted his lack of knowledge of the Dutch Pentecostals and therefore based his argument on his German sources. Referring to an article in *Auf der Warte* Winckel mentioned the danger of “Feminism” among Pentecostals:

“We know how this through the dominion of female mediums had come to development in particular in the Pentecostal Movement. Female dominion in the assembly of the Lord is a sure sign of ungodly direction and a special mark of the apostate assembly in the last days.”⁴⁴

The Lutheran weekly *De Wartburg* only carried references to the Kassel events in 1908. Citing B. Kühn it issued a brief warning against fanaticism referring to Kassel in January 1908.⁴⁵ In May 1908 a long article on speaking in tongues appeared on the front page. It contained many details of the Kassel meetings and a translation of the Barmen Declaration.⁴⁶

At an early stage the Baptists were confronted with the Pentecostal movement through the problems that arose in their assemblies in Harlingen and Sneek. After the departure of their pastor Gerrit de Wilde, who sympathized with the Pentecostals, in July 1909, the situation was “settled” by excluding the Pentecostal adherents from the fellowship.⁴⁷ The Baptist periodical *De Christen* also published the translation of the Berlin Declaration together with a “brotherly warning” from the editor: “With deep regret we have taken cognizance of the initial devastation that the present ‘Spirit-’ or ‘Pentecostal movement’ in some of our Assemblies (Sneek and Harlingen) already has caused.”⁴⁸ At the annual general council of the Baptist Union in 1911 the following motion was carried:

“Having heard the explanations concerning the character and revelation of the so-called tongue or spirit movement, the council considers that we completely and resolutely should keep far aloof from all intercourse with that persuasion.”⁴⁹

⁴² Verklaring, in: *Ermeloch Zendingsblad* 50/11 (November 1909), 2–8; cf. *De Tongenbeweging in Zuid-Afrika*, 51/5 (May 1910), 12–14.

⁴³ Pinksterbeweging, in: *Ons Orgaan* 7/95 (July 1911), 3. Taken from: *De Vredeboed*, the example came from: *Sabbatklänge*.

⁴⁴ A. Winckel, Een crisis in de pinksterbeweging, in: *Ons Orgaan* 14/233 (14 November 1919), 113–14. The article continued in 14/234 (28 November 1919), 120.

⁴⁵ Een waarschuwing tegen geestdrijverij, in: *De Wartburg* 9/5 (31 January 1908), 3.

⁴⁶ Spreken in tongen, in: *De Wartburg* 9/22 (29 May 1908), 1–3. The article from Johan de Heer in “Jeruël” February 1908 was cited in full.

⁴⁷ Cf. chapter 7, section concerning Sneek.

⁴⁸ *De Christen* 28/1174 (28 October 1909), 343.

⁴⁹ *De Christen* 30/1266 (3 August 1911), 245.

The statement was the first official denunciation of the Pentecostals from any denomination in the Netherlands.

A request for further investigation was put aside. Nevertheless at the next council on 11 July 1912 at Amsterdam, F. J. van Meerloo gave a report of his personal examination concerning the Pentecostals. Van Meerloo, who lived in Amsterdam and had been pastor of the Baptist assembly that also assembled in the Kerkstraat, had attended a number of public Pentecostal meetings. Being an opponent he was refused admittance to the mutual meetings by Polman, who wrote him:

"When you have changed your opinion and are convinced that God had really poured out his Holy Spirit in our midst and you can unite in one spirit with us, like the 120 on the feast of Pentecost, then we will be glad when you visit our mutual meetings. I would like to first receive an answer from you."⁵⁰

Van Meerloo replied by letter, that the whole matter was against Scriptures and dangerous for those following it. His lecture before the Union drew the same conclusion.

Re-evaluation by Wumkes

The Netherlands Reformed minister Dr. Geert Aeilco Wumkes (1869–1954) was the first to write a positive account of the Dutch Pentecostals. In 1912 he wrote a detailed and sympathetic account of the rise and development of the Baptists in the Netherlands. Through Polman he became interested to do the same with the Pentecostal movement. Wumkes' description of the Pentecostals *De Pinksterbeweging voornamelijk in Nederland*, was the best recommendation for the movement that Polman could have wished. It first appeared in *Stemmen des Tijds* (Voices of the time), a monthly publication for Christianity and culture, after which Polman had it published as a separate brochure.⁵¹ Wumkes based his writing upon the many conversations with Polman and the Pentecostal literature he received from him. He gave a short historical introduction followed by a biographical sketch of Polman and a description of the Dutch movement. Wumkes stressed the international and interdenominational character and the zeal for foreign mission.

