

# Reformational outposts for information and communication

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## Introduction

In this article we are going to explore the work of several organisations dealing with (or hosting) the communication of ideas, news, values or information from a reformational perspective. We will subdivide the field into a few sectors: the broadcasters, the newspapers, the popular journals, the academic journals, the publishing houses and a few interesting websites. The latter will be treated as international and therefore briefly mentioned in the final section of this short article. Once again I need to remind our readers that the purpose is to emphasise publishing activities in areas where Christian contributions are less taken for granted and therefore we will not deal with theological publications. Let us begin from the Netherlands.

## The Netherlands

### • Broadcasters

The Dutch public broadcasting system allows the voices of the different communities to be heard (including the Christian ones) by supporting the broadcasters who represent the worldviews of certain sections of the population. The system is illustrated for example in the book by John L. Hiemstra, *Worldviews in the air: the struggle to create a pluralist broadcasting system in the Netherlands* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997).

As a consequence, several Christian TV and radio broadcasters operate in the Netherlands under the banner of the "Netherlands Public Broadcasting". The main Christian producers of TV and radio programs are the **Dutch Christian Radio Broadcasting Association** (Nederlandse

Christelijke Radio Vereniging – NCRV) and **Evangelical Broadcasting** (Evangelische Omroep – EO). The reformational movement contributes to this common Christian enterprise.

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### • National newspapers

In this category we can mention three Dutch newspapers. *Trouw* ("loyalty" or "allegiance", cognate of "true") has a daily circulation of 105 000 copies. It was founded during the Second World War by members of the Dutch Protestant resistance. The Nazi forces tried to suppress the newspaper by imprisoning around 20 couriers, which were later executed for refusing to conform to an ultimatum. The newspaper is "rooted in the Christian tradition and aims to be a source of contemplation and inspiration for everyone who feels a need for moral and spiritual orientation".

The *Reformatie Dagblad* has a circulation of 60 000 copies. Founded in 1971, its headquarters are in Apeldoorn and it is informally linked to the Reformed Political Party. The *Nederlands Dagblad* has a daily circulation of 33 000 copies. It

was founded in 1944 and it used to have a liaison with the Gereformeerde and the Vrijgemakte churches and with the Reformed Political Alliance (GPV) – a party which merged in the Christian Union in 2001.

- **Academic journals**

The journal *Philosophia reformata* (vol. 75, 2010) deals with philosophy in the Calvinist tradition and is published by the Association for Christian Philosophy. Its first editor was H. Dooyeweerd (1935). The journal has recently adopted the policy of publishing only in English, thus showing its desire to enlarge its “audience”. It is a prestigious, high-level international journal.

The Gereformeerde Wetenschappelijk Genootschap (Reformed Scientific Society) publishes the journal *Radix* (vol. 36 in 2010), which is equally prestigious and more interdisciplinary (although less international, one may argue, as it publishes mainly in Dutch).

In the field of politics, the Christian Democratic Appeal publishes the journal *Christian democratic explorations* (vol. 17, 2010).

- **Popular journals**

The journal *Beweging* (vol. 74, 2010) is published in Dutch and constitutes a popular version of *Philosophia reformata*, aiming at a broader public. The name has recently changed to *Sophie* and the new publication will incorporate the journal *Ellips: tijdschrift voor Bijbel en wetenschap*. The latter has been published since 2002 by the Stichting Evangelische Hogeschool (8 issues per year, previously published with the title *Bijbel en wetenschap*). The bulletin *Aspekten* is useful especially to be informed about conferences, meetings and other initiatives concerning reformational philosophy.

In the field of politics, the journal *Zicht* (“studieblad voor gereformeerd zicht op politiek en maatschappij”, vol. 36, 2010), is published quarterly by the Guido de Brès Stichting (the Academic Institute of the Re-

formed Political Party). The Christian Democratic Appeal publishes the journal *CDA Magazine*, also dealing with political, economic, social and actuality issues.

