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# Literature Survey

## Kuyperania 1960s-1970s: A Survey of English-language Literature on Abraham Kuyper

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### Abstract

*This survey examines the significant English-language literature on the Dutch neo-Calvinist Abraham Kuyper from the 1960s to the 1970s. It includes brief biographies of the authors. The articles examined reflect the diverse and multifaceted impact of his legacy during the 1960s and 1970s, with a combination of admiration as well as developing critiques on various aspects of his thought.*

### **Key words:**

Abraham Kuyper, education, politics, sphere sovereignty

### Introduction

This is a continuation of Bishop (2024), which discussed work written about Abraham Kuyper from the 1890s to the 1950s. The articles under review here cover the period from 1960 to 1979. Overall, in the period 1898 to 1959 the reception of Kuyper's work was positive and laudatory. In the period under review here, some critiques of his work began to appear revealing a growing complexity in scholarly engagement. The literature reviewed reflects

a combination of admiration and critique, and illustrates the developing discourse surrounding Kuyper's philosophical, theological, and political contributions.

Vander Stelt (1973), for example, identifies semi-mystical conceptions and dualistic tendencies in the views of Kuyper. Van Til (1975) also critiques Kuyper, maintaining that he and Bavinck have "remnants of Scholasticism in their thinking". Others questioned Kuyper's political views, particularly his opposition to liberalism and socialism, suggesting he was too reactionary. Some argue that his positions may have alienated potential allies and limited broader coalitions for social reform (see, for example, Witt 1961, Jellema 1965, De Jong 1996).

Overall, while the ideas and legacy of Kuyper are followed and respected by the great majority, yet there is also some critique and disagreement between scholars and thinkers.

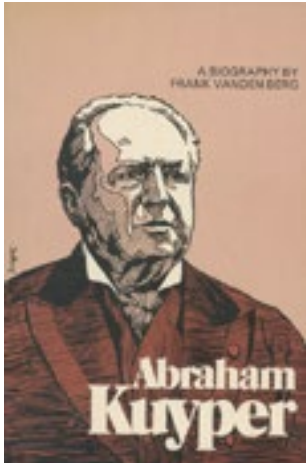
Some of the key themes that recur include the following:

1. *Political and Social Views*: Several articles discuss Kuyper's political and social views, including his stance on liberalism, socialism, and evolutionism. There is some debate on where Kuyper stands on the topic of evolution.
2. *Religious-Political Community*: There is a focus on Kuyper's views on the idea of a single religious-political community.
3. *Critiques and Flaws*: Some articles identify flaws in Kuyper's views, such as semi-mystical conceptions and dualistic tendencies.
4. *Influence on Education*: Kuyper's impact on education and his educational endeavours are highlighted in some articles.
5. *Philosophical and Theological Influence*: Kuyper's influence on philosophy, theology, and apologetics, including his sphere sovereignty and philosophy of science, is a recurring theme.

These themes reflect the multifaceted and diverse impact of Kuyper's ideas and legacy during the 1960s and 1970s, with a combination of admiration, critiques, and discussions on various aspects of his thought.

## 1960

Vanden Berg, F. 1960. *Abraham Kuyper*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.



This is the English biography of Kuyper. It is written by a schoolteacher and a great admirer of Kuyper. Vanden Berg covers the whole of Kuyper's career largely chronologically. It emphasises his actions and motivations much on what Kuyper did and the motivations over his personal and family life. His wife and children get little mention. Nevertheless, this is a great place to start to get to know Kuyper and his very many achievements. There is an index but no bibliography. Though many of Kuyper's lecturers, articles and books are mentioned in the text, often with useful summaries.

It was republished in 1978 by Paideia Press.

Dirk W Jellema, writing as DWJ in the *Kuyper Newsletter* 1 (2) aptly summarises it thus: "Popular, reliable, straightforward, hero-worshipping."

The 1978 reprint was very briefly reviewed by Rev. Jerome Julien in *Outlook* 29 (4) (1979).

Several of the reviewers have noted Vanden Berg's uncritical hero-worshipping approach.

## 1960 Reviews

There are several reviews of Vanden Berg's biography of Kuyper.

Walvoord, John 1960. Review of *Abraham Kuyper* by Frank Vanden Berg. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 117(468) (Oct):367

The review in full:

*Abraham Kuyper*. By Frank Vanden Berg. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1960. 307 pp. \$4.00.

This interesting biography of Abraham Kuyper, known for his many works including his monumental *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, will be welcomed by those who have been blessed by his writings. His eighty-three years concluding in 1920 contained over fifty years of evangelical leadership in Holland where he played a large part in ecclesiastical education and political arenas. The study of the life of this remarkable man of God, who had so many varied gifts, will serve to enrich the reader and will give Kuyper's works deeper perspective.

J.F. Walvoord

Runia, K. 1960. Review of Vanden Berg's *Abraham Kuyper*. *Reformed Theological Review* :88-89.