Wumkes' writing did not fail to arouse a lot of response. The Christian daily newspaper *De Nederlander* printed large portions of it in four consecutive articles.⁵² The Evangelical papers that had stigmatized the Pentecostal movement as false were annoyed. In *Maran-Atha*, organ of

⁵⁰ F. J. van Meerloo, *Over de Pinkster- of Tongenbeweging*, Apeldoorn 1912, 8–9.

⁵¹ G. A. Wumkes, *De Pinksterbeweging voornamelijk in Nederland*, in: *Stemmen des Tijds* 5/11 (September 1916), 251–71; idem: *De Pinksterbeweging voornamelijk in Nederland* Utrecht 1916; idem: *De Pinksterbeweging voornamelijk in Nederland*, 2d printing, Serie Pinksteruitgaven, no. 1, Amsterdam 1917.

⁵² *De Pinksterbeweging*, in: *De Nederlander* 23/7032–23/7035 (19 September 1916–22 September 1916), 4.

the Tent Mission, Wumkes' article was called "an important historical overview", but instead of a review it was followed by repeating the old arguments taken from Germany to repudiate the movement once more.⁵³ A. Winckel in the Free Evangelical paper *Ons Orgaan* cited the repudiations from *Maran-Atha*, but did a better job by also discussing the content of Wumkes' publication.⁵⁴ Winckel accused Wumkes for having written an unreliable sketch and concluded:

"Dr. Wumkes demonstrates in his article that he does not know the area in which he moves sufficiently, and that he only in part understands the subject he deals with. And it does seem, that he is informed in a one-sided and superficial way."⁵⁵

The Baptists, who were much indebted to Wumkes, were left somewhat embarrassed. They shared the objections of Winckel, but were more cautious in expressing them.⁵⁶ Dr. J. van Dorp in the Reformed church paper *Nieuwe Nederlandsche Kerkbode* wrote a sympathetic review and remarked: "One would do good to read his book and follow his example by not immediately, unseen, repudiating this movement. Probably one would get, like we did, some more appreciation."⁵⁷ The Christian newspaper *De Amsterdammer* printed an extensive summary of Wumkes' brochure in June 1917.⁵⁸

The criticism from Winckel that Wumkes' information was one-sided seems justified. Nowhere did Wumkes reflect knowledge of the numerous anti-Pentecostal literature. But the accusation of one-sidedness would likewise apply to the Evangelical opponents, who on basis of the information from their German colleagues had condemned the Dutch Pentecostals. Wumkes must be credited for introducing a new approach by allowing the Dutch Pentecostals to speak for themselves.

Bakker Reanimates the Kassel Spirits

In 1924 *Stroomingen en sekten van onzen tijd* (Trends and sects of our time) by H. Bakker, a conservative NRC minister at Amsterdam, appeared. It included a short description of the Pentecostals. Although Bakker lived in the same city he failed to personally investigate the Pentecostal meetings. His repudiation was based on information from Germany. A wild story from Kassel served to characterize the beginning of the movement. Bakker

⁵³ De Pinksterbeweging, in: *Maran-Atha* 7/8 (November 1916), 58–59.

⁵⁴ A. Winckel, De Pinksterbeweging, in: *Ons Orgaan* 12/164 (12 January 1917), 5–6; 12/165 (26 January 1917), 11–12; 12/167 (23 February 1917), 29.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 12/165 (26 January 1917), 12.

⁵⁶ N. v. B., Van de boekentafel, in: *De Christen* 36 (1917), 83–85.

⁵⁷ J. van Dorp, De Pinksterbeweging voornamelijk in Nederland, in: *Nieuwe Nederlandsche Kerkbode* 2/22 (2 March 1917), 2.

⁵⁸ De Pinksterbeweging en haar leider G. R. Polman, in: *De Amsterdammer*, 16 June 1917; cf. De Pinksterbeweging, in: *De Amsterdammer*, 7 July 1917, for a friendly review of T. B. Barratt's "De waarheid inzake de Pinksterbeweging", Amsterdam 1917.

saw signs that the movement had passed its pinnacle: "After all, who would succeed, when one has already started with so much excitement and display, to maintain the climax for years and years?"⁵⁹ As to the Amsterdam assembly he wrote:

"Those that got acquainted with it say, that in this Pentecostal assembly there is but little speaking in tongues; and moreover the leader is immediately present to 'interpret' and then to call up to the service of the Lord. This assembly therefore seems to have been reduced to yet another of the many free assemblies."⁶⁰

In summary Bakker held the following objections against the Pentecostals: making subordinate matters (i. e. glossolalia) the main issue; forcing the spirit of prophecy; ignoring the spiritual development in the church; not bringing the sermon into prominence, but suggestion, excitement and fanaticism, while these excited scenes are destructive for both soul and body.⁶¹

