
Reviewed by David Bundy

Cornelis van der Laan, former General Secretary of the Broederschap van Pinkstergemeenten in Nederland (Brotherhood of Pentecostal Churches in The Netherlands), is well known to scholars of European Pentecostalism because of his insightful contributions to EPTA Bulletin and Pneuma and his participation in scholarly conferences in Europe and North America. His is also co-author, with his brother Paul N. van der Laan, of the standard history of Pentecostalism in the Netherlands and Flemish speaking Belgium, Pinksteren in Beweging, Vijfenzeventig Jaar Pinkstersgeschiedenis in Nederland en Vlaanderen (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1982). In the newer book, van der Laan examines the life and work of the founder and initial leader of the Pentecostal Churches in the Netherlands, G. R. Polman (1867-1932). The work was presented as a Ph.D. dissertation (1987) at the University of Birmingham (England) under the direction of Professor Walter J. Hollenweger. A Dutch translation of this English text was published as De Spade Regen: Geboorte en groei van de Pinksterbeweging in Nederland 1907-1930 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1989). The Dutch translation has fewer notes but more photographs and plates.

The volume makes a number of important contributions. Firstly, it describes in careful detail the pre-history of Dutch Pentecostalism with attention both to its socio/political context and to the revivalist groups which sought to minister and gain adherents in The Netherlands and with which Polman was associated. Van der Laan clearly demonstrates the Wesleyan/Holiness roots of Dutch Pentecostalism as he describes Polman's work with the Salvation Army and his move to the U.S.A. to participate (Oct. 1903-Jan. 1906) in John Alexander Dowie's Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, IL. The Polmans returned to Holland to take over the leadership of the Zionist community founded earlier by A. S. Booth-Clibborn who had earlier been supervisor of the Polmans in the Dutch branch of the Salvation Army. As with many American, English and German Holiness and (future) Pentecostal believers, Polman was deeply influenced by the Welsh revival and longed for an experience of spiritual renewal.

Pentecostalism which came to Europe through the medium of T. B. Barratt, a Holiness Methodist Episcopal minister in Christiania (Oslo) Norway soon spread to Zurich. The Polmans' friend and fellow former Salvation Army officer M. D. Voskuil went to investigate and immediately after his return, Wilhelmine Blekkink Polman experienced glosso-
lalia. The church in Amsterdam was established and a building secured. Polman founded (April 1908) and edited an important periodical, *Spade Regen* (Latter Rain).

Secondly, van der Laan traces in careful detail the life of Polman, examining his troubled early life, his success in the Salvation Army, the triumphant years as an internationally prominent Pentecostal statesman and theologian, the developments (some negative) within the Pentecostal churches in The Netherlands and Polman's involvement in each situation, the editorial and publishing work and he probes the relationships with Polman's nuclear family. Detailed attention is also given to the financial profile of the congregation and family on the basis of various financial and legal documents. The demise of Polman's influence in Dutch Pentecostalism due to his adultery is carefully and sympathetically chronicled. Every genre of source, including oral history, related to the life of Polman has been systematically used. Reports published in Pentecostal periodicals in England, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States as well as in The Netherlands were found. The only apparent lapse is the lack of references to T. B. Barratt's publications, *Byposten* and *Korse's Seier*.

Thirdly, the reader is provided a detailed and copiously documented analysis of the mission programs undertaken by the fledgling Dutch Pentecostal churches (pp. 179-201) which supplements the material in *Pinksteren in beweging*. Early participation in Cecil Polhill's Pentecostal Missionary Union based in London is discussed as is the founding of the Dutch Pentecostal Missionary Society (1920). Mission efforts focused on China, Zaire (then the Belgian Congo), Venezuela and Indonesia (then the Dutch Indies). Extensive prosopographical data about early Dutch Pentecostal missionaries is provided, including discussions of their relationship with Polman. There are references to fund raising efforts and publicity reports in *Spade Regen*, along with an initial assessment of the impact of missions and missionaries on Dutch Pentecostalism.

Fourthly, van der Laan proffers an exposition of the theological position of Polman, with frequent reference to the writings and intellectual contributions of his wife, W. Polman-Blekkink (the volume can also be read as a biography of Mrs. Polman!). The ecumenical, internationalist, pacifist, eschatological and ecclesiological concerns of the Polmans are thoughtfully delineated. The negative response of most Dutch churches to Pentecostalism as articulated by the Polmans is described and documented. The thesis that Polman was a "sectarian against his will" is clearly demonstrated.

Thus, this volume makes significant contributions to many fields of inquiry related to Pentecostalism: history, theology, ecumenics, missiology, prosopography. As noted it also has implications for and presents a challenge to the earlier traditions out of which Polman came, as well as for those established churches which would attempt to live consistently