Runia is grateful that Eerdmans published this popular level biography. But criticises the lack of attention given to Kuyper's theological concepts and notes that Vanden Berg is not critical enough in his appraisal of Kuyper. "It is too much written in a black-white scheme, and Kuyper is sometimes too much glorified."

Stafford Wright, J. 1960. Review of Vanden Berg's *Abraham Kuyper*. *Evangelical Quarterly*: 243-244.

Wright suggests that "Kuyper moves through these pages as a Colossus, valiant for the truth, but only rarely seen as a man of like passions with ourselves."

Woolley, Paul 1960. Review of Vanden Berg's *Abraham Kuyper*. *Westminster Theological Journal*:123-126.

Woolley makes the important observation in this review: "The church in politics' is a spectre that haunts Christians. But Christians in politics are not the church in politics." He acknowledges the limitation of this biography and hopes that one day we might have a better book on Kuyper.

Ten Zythoff, Gerrit 1960. Review of Vanden Berg's *Abraham Kuyper*. *Church History* (Sept): 372-373.

For Ten Zythoff, of Western Theological Seminary in Michigan, this is "quite an unsatisfactory book because it does not do justice to the true genius of Kuyper" (373).

## 1961

Hoekema, A. A. 1961. Kuyper, Bavinck and infallibility. *Reformed Journal* 11:18-22.



*Anthony Andrew Hoekema (1913-1988)* was born in the Netherlands and studied at University of Michigan (AM, 1937), Calvin Theological Seminary (ThB, 1942), and Princeton Seminary (ThD, 1953). He was on the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary from 1939 to 1941 and again in 1956-1958, he then joined the faculty at Calvin Theological Seminary (1958-1978).

This article discusses the Report of the Committee on Infallibility prepared for a forthcoming CRC Synod. He appreciates that "One of its most valuable features, to my mind, is its insistence that the infallibility of Scripture does not imply a kind of meticulous accuracy which would do violence to the purpose of Scripture." He notes this view is also Kuyper's and Bavinck's and presents "in translation, some quotations from the writings of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck to substantiate this claim".

Witt, Cornelius 1961. Abraham Kuyper. *The Banner* 96 (May):14.



This is a section from the "For Young People". In it Witt discusses Kuyper's biography by Vanden Berg. He wonders: "What have we attained, for example, in the sphere of politics?" And poses the question, "Where are the men and women of sound Calvinistic convictions who are leaders on the national scene?"

Born in the Netherlands *Cornelius Witt (1903-1983)* studied at Calvin Theological Seminary (ThB 1929). He was ordained in 1929 and served at: Leighton, IA, 1929-37; Hull, ND, 1937-41; Harderwyk, Holland, MI, 1941-50; Ebenezer, Trenton, ON, 1950-58; Flint, MI, 1958-63; East Palmyra, NY, 1963-68.

## 1962

Runia, K. 1962. Dr. Kuyper on ... the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and later on. *Trowel and Sword* (May).



In this short piece Runia examines Kuyper's answer to the question: "What is actually the difference between the time before and after Pentecost?"

*Klaas Runia (1926-2006)* was a professor of Systematic theory at the Reformed Theological College, Geelong, Australia (1956-1971). On return to the Netherlands, he was professor of practical theology at Kampen. He obtained his doctorate on Barth at the VU Amsterdam.

## 1964

M. 1964. Review of Kuyper's *The Revelation of St John*. *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*:302-303.

There is no indication of the identity of "M." but s/he writes: "The book is free from liberalistic and millennialistic error. It is not a consecutive exegesis of Revelation, rather, Kuyper selected certain topics from the various chapters of the book."

## 1965

Jellema, Dirk W. 1965. Abraham Kuyper's answer to 'liberalism'. *Reformed Journal* 15 (May/June): 10-14.

*Jellema (1924-1982)* had translated Kuyper's *Het sociale Vraagstuk en de Christelijke Religie* as *Christianity and the Class Struggle*, which would later become *The Problem of Poverty*. Jellema was also one of the editors of *The Kuyper Newsletter* and has written before on Kuyper's view of liberalism (Jellema, 1957). Here he concludes:

First: the 'liberalism' that Kuyper denounced implied a social and economic program very similar to that which the far right proposes today. Second: the social and economic program that Kuyper favored as a program that would recognize the demands of Christianity would be denounced as 'socialist' by the far right today.

Mounce, Robert. 1964. Review of Kuyper's *The Revelation of St John*. *Evangelical Quarterly*. 37(1):54-55.

Mounce observes:

"A major consideration for Kuyper is that the Apocalypse deals exclusively with the mighty events which usher in the end of all things. Although the letters to the seven churches are symbolic of the various virtues and vices which characterize the Christian church in every age, the work as a whole tells us nothing of the span of normal history preceding the last days."