Most of these objections, however, concerned the Kassel episode. For a fair treatment of the Dutch Pentecostals Bakker should have investigated the matter further, even more so because he had received information that the Dutch were more down to earth. Yet, in spite of his conclusion that God was not in this dangerous imitation and excitement of the Pentecostal movement, Bakker closed with a constructive remark:

"At the same time I am reminded of the 'unpaid bills' of the church. In this Pentecostal movement there speaks an accusation that the church must take to heart. It can be so lukewarm and deadly and worldly in the assembly of the Lord. We cannot accept, that we are only in appearance or are only 'a little' Christian. Pentecostal fire and Pentecostal Christians belong to each other. Where is the holy zeal that moves the church of our days?"⁶²

Bakker's book was widely read and saw several reprints. To this day it is a popular source for those who want to repudiate the Pentecostal movement. The decline of the movement around 1930 seemed to vindicate Bakker's judgment. In his *Onder buitenkerkelijken, sekte-mensen en anderen* (Among unchurched, sectarians and others) from 1935, he was even more venomous in his remarks: "A religion of shaking, springing, rolling, crying and shouting is good for harlequins and acrobats."⁶³ Here he described the Pentecostal movement as a slip from an American plant that would not grow in Dutch soil. "The Pentecostal assembly belongs to California, the land of the most luxurious plant growth and surfeited film-stars; in the erotic Los Angeles."⁶⁴

⁵⁹ H. Bakker, *Stroomingen en sekten van onzen tijd*, Utrecht 1924, 109.

⁶⁰ Bakker, *Stroomingen*, 108.

⁶¹ Bakker, *Stroomingen*, 110–11.

⁶² Bakker, *Stroomingen*, 112.

⁶³ H. Bakker, *Onder buitenkerkelijken, sekte-mensen en anderen*, Wageningen 1935, 179. Bakker gladly quoted from Upton Sinclair's "Petroleum" (Dutch translation) the rather sensational description of an American Pentecostal farmer.

⁶⁴ Bakker, *Onder buitenkerkelijken*, 175.

The above survey reveals that with the exception of Wumkes and Gunning all interpreters of the Dutch Pentecostal movement arrived at negative conclusions. Upon examination it appears that usually these repudiations were based on secondary information from Germany and not on serious personal research. Van Meerloo did attend the meetings, but with the attitude of an opponent, for which reason he was refused admittance to the mutual meetings. Polman's complaint that the movement was judged without a proper personal investigation was therefore justified. Those that took the trouble to enter into a personal relation with the Pentecostals with an open attitude like Wumkes and Gunning came to a sympathetic and constructive evaluation. Both were orthodox ministers with a common interest in dissenters. They demonstrated a flexibility in thinking that is not often found among orthodox circles. In general the churches regarded the Pentecostals as sectarian.

Joh. Jansen's article on Pentecostalism in the authoritative Re-Reformed *Christelijke Encyclopedie voor het Nederlandsche volk* (six volumes, published between 1925-1931) is representative for this prevailing assumption.⁶⁵ Completely relying on Bakker's description he presented Pentecostalism as a destructive imitation that fortunately had passed its pinnacle. Contrary to their evangelical colleagues (Baptists and Free Evangelicals) the Reformed and Re-Reformed ministers (Bakker and Jansen) avoided the term "demonical" in their common repudiation of the movement.

The Cross of the Rejected

Although much aware of the strong rejection the Pentecostal movement endured, Polman refrained from writings against his opponents or even mentioning their names. Only some indirect references are found in *Spade Regen*, such as Arie Kok writing in 1909: "It is not the 'tongues' that we bring to the forefront, as so many think and gladly hold against us, but it is Jesus."⁶⁶ Sometimes Polman expressed his pain, that fellow-Christians condemned the movement without a proper investigation, but added: "Yet, the Pentecostal blessing has given us loving hearts and has taught us to do what Jesus did, who did not revile back or threatened, but handed it over to Him, who judges rightly."⁶⁷ From his correspondence with Gunning and Wumkes it is evident, that Polman was very co-operative

⁶⁵ *Job. Jansen*, Pinksterbeweging, in: *Christelijke Encyclopedie voor het Nederlandsche Volk*, vol. 4, Kampen 1925-1931, 573-74. Cf: *W. J. J. Velders*, Gebedsgenezing in vol. 6, 182-184. Another critical publication from the Re-Reformed is: *De Pinkstergemeente en hare dwalingen getoetst aan Gods Woord*, Rapport van de commissie inzake de "Pinksterbeweging" aan de classis Meppel der Gereformeerde Kerken, Hogeveen 1932.