- **Publishers**

Several publishing initiatives have managed to spread the views of the reformational community. Some of them are dedicated mainly to reformational publications, while others include other Christian and non-Christian approaches. In this section, however, (and the same holds for the other countries below) I will mention the companies which are the most known publishers of reformational literature. In the Netherlands we can mention especially **Buijten & Schipperheijn** (Amsterdam) and **Uitgeverij Kok** (Kampen),

### Canada and the USA

- **Academic journals**

In Canada, in the past several well-known and valuable journals were published, like *Anakainosis*, *Vanguard* and the *Reformational Forum*. I am not aware that a reformational academic journal is presently published in Canada. Nevertheless, we can still mention a few important publications in the USA. The prestigious *Christian scholars' review* (vol. 41, 2010) is published by a coalition of Christian colleges among which one can mention Calvin College. The journal is multidisciplinary in focus, just like the journal *Christian higher education* (vol. 11, 2010), often “publicised” by IAPCHE (the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education).

Equally multidisciplinary is the journal *Pro Rege* (vol. 39, 2010), published quarterly by Dordt College. It contains short but often very valuable contributions (often written by Dordt lecturers) and is sent free of charge on demand as a service to the Christian Community worldwide. It shows particular attention to the reformational perspective.

*Faith and economics* (vol. 28, 2010) is published twice a year by the Association of Christian Economists (ACE) in Holland

(Michigan). The president of the Association is John Dunn of Hope College where the Association started in 1982. The environment and the contributions in this case may be less “Kuyperian” and more “ecumenical” but it is certainly a publication to take note of.

**Perspectives on science and Christian faith** (vol. 60, 2010) focuses on the link between Christianity and the natural sciences and is published by American Scientific Affiliation (ASA, an organisation of some 1 500 members founded in 1941). The journal (previously published as *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*) displays a broad range of Christian positions and the contributions often (though not only) focus on the creation-evolution debate. Although it cannot be counted, strictly speaking, among the reformational journals, it is open to contributions by the reformational community.

Finally, I would like to mention **Faith and philosophy** (vol. 27, 2010), the journal of the Society of Christian philosophers, available online and supported from Asbury University and the University of Notre Dame. The journal is especially tuned to the Plantinga-Wolterstorff philosophical line.

- **Popular journals**

Things look better, for Canada, when we look at the category of the popular journals. The Christian Labour Association of Canada publishes **The Guide** (vol. 55, 2010) a quarterly journal dealing with social and labour issues. **The Catalyst** (vol. 33, 2010) is published by Citizens for Public Justice, integrated by a newsletter.

In the USA one can mention three publications (available online) produced by the Centre for Public Justice and therefore dealing with political and economic issues, namely **Public justice report** (vol. 33, 2010), **Capital commentary** and **Root and branch**.

- **Publishers**

In Canada several projects are underway: the **Herman Dooyeweerd Centre for Phi-**

**losophy** is busy republishing the works of this Dutch philosopher. We should also mention the **Paideia Reformational Project**. Paideia Press was an important publisher which suspended its activities for a few years but is now recovering quickly and with excellent results. The project concerns the publication of reformational books but also the storage of online texts which can be downloaded by the public. I think this initiative is particularly promising for the distribution of reformational literature worldwide.

I would also like to mention the **Faith and Learning Network**, sponsored by the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. The network provides a bibliography aimed at supporting students and scholars in developing countries in their access to literature focusing on Christian learning and scholarship.

In the USA, Reformational authors are often published by **Eerdmans** (Grand Rapids, Michigan), the **Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company** (New Jersey), **University Press of America** (Maryland), **Dordt Press** (Iowa), **Notre Dame Press** (Indiana) and **Baker Publishing Group** (especially its Baker Academic series) in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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## South Africa

I would like to dedicate this short article to Prof Johannes Froneman (Faculty of Communication of the Potchefstroom Campus), for his continued contributions to a Chris-

tian understanding of communication and journalism.

### • Academic journals

South Africa has at least three journals hosting Christian (and often reformational) contributions. All of them are available online and are multidisciplinary with emphasis on the humanities. All of them host articles in both Afrikaans and (increasingly) English and all of them are “accredited” by the South African Department of Education.