Quite distinct from Farrer's interpretative approach to the Apocalypse is a recent paper back edition of an earlier English translation (1935) of Abraham Kuyper's *The Revelation of St. John*. It originally appeared in serial form in the weekly *De Heraut* and later formed the fourth and final volume in a massive 'treatment of "The Consummation of the World"' by the renowned Dutch theologian.

A major consideration for Kuyper is that the Apocalypse deals exclusively with the mighty events which usher in the end of all things. Although the letters to the seven churches are symbolic of the various virtues and vices which characterize the Christian church in every age, the work as a whole tells us nothing of the span of normal history preceding the last days. The Apocalypse proper begins at chapter four. It is interpreted throughout as consistently symbolic, i.e., the four beasts and twenty-four presbyters emphasize the antithesis between the condition of the original paradise and the present state of things; the dragon, beast, and false prophet indicate the three great world powers of philosophy, politics, and pseudo-religion; etc.

Kuyper's view of the last chapters of Revelation is worthy of special note. The normal course of history comes to a close with chapter 16. Before the inauguration of life on the new earth (chapters 21-22) comes the transitional period described in chapters 17-20. This unit consists of two parts: the final demoniacal development of the world (17-19) and a parallel period (called the millennium, chapter 20) which gives the final history of the believer. Chapters 17-19 reach back to Paradise to trace the destructive line which reaches its goal in the consummation. The period of 1,000 years is not literal but expresses the fulness of Divine action. The binding of Satan is a pause in the final denouncement for one last appeal 'to the conscience of the nations'.

Roberts, J.W. 1964. The Interpretation of the Apocalypse: The State of the Question *Restoration Quarterly*.

This is a review of Kuyper's *The Revelation of St John* together with other studies on Revelation.

He describes the book as a good example of a futurist interpretation that is neither pre- nor postmillennialist. Though he notes that "Kuyper is aware that one difficulty with such a futurist view is that it divorces the Revelation from any relevance to the age in which it was written".

## 1966

De Jong, Peter 1966. Kuyper on the American church scene. *Torch and Trumpet* 16 (September):14-15.

De Jong looks at Kuyper's *Varia America* in light of accusations made against him and his North American followers. De Jong concludes: "(1) Kuyper did not commit himself to the ideal of a single religious-political community, as had been charged. (2) Kuyper while appreciating the U.S. (and Anabaptist) break with such false ideals, also saw, that which modern critics who more or less share the common U.S. prejudices fail to see the need for Christian influence in society in organized as well as individual ways."

## 1967

Ambler, Rex. 1967. The Christian mind of Abraham Kuyper. In *Profitable for Doctrine and Reproof*. London: Puritan and Reformed Studies Conference.



Rex Ambler lectured in theology at Birmingham University, UK from 1968 until retirement in 1999. He now writes on Quakerism.

This is the first paper written on Kuyper by a British scholar. He gives a brief historical background to nineteenth-century Netherlands and some biographical details of Kuyper. He looks briefly at Kuyper's early influences and his Calvinism. Kuyper's "frame of Christian thinking" is then examined; this includes his sphere sovereignty (though Ambler avoids this phrase). He concludes with mentioning Kuyper's desire to do all things to the glory of God, as nothing is beyond the scope of God's rule.



## 1968

Mennega, Aaldert 1968. Abraham Kuyper and evolutionism. *The Banner* (November) 103:10.



*Aaldert Mennega (1930-2018)* was professor of Biology at Dordt College from 1964 until his retirement in 2000. He maintained Kuyper in his Evolution speech “showed the incompatibility of atheistic evolution with the Christian faith, but also very clearly denounced any compromise between the two camps, using very strong language in his warnings not to have anything to do with any form of evolution”. (Cited in Mennega, AI (1974) “Scripture Fundamentals, the Christian Scientist, and the Antithesis”, *Pro Rege* 3(2):2-6.)

Mennega opens his article with this strong statement: “A superficial reading of a number of articles in our generally Reformed papers might easily lead one to think that Abraham Kuyper, were he living today, would surely endorse Evolutionism. Nothing could, however, be further from the truth.”

He then goes on to summarise Kuyper’s 1899 “Evolution” address in an attempt to show this is the case.

## 1969

Vander Stelt, John C. 1969. Christian Social action and sphere sovereignty. National Congress of the Christian Action Foundation, Dordt College (July).



*John Vander Stelt (1934-2020)* was born in Dussen, Noord Brabant, the Netherlands. He obtained his BD from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1965. He served at Newmarket, ON CRC church (1965-1967) before joining the faculty at Dordt College, Sioux Center, IA in 1968. He retired in 1999.

In this paper Vander Stelt begins by posing the question: “How can Christians raise a distinctive voice in the wilderness of the practical confusion in our twentieth-century post-Christian era?” One key principle he sees is sphere sovereignty. He traces its historical background before looking at Kuyper.