⁶⁶ *Arie Kok*, Wien zal Ik zenden, in: *Spade Regen* no. 12 (November 1909), 2.

⁶⁷ *G. R. Polman*, De Heere heeft groote dingen bij ons gedaan: Dies zijn wij verblijd!, in: *Spade Regen* no. 29 (March-May 1912), 2.

if someone wanted to make a serious study of the movement. The same correspondence informs us a little more about his position towards opponents. Polman did not regard slander a threat and felt, that if the Pentecostal movement could not endure slander, it should rather disappear.⁶⁸ As to abuses (probably referring to Kassel) he reacted:

"That in some places some things have occurred, that were wrong and not of the Holy Spirit, I affirm completely, but don't you believe yourself that the leaders in this movement suffer the most under it, and that they have done everything to fight such things? Why does one now take such a sole matter and deduce from there, that the whole movement with her thousands of earnest children of God is not right?"⁶⁹

When questioned by Gunning about his attitude towards the church, Polman replied: "I do not have grievances against the institutionnalized church of our days, but I deeply regret the spiritual deadness, the insusceptibility for the revelations of God and the ignorant attitude that she seems to adopt over against what God is doing in these days."⁷⁰ He considered the Pentecostal movement a divine intervention to awaken a sleeping church.

Polman realized that his understanding and that of single assemblies was partial and needed replenishment: "Only the entire body of Christ can contain the fullness."⁷¹ His readiness to be taught by someone from outside the movement becomes evident from his correspondence with G.A. Wumkes. When Wumkes accused the Pentecostals of using Scripture at variance, Polman thanked him for the correction and begged him to help them further in this matter.⁷² Polman agreed with Wumkes that in order to lose its one-sidedness the Pentecostal movement needed to penetrate into the various denominations.⁷³ Alas, Wumkes was only one of the very few clergy that responded in such a constructive manner. In general the Pentecostals were either ignored or repudiated as sectarian, which crushed Polman's hope for an ecumenical revival.

Concluding remarks

Obviously the conflict between the Pentecostal movement and the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* did a lot of harm to both sides. The condemnation by the German *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* was measured out in many publications and had negative effects for the Pentecostal movement in the Nether-

⁶⁸ G. R. Polman to J. H. Gunning J. Hz., Amsterdam, 7 January 1913.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Polman to Gunning, Amsterdam, 12 March 1910.

⁷¹ G. R. Polman, Pinksteren, in: *Spade Regen* 16/2 (May 1923), 21. In *Spade Regen* 15/4 (July 1922), 52, Polman wrote: "We do not think that we only have the truth and that others have to believe the same as what we believe."

⁷² G. R. Polman to G. A. Wumkes, Amsterdam, 6 March 1917.

⁷³ G. R. Polman to G. A. Wumkes, Amsterdam, 20 October 1916.

lands, as it made many prejudiced against all Pentecostal manifestations. Usually reference was made to the irregularities at Kassel and to a lesser extent to the Berlin Declaration.

During the Second World War relations between Pentecostals and some individual evangelists slowly improved. Pentecostals were also involved in the start of the interdenominational 'Youth for Christ' in 1946. During the 1960's the NRC showed a careful interest in the Pentecostals, at a distance followed by the Re-Reformed.⁷⁴ In 1968 the first meeting between Pentecostals and the Baptist Union was held.

Only long after the Second World War would the Evangelical Movement become significant in the Netherlands. After two false starts the Evangelical Alliance was founded in 1979. By this time the Pentecostals were becoming more and more accepted, also due to the upcoming Charismatic Renewal. Since the 1980's churches increasingly opened the doors for the gifts of the Spirit. In 2002 a Professorial Chair of Pentecostal Studies was inaugurated at the Re-Reformed VU University Amsterdam. Pentecostals have ongoing dialogues with Reformed and Roman Catholics.

Nevertheless, there are still some who persist in a strict rejection of the Pentecostals as being false or demonic and who like to keep the Kassel spirits alive. It might be that Couvée's lamentation about the brothers from the free circles and small churches also applies here "although I believe that we will be able to live together in heaven, I do not believe that this is possible on this sinful earth".

⁷⁴ Generale Synode der Nederlands Hervormde Kerk, *De Kerk en de Pinkstergroepen*, Den Haag 1960; *H. C. Endedijk/A. G. Kornet/G. Y. Welema*, *Het werk van de Heilige Geest in de gemeente. Voorlichtend geschrift over de Pinkstergroepen* uitgegeven in opdracht van de Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken, Kampen 1968. For a thorough discussion see *P. N. van der Laan*, *The Question of Spiritual Unity. The Dutch Pentecostal Movement in Ecumenical Perspective*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham 1988.