

Opsomming en aanhaling vanuit H. Bavinck se boek: *Saved by Grace – The Holy Spirit's Work in Calling and Regeneration* (vertaal deur Nelson D. Kloosterman, geredigeer en voorwoord deur J. Mark Beach; Grand Rapids, MI: RHB, 2008). Oorspronklike titel in Nederlands: *Roeping en Wedergeboorte* (Kampen: G. Ph. Zalsman, 2003).

1. Beach haal RH Bremmer se opsomming van Bavinck se boek aan, in sy voorwoord-artikel, liv-iv:

In closing out this summary of Bavinck's presentation, I put forward R. H. Bremmer's synopsis of Bavinck's position:

1. The calling of the gospel is of the greatest importance and may not, because of divine election, be a message restricted only to the elect.
2. Scripture speaks of regeneration in a threefold sense: (a) as the principle (*beginself*) of new life that is implanted in man prior to faith; (b) as moral renewal; and (c) as the restoration of all things.
3. Calvin and other Reformers, as well as the Belgic Confession, present faith as preceding regeneration. However, the order was later reversed especially for two reasons: (a) the struggle against the Anabaptists, such that it became necessary in regard to little children to speak of the implanting of a first principle of life; and (b) the struggle against the Remonstrants, such that it became necessary to accent the total depravity of humans, which in turn required that God implant a first principle of life, wherein a person remains wholly passive.
4. Yet all this may not lead to the conclusion that regeneration always precedes baptism with respect to elect children.
5. Baptized children are to be viewed and treated as elect and regenerated children, until the contrary is decidedly evident from their confession or life.
6. Bavinck distinguishes between the idea of regeneration in the broader sense (that of Calvin and the Reformers) and in a narrower sense (the giving of the faith-capacity or capacity of faith in the implanting [*instorting*] of the new life).
7. Regarding the latter, he again distinguishes between active regeneration (*regeneratio activa*) and passive regeneration (*regeneratio passiva*). Passive regeneration is the fruit of God's activity in man; active regeneration is identical to the internal call (*vocatio interna*).
8. Immediate regeneration is to be understood as the direct operation of God's Spirit in a person effecting regeneration, wherein neither man's understanding or will cooperates. It is an additional operation that accompanies the Word and gives the capacity of faith.
9. Since Dort, it is common for the Reformed to speak of regeneration as preceding faith.
10. In connection with the awakening of faith flowing from the capacity for faith bestowed in regeneration, the Word is described for the first time as means of grace "in the proper sense."
11. The first regeneration takes place under and with the Word, but not through the Word; as for children, the objective presence of the Word must be acknowledged.
12. The disposition (*habitus*) and nature (*qualitates*) given to man by regeneration owe their stability and durability to the Holy Spirit, who elevates the life implanted with regeneration above sin, destruction, and death. (Footnote 144: Bremmer, Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus, 271-72. For Bremmer's whole discussion of Bavinck on regeneration, 261—72; cf Smilde, *Een Eeuw van Strijd over Verbond en Doop*, 185—94. Bavinck treats this entire topic of calling and regeneration, as well as faith and conversion, in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, IV, 33—175.)

2. Hoe daar gepreek moet word, volgens Bavinck, bl.126-128

12.4.3 Covenant and holiness

Even as on the one hand we must maintain the church's catholicity, nevertheless on the other hand we must confess its holiness. We may not, on the basis of practicalities, define the essence of the church differently than it exists in the truth of God's Word. The church is and remains the gathering of true Christ-believers, even if all the churches on earth fall away and degenerate; the church's being is determined by heartfelt faith. Thus the sacraments have been instituted only for true believers; on the basis of God's Word we may not confess anything else. Even were they to be administered a million times to people who do not belong among the true believers, their essence would not be, and may not be, changed for that reason. A true, Christian baptism is therefore administered only when together with the administration of the sign by the minister, Christ from heaven binds the working of His Spirit, and the thing signified is received and enjoyed by the one baptized.

12.4.4 Covenantal summons to faith and repentance

For this reason congregational preaching ought never to omit the serious summons to faith and repentance. Proceeding on the basis of the covenant does not exempt the preacher from that, but rather it is precisely this that obligates him to issue such a summons. That obligation is derived not first of all from the presumption that all elect persons already in their first days of life even before baptism have been regenerated, and this obligation applies not only with reference to those who in their childhood are supposedly regenerated. But this obligation is grounded in the covenant of grace, as it has spread historically throughout the human race under God's leading, and includes all Christians and their children, and it applies with reference to them all together, whether or not they were already regenerated in the earliest days of life. For no matter how inestimably great the blessings already are that God bestows upon us when from our birth we are included in the covenant, born in a Christian church to Christian parents, baptized with holy baptism, and nurtured in a Christian family—all these blessings are still not enough. Each person is confronted with the obligation of personal, saving faith; only one who believes in the Son has eternal life. Whether the church already presumes that all its members are believers, or, being unable to judge the human heart, the church must be satisfied with an outward confession and walk and base its response on these—all of this in no way detracts from the truth that each must examine and test himself, and that no one, whether inside or outside the church, will enter the kingdom of heaven unless he is born again of water and Spirit. Not the church, and not the minister of the Word, but only God in heaven brings about salvation.

12.4.5 Congregational preaching

Thus both elements belong together in congregational preaching. The preacher's sermons should connect to God's work that has preceded, to the gifts and blessings He has bestowed in His covenant, in His Word, and in His baptism. His sermons should continue building upon the foundation God Himself has laid, but then should also continue warning of the need for self-examination, so that people not deceive themselves for eternity. Biblical sermons seriously summon church members to faith and conversion both initially and continually, for only those who believe will be saved.

Neither of these elements may be omitted from preaching to the congregation — neither the element of discriminating examination nor the element of continual building on the foundation. Which one of these deserves priority in a given congregation and at