Kuyper in his 1880 speech “Souverenitet in eigne Kring” explained why the spheres in society should be free from domination of the other ones.

Vander Stelt thinks Kuyper’s project was “seriously hampered” by Thomistic ground-motive of religious dualism between nature and grace. He sees evidence of this in the following distinctions Kuyper made:

Christ as mediator for salvation	Christ as mediator in Creation
Particular grace Inner personal life of the believer Church Eternal life Renewal and regeneration Bible	Common grace Societal life of believer and unbeliever Society Temporal life Protection and preservation Tradition, scientific thought and concrete conditions of human society

Van Til, Cornelius. 1969. Natural theology and scripture (Kuyper and Warfield on apologetics). In: *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed. In Ch 8:229-254.

*A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, Van Til notes in the Preface, is an enlargement of his *The Defense of the Faith* (1969). Warfield, Kuyper, Buswell and Hamilton are ‘given a deeper analysis’.

In the chapter on natural theology Van Til devotes a large section to Kuyper and Warfield. He starts by noting how much Kuyper and Warfield have in common: “It is because of this large measure of agreement on the doctrine of Scripture as well as the content of Scripture that the differences between them on the matter of natural theology is so remarkable” (p. 230). Warfield has a higher view of natural theology than Kuyper. Kuyper use the term natural theology often as a synonym for “general, non-soteriological revelation”, the knowledge by which “man has by virtue of being the image of God”; “It is not therefore the idea of autonomous man that Kuyper thinks of when he speaks of natural theology” (230).

Kuyper and Warfield differ on natural theology, Van Til wonders if they can be reconciled. He first delineates the “apparently irreconcilable differences” (231).

For Kuyper sin has radically affected the cosmos; it has not “made man insane” (231), but the direction has changed. Human thought is not merely fruitless it is “destructive to the truth” (232). For Kuyper the knowledge of God cannot be attained from nature. Kuyper concludes there is “virtually no use in Christian apologetics”. Warfield takes issue with this in his “introductory note” in Francis R. Beattie’s *Apologetics*. Warfield sees an inconsistency in Kuyper. He fails to see why Kuyper should want to minimise apologetics because of sin. Van Til notes that for Warfield, “The idea that faith comes ultimately by virtue of testimony of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men does not exclude apologetics” (238). Warfield rejects Kuyper’s twofold science.

## 1970’s Reviews

### 1970

Faber, J. 1970. The incarnation of the word. Translated by R. Koat. It was first published in Dutch as “Kuyper over de Vleeswording des Woords”. *The Canadian Reformed Magazine* 19 (December):5-9.

In looking at Kuyper’s views on the incarnation of the Word Faber argues “we are mainly concerned with that which he has brought forward antithetically in his polemics with different spiritual currents in the Christian camp”. He notes Kuyper “lucidly and vigorously upheld the Scriptural, Reformed confession about the motive of the incarnation of the Word over against the pantheistic fundamental heresy of the nineteenth century”. He also looks briefly at the criticism of S. Greijdanus and K. Schilder.

### 1971

Langley, McKendree R. 1971. Abraham Kuyper 1830-1875: How Kuyper broke the stronghold of humanism in Dutch politics, and the Christian principles of thoughtful action that lead him to do it. *Vanguard* (May/ June):7-10, 22.

This is part 2 of a short series on “Pioneers of Christian politics”. Here Langley provides a short historical overview of Kuyper the politician. He closes by highlighting four themes in Kuyper’s thought: he made a serious attempt to relate this to politics; the reform element runs through Kuyper’s speeches; the example of identity and integrity of the Christian party was upheld; and tolerance was important for the development of Christian politics.

Three cartoons of Kuyper illustrate the article.

Mennega, Aaldert. 1971. Science, evolution, and Abraham Kuyper. *Outlook* 21 (September):23-24.

*Aaldert Mennega* came to the States from the Netherlands after the Second World War. He was an Associate professor of Biology at Dordt College, Sioux Center. See Mennega (1968, above).

Mennega begins by mentioning Kuyper's view that there are two types of people, and two kinds of science: the regenerate and the unregenerate. He remarks: "The idea of absolute unity of science denies the fact of regeneration." It is for this reason that the claim "The ideal of a peculiarly Reformed or Christian science, however, has proved to be mistaken" is wrong.

He then briefly comments on Kuyper's statement that "even if it had pleased God not to create kinds Himself, but to make one kind to arise out of another by implanting in the earlier kind the ability to produce the next higher kind, even then Creation would have been equally marvelous". Mennega comments: "Although the evidence is much against the theory of evolution, we ought not to concern ourselves exclusively with defenses, for in principle the origin of the universe, of the earth, and of living beings is not amenable to scientific investigation and is not capable of being verified."

## 1972

Star, Ring. 1972. Appeals to Kuyper for a literal Genesis. *The Banner* 107 (March):20.