The *Journal for Christian scholarship / Tydskrif vir Christelike wetenskap* (vol. 46, 2010) is linked to the Association for Christian Higher Education. Its present editor is Prof D.F.M. Strauss and the journal delivers four issues per year. Recently the English title was added to the original Afrikaans title, showing the willingness of the editorial staff to be more open to an international public.

The journal *Koers: Bulletin vir Christelike wetenskap / Koers: Bulletin for Christian scholarship* (vol. 75, 2010) is produced at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University and is also supported by the Koers Association.

Finally, *Acta academica* (vol. 42, 2010), produced at the University of the Free State, does also host with a certain regularity contributions from a reformational perspective.

### • Popular journals

Here the journal *Woord en daad / Word and action* should be mentioned, a journal with a glorious past and hopefully with a relevant future as well. The journal deals with a wide range of actuality-issues: politics, economics, society, principled reflection from a Christian point of view and so forth. *Word and Action* is published quarterly in Potchefstroom by the Reformational Movement of South Africa. A similar journal, *Roeping en riglyne* (vol. 58 in 2010) is published in Bloemfontein by the Association for Christian Higher Education.

### • Publishers

In this area we have less than in the previous section, and probably less than in the past when publishers like SACUM, Pro Rege and others were active. A vast service was also offered by the Institute for Reformational Studies, which had in its publications (posted worldwide) a large part of its mission.

Nowadays one can mention the **Institute for Contemporary Christianity in Africa**, which publishes especially the works of B.J. van der Walt.

## Asia and Australia

Unfortunately, I am not aware of the existence of specific reformational journals in Asia. One must take into account the fact that in Korea or Japan the number of scholars in the Kuyperian tradition is not large.

In Korea, however, a good academic journal is available, *Faith and scholarship*, published by the Korean Association for Christian Studies.

In Australia, Amani Educational Services publishes (online) the *African journal for transformational scholarship* “an interdisciplinary journal of scientific and scholarly insights”. The reason why the adjective “African” appears on this journal based in Victoria-Australia, is that it is an official organ of the “Centre for the Promotion of Higher Education in Africa” (CPCHEA). The managing editor is Prof Stuart Fowler. In the past there existed some reformational periodicals of good level (for example *Issues* and *Outlook*) but they don’t appear anymore. The fact that the “twin” associations for Christian scholarship in Australia and New Zealand have also ceased their activities seems to point towards a need for revitalisation.

## Internet sites

Probably the most consulted site for reformational movement is the one maintained by Steve Bishop in UK. The site is called *All of life redeemed*, [www.allofliferedeemed.co.uk/](http://www.allofliferedeemed.co.uk/) and presents documentation

concerning past and present authors within reformational scholarship. One can download a large number of articles and more bibliographical and historical information is available, together with the announcement of new initiatives.

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From this same website, by accessing the "further information" page, one can access a list of "key websites" <http://www.alloflife-redeemed.co.uk/furtherinformation.htm#313447421>. Particularly interesting is the forum called **Thinknet**, started after the publication of Roy Clouser's book *The myth of religious neutrality*.

Some interesting sites offer a kind of introduction to reformational philosophy, for example <http://ittowt.blogspot.com/> (by S. Bishop) and <http://www.dooy.salford.ac.uk/> (by A. Basden).

### Conclusion

It seems that even in this field the Reformational movement has not spared its energies. Ideas can be good and valid, but to reach people they need "legs". These legs, in the present world, are constituted by the media. As these journals can often be consulted online, I would like to encourage students and academics to include them in their list of readings. One can also subscribe to them and hereby support them (for example by subscribing in favour of a friend or relative).

**WOORD & DAAD** op die internet! /

**WORD & ACTION** on the internet!

[http://www.journals.co.za/ej/ejour\\_woord.html](http://www.journals.co.za/ej/ejour_woord.html)

Gebruikersnaam en wagwoord kan aangevra word

by:

UserID and password can be obtained from:

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