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ALL THINGS NEW.

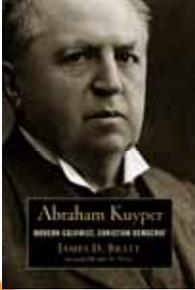
Neo-Calvinist Groundings for Social Work

ALAN KEITH-LUCAS LECTURE 2014

JAMES R. VANDERWOERD, MSW, PhD
Professor of Social Work
Redeemer University College

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Abraham Kuyper
MODERN CALVINIST, CHRISTIAN RENAISSANCE
JOHN D. BRATT
Author of *Abraham Kuyper*

“We as Christians must place the strongest possible emphasis on **the majesty of God’s authority**”.

“You must exercise an **architectonic** critique of human society.”

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My Dutch Calvinist Heritage



My father in 1944



My mother in front of her childhood home in Velp, The Netherlands

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Overview

1. Neo-Calvinists on the Christian Family Tree
2. Five aspects of the neo-Calvinist "accent"
3. Neo-Calvinist insights and examples in social welfare
4. Blindspots and opportunities

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Neo-Calvinists on the Christian Family Tree

Source: wikipedia

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Nicholas Wolterstorff



Alvin Plantinga

"The New Calvinism"



 **The Neo-Calvinist Accent**

1. God's sovereignty
2. "Grace restores nature"
3. "And God said it was good"
4. Salvation isn't just for you and me
5. "The True Story of the Whole World"

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 **Every Square Inch**

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which **Christ**, who is sovereign over all, does not cry out, **"Mine!"**

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 **"Grace restores nature"**

CREATION → **FALL** → **REDEMPTION**

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REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE **Structure and Direction**

When God's norms are followed then things are structured properly and are directed towards God.

All things in creation

When God's norms are disobeyed then things are structured improperly and are directed away from God.

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REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE **Salvation is not just for you and me**

"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [Christ], and through him **to reconcile to himself all things**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."

Colossians 1:19-20

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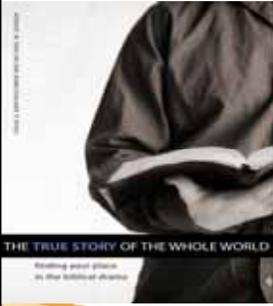
REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE **The Drama of Scripture**

CREATION - FALL - REDEMPTION

our time in the story

Act I "It was very good"	Act II fall into sin	Act III Israel	Act IV JESUS' birth, death, resurrection	Act V early and current church	Act VI "all things made new"
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Metanarrative

“The whole point of Christianity is that it offers a story which is the story of the whole world. It is public truth.”

- N.T. Wright

THE TRUE STORY OF THE WHOLE WORLD

Setting your place in the fabric of eternity

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Neo-Calvinist Insights for Social Welfare

- Humans created in the image of God
 - relational and social
 - creative
- Nature of societies
 - Principled pluralism
 - Role of government

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Humans created in the image of God



relational... social... creative

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Three Types of Societal Difference

X Directional:

- Differences in beliefs
- towards or against God's will

✓ Structural:

- the institutions, communities, social groups that God created as structures of creation

✓ Cultural:

- variation in culture, ethnicity, and language

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Multiple Pluralities in Society

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Sphere Sovereignty

Each has its own limited authority, but all are subject to God.

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Neo-Calvinist Influences in Social Welfare

- Religious freedom
 - Faith-based social services
 - “free” education
 - Christian labour unions
- Public justice

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Freedom for faith-based organizations

Abraham Kuyper in the White House?
Why Don't Just So Far From Washington, DC



INSTITUTIONAL Religious Freedom ALLIANCE
Shaped by Faith. Free to Flourish!

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“Free” Christian Education



vrije Universiteit amsterdam



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 **Freedom for Christians in Labour Unions**

Freedom & pluralism in labour unions

- Christian Labour Association of Canada (founded in 1952)
- “Open shop”



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ryV8XO-WPE>

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 **“Justice, Not Just Us”**
Gerald Vandezande
1931 - 2011


“Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law...”





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CARDUS

“... is a think tank dedicated to the renewal of North American social architecture.

Drawing on more than 2000 years of Christian social thought, we work to enrich and challenge public debate through research, events, and publications, for the common good.”

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“But who can discern their own errors?”

(Psalm 19:12)

- Triumphalism
- Divisiveness
- Head over heart and hands



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The church is a cord of many strands that cannot be broken



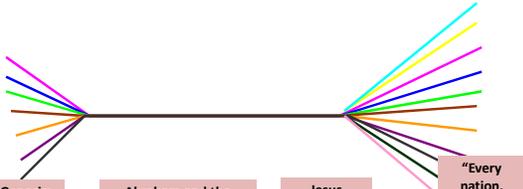
Different traditions of the Christian church



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God's Grand Vision



Genesis: "teeming swarms"

Abraham and the covenant with Israel

Jesus institutes the church

"Every nation, tribe, people & language" (Revelation)

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