Revd Ring Starr points out that Kuyper in his *Common Grace* "clearly states that the first chapters of Genesis are a record of facts as they actually took place. It is significant that the author underscores this statement; and in the context of the entire chapter, he emphatically insists on understanding the account of creation literally".

*Ring Star* (1897-1999) obtained a ThB. from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1930. He was then ordained in the CRC and served at: Purewater, SD, 1930-38; Shepherd, MT, 1938-43; Bemis, SD, 1943-50; Compton, CA, 1950-51; Granum, AB, 1951-59; Bemis, SD, 1959-66.

Skillen, James W. 1972. The political theory of the Dutch statesman, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920). *Master's Thesis*. Department of Political Science, Duke University.

(Not Seen)



*James W. Skillen* is the former president of the Center for Public Justice and is author of numerous books on politics. He received his BA from Wheaton College in philosophy and a BD from Westminster Theological Seminary. After graduate study in philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam, he completed his MA and PhD from Duke University, both in Political Science.

Westra, John. 1972. Confessional political parties in the Netherlands, 1813-1949. *PhD Thesis*. University of Michigan.

According to DWJ in *Kuyper Newsletter* 1(2) this is: "A massive (470 pp) study, including a major treatment of K and the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Valuable and detailed account."

Zuidema, S.U. 1972. Common grace and Christian action in Abraham Kuyper. In *Communication and Confrontation*. Toronto: Wedge, 52-105.

This paper is also published in Bishop and Kok (Eds.) (2013). Zuidema notes that common grace is an important topic and has great significance for all Kuyper's adherents. He sees a polar duality in Kuyper's particular and common grace. "Common grace rests in Christ the Son of God as the Mediator of creation; particular grace is rooted in Christ as the Incarnate Word, the Mediator of Redemption." He looks at some of Kuyper's basic questions: (1) How is it possible that common grace can be of significance for particular grace? And (2) How is it possible that particular grace can be of significance for common grace? Hence (3) Of what significance can they be for each other in the present dispensation? In the paper he takes on Van Ruler's interpretation of Kuyper's common grace – he proposes "Kuyper gave Van Ruler cause for writing what he did. But no less do I conclude that Kuyper more than once should have given Van Ruler pause in writing what he did."

## 1973

De Gaay Fortman, W. F. 1973. Kuyper and the social problem. *Perspective Newsletter* 7:12-15.



This is a translation by McKendree Langley from *Nederlandse Gedachten*, November 14, 1970, The Anti-Revolutionary Party, The Hague, The Netherlands.

*De Gaay Fortman*, (1911-1997) was a professor of the VU and member of the Dutch parliament. He identifies two areas in which Kuyper's work regarding the social problem is still relevant: the disaster that happens when the Gospel is reduced to only the relationships between God and the soul; and that the social question is not "merely a matter of stipulating reforms of the existing social order". A structural critique based on the gospel is required.

He concludes Kuyper "examined mercilessly the social order of his day by means of the structural critique of the Gospel. He clearly endeavoured to demonstrate that the Christian must not approach social injustice with abstract theories. Rather the Christian must always seek a balanced union of principles and social reality. Above all, he opposed the fatal error that the Gospel should be significant only for the salvation of the individual and that it is concerned only with God and the soul. Rather the Gospel is universal and worldwide. It is relevant to all aspects of life. It is relevant both for man and for social structures. This is that banner that Abraham Kuyper raised among the Dutch people" (Isaiah 11:12).

De Jong, Peter. God's book is our light. *Outlook* 23 (April):

Peter (without a Y.) De Jong was a pastor of the Christian Reformed Church of Dutton, MI and a staunch critic of the AACS. In this article he discusses a republished book by L.J. Hulst and G.K. Hemkes *Ouel en Nieuw Calvinisme* [Old and New Calvinism] where they expressed reservations about Kuyper's view of the Bible. According to De Jong:

Hulst and Hemkes in their little book pointed out that Kuyper's notion of the truth as a 'kernel' which believers had to develop through the centuries was completely foreign to the writings of Calvin (p. 13) who always stressed the centrality of the Bible in the Christian faith and life and also called and taught the church and her leaders to be simply preachers and teachers of it.

De Jong, Peter Y. 1973. Comments on criticism of Dr. A. Kuyper. *Outlook* 23 (June):10-11.

Peter De Jong (with a Y.) responds to his namesake's article above in a letter to the editor: "I would ask but one thing of our readers: Let's not misunderstand Kuyper and his use of the term '*kern*', [kernel] in order to drive wedges where really there are none!"



*Peter Ymen De Jong, (1915-2005)* was a graduate of Calvin College (BA), Calvin Theological Seminary (BD 1939) and Hartford Theological Seminary (PhD 1942).

He was a CRC minister in a number of churches including in Grand Rapids and Hamilton, Ont. He was a Professor of Practical Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary (1964-1970) and served as editor of *The Outlook* which was formerly known as the *Torch and Trumpet* and *Renewal*. He was one of the founders of the Mid-America Reformed Seminary where he also taught part-time. He joined the United Reformed Church when he retired.

Nichols, Anthony H. 1973. Abraham Kuyper: a summons to Christian vision in education. *Journal of Christian Education*, 16 (October):78-94.

*Nichols* was based in Central Java when he wrote this article. (See also, Nichols, 1975). Here he paints a biographical picture of Kuyper focusing on his educational endeavours.

Vander Stelt, John C. 1973. Kuyper's semi-mystical conception. *Philosophia Reformata* 38:178-190.

Vander Stelt identifies some flaws in Kuyper's views. Utilising Vollenhoven's framework, he identifies Kuyper as being semi-mystical and displaying dualistic tendencies. Some of these criticisms were developed in Vander Stelt's *Faith, Life and Theology* (Vander Stelt, 2020).

## 1974

Van Til, Cornelius. 1974. Herman Dooyeweerd and Reformed Apologetics. Philadelphia: WTS (mimeo).

Part 1 looks at the “Knudsen-Dooyeweerd Criticism of my apologetics”, Part 2 is “Herman Dooyeweerd and synthesis thinking” and Part 3 deals with “Synthesis thinking”. In it Van Til looks at Kuyper’s Stone Lectures, his sphere sovereignty, his philosophy of science and his scholasticism.

He asserts “Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck still have not altogether escaped the Thomistic-Aquinas position”.

Zwaanstra, Henry. 1974. Abraham Kuyper’s conception of the church. *Calvin Theological Journal* 9(2):149-181.



Revd “Hank” Zwaanstra (1936-2016) obtained his BD from Calvin Theological Seminary and his PhD from VU University in 1973. He was on the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary from 1963 to 2001. He was ordained in 1966.

Zwaanstra’s paper looks at Kuyper’s conception of the church. He notes Kuyper’s concern for the church—his first and last articles were on the church. He discusses the form and essence of the church as well as many of Kuyper’s key concepts including the visible and invisible church, church as organism and as institution, and the spiritual and mystical church.

## 1975

Fernhout, Harry. 1975. Man, faith, and religion in Bavinck, Kuyper, and Dooyeweerd. *MPhil Thesis*. Institute for Christian Studies.

Contents:

Introduction

Herman Bavinck

    Bavinck’s anthropological framework

    Bavinck’s view of faith and religion

    Schematic diagram of Bavinck’s anthropological framework



## Abraham Kuyper

Kuyper's anthropological framework

Kuyper's view of faith and religion

Kuyper's schematic diagram of his view of man

Schematic diagram of Kuyper's anthropological framework.

## Herman Dooyeweerd

Dooyeweerd's view of man

The faith (pistical) function

Conclusion

Schematic diagram of Dooyeweerd's anthropological framework.



These chapters were subsequently published in *Journal for Christian Scholarship*—see Fernhout (1979) below.

*Harry Fernhout* is a former president of the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, and of The King's University College, Edmonton, Alberta. He was the director of Global Scholars Canada from 2014-2017.

Nichols, Anthony H. 1975. The educational doctrines of Abraham Kuyper: an evaluation. *Journal of Christian Education* 18:26-37.

See also Nichols (1973). Both these papers serve to introduce Kuyper's ideas to the Australian Christian Schools movement.

Nichols comments on one objection levelled at Christian schools is that they promote a “ghetto mentality” by isolating children from the world. Kuyper's emphasis on creation and common grace shows that this was not a motivation for Kuyper (29). Education was a preparation for involvement in society. By the universality of faith, Nichols means the role of faith, as identified by Kuyper, is integral in all of life's activities – whether believer or atheist. All educational theories have their foundations in faith commitments. He finds Kuyper's view of the antithesis is “more controversial” (31). Nichols suggests that Kuyper's “inconsistencies” have been eliminated by Cornelius Van Til.

As regards sphere sovereignty while acknowledging it helps to delineate the roles of family, school and state, he contends it lacks biblical warranty. (In a footnote he does acknowledge that Kuyper never maintained that it did.) Nichols also asserts that there is “no Biblical doctrine of the State”.

Van Til, Cornelius 1975. Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck: Orthodox reaction to the synthesis of 19<sup>th</sup>-century theology. In: *The New Synthesis Theology of the Netherlands*. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed. Part 1 Section E.

Van Til's book was to present a critique of what he terms the “new synthesis”, a synthesis between “Kantian man and the Christ of the Scriptures” (7). The new synthesis includes Barth, H.M. Kuitert, Robert Collingwood, Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Scholten. In this short section he poses the question how have Kuyper and Bavinck dealt with “the claims of Scholten and his disciples” (28). He recognises that they rejected Scholten's claims but thought that there were “remnants of Scholasticism clung to their thinking”. Unfortunately, he does not unpack what he means by this.

## 1976

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. 1976. The French Revolution and after. *The Christian and the State in Revolutionary Times*. London: Westminster Conference, Ch 6.



*D.M. Lloyd-Jones* (1899-1981) was for thirty years the minister at Westminster Chapel, London.

This lecture was delivered at one of the Westminster Conference at Westminster Chapel, London in 1975. Lloyd Jones was an important figure in British evangelicalism of the mid to late twentieth century. As he puts it “My whole thesis is to show that something entirely new emerge, and came into being with the French Revolution”. He looks at the reactions of Groen Van Prinsterer and Kuyper to it and the formation of the Ant-

Revolutionary Party. Particularly interesting for the British context is Lloyd Jones comments regarding worldview:

"The Christian is not only to be concerned about personal salvation. It is his duty to have a complete view of life as taught in the Scriptures. ... As far as the Christian is concerned – and that is what we are interested in now – we are not to be concerned only about personal salvation; we must have a worldview. All of us who have ever read Kuyper, and others, have been teaching this for many years." (101)

## 1978

Vander Werff, Pieter H. 1978. Kuyper no evolutionist. *The Banner* 113 (August):23-24.

Vander Werf takes issue with Menninga's view of Kuyper's view of evolution. He states: Dr. Kuyper further said: "Because the evolution theory is in contradiction with Christian principles, as revealed in the Bible, we have to attack this hypothesis."

Rewerts, Ronald M. 1978. The significance of Abraham Kuyper for Reformed theology. *Trinity Journal*

Rewerts is reservedly complimentary of Kuyper. His conclusion, in full reads:

"The achievement of a man of Kuyper's greatness is incredible. Yet it is disappointing to see in his work flaws and imbalances that have led a great number of his successors away from a truly Biblical Christianity. Though he denounced the mirage of Modernism and attempted a reconstruction of Calvinism that was Biblically consistent and contemporaneously relevant, he himself has been accused of teachings that led to a secularized Christianity and a synthesis with modern thought. Indeed "unsound elements of the system in the hands of less gifted disciples can become a threat to the very cause that is championed.

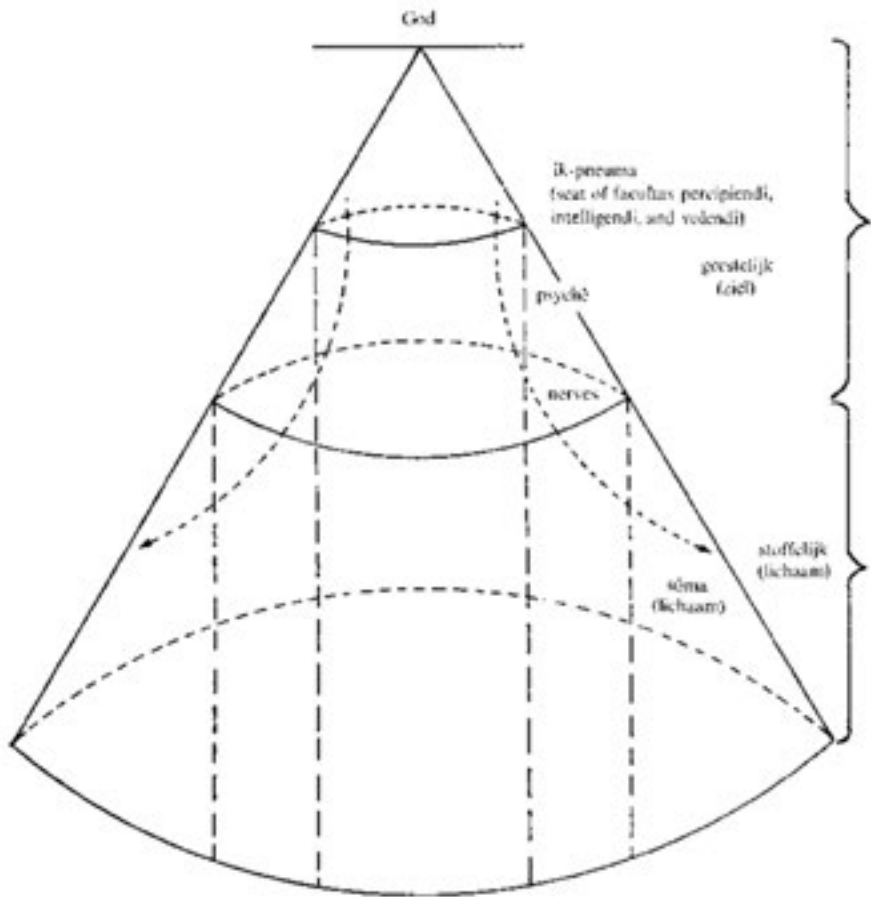
Yet without doubt, Kuyper's theology must continue to be reckoned with, and can provide much useful thought for a church that is ever reforming according to the Word of God."

## 1979

Fernhout, Harry 1979. Man, faith and religion in Bavinck, Kuyper and Dooyeweerd (I)-(III). *Journal of Christian Scholarship*. 15(1-2):54-71.

This is a publication of Fernhout's MPhil (1974). (For the contents see above.)

This is the second in a series of three papers. The first dealt with Bavinck and the third with Dooyeweerd. This examines Kuyper's anthropology. He focuses on Kuyper's "Locus de Homine" from his *Dictaten Dogmatik* (1910). Kuyper rejects "out of hand any notion of trichotomy"; likewise, he rejects a monist view. In examining Kuyper's view of faith, he identifies a rational-logical tendency in Kuyper, but this he states, "should not cause us to be blind to the acuteness and biblical soundness of Kuyper's insight that faith has to do with that side of man's creational nature which calls him to come face to face with his Creator". (71)



Langley, McKendree R. 1979. The political spirituality of Abraham Kuyper. *International Reformed Bulletin* 76:4ff.

Also, in Bishop and Kok (Eds) (2013).

By political spirituality Langley means a “neglected yet important aspect of Christian sanctification in relation to people, money, government and justice”, it is “neither liberation theology, nor a revitalized theocratic social ethic”. Langley looks at a number of aspects of Kuyper’s life that illustrate this political spirituality: as a pastor, a journalist, a party chairman, a champion of the poor and as prime minister. In doing so he looks at several of Kuyper’s writings, including “To the voters” an editorial in *De Standaard* where Kuyper proposed that voting was “as much a confession of faith as worshipping in church on a Sunday”.

Vander Werff, Pieter H. 1979. Dr. Abraham Kuyper and evolutionism. *The Banner* 114 (February):23-24.

This is a further statement of Vander Werff (1978).

## Conclusion

The literature discussed here from 1960s to the 1970s reveals a shift in the reception of Kuyper’s work. His contributions continue to be respected; however, critiques of his work began to emerge. Scholars began to engage more critically with his political views and his theology. This developing discourse not only enriches our understanding of Kuyper’s legacy, but it also invites further exploration and dialogue regarding the relevance of his ideas for today. It is important to balance admiration with a critical analysis.

## Bibliography

These are the works mentioned but not reviewed in the above.

BISHOP, S. 2024. Kuyperania 1890s–1950s: A Survey of English-language Literature on Abraham Kuyper. *Tydskrif Vir Christelike Wetenskap | Journal for Christian Scholarship*, 60(1&2):103-135. Retrieved from <https://pubs.ufs.ac.za/index.php/tcw/article/view/1405>.

BISHOP, S. & KOK, J. (Eds.) 2013. *On Kuyper: A Collection of Readings on the Life, Work & Legacy of Abraham Kuyper*. Sioux Center, IO: Dordt Press.

KUYPER, A. 1910. *Dictaten Dogmatik van Dr. A. Kuyper*. Kampen: J.H. Kok.  
VANDER STELT, John C. 2020. *Faith Life and Theology: A Reorientation*. Jordan Station: Paideia Press.

## Appendix: Additions to 1940s

Lubbers, George C. 1945. Calvinism According To Kuyper's Stone-Lectures – A Critique. *Standard Bearer* XXI (2):65-69.



In this review *George Lubbers* (1909-2001) a minister in the Protestant Reformed Church in America summarises Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism*. He concludes:

"We gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to Dr. Kuyper for having taught us much in these lectures. Especially is this true of the lectures on Politics and Art. This does not imply that we subscribe to all. It is especially on the points touching the place of Science and Politics in Kuyper's conception of history as the development of mankind that we take exception to. But of this we will write more later."

Lubbers, George C. 1945. Calvinism According To Kuyper's Stone-Lectures – A Critique (2): Kuyper's Method. *Standard Bearer* XXI (5):112-114.

Here Lubbers examines Kuyper's method in the Stone Lectures. He concludes:

Kuyper did not arrive at [his] conception in the way of exegetical-synthetical study, but in the way of attempting a reconciliation of what he considered a discrepancy between the doctrine of total depravity and the good that the unregenerate do. And: this was not the method of the Reformers. (114)

Lubbers, George C. 1945. Calvinism According To Kuyper's Stone-Lectures – A Critique (3): Kuyper's Method. *Standard Bearer* XXI (5):112-114.

In this critique of Kuyper's Stone Lectures Lubbers discusses what he perceives to be Kuyper's "dualistic-synthetic conception of history".

Hanko C. Dr. Kuyper's Conception of Christ's Human Nature as General *Standard Bearer* XXI.

Here Hanko takes issue with Kuyper's view of the humanity of Christ. He maintains that Kuyper asserts "that Christ assumed the human nature, that He became a man; We can call Him 'Son of Man', but never 'a man'. The totality of mankind was not increased by one through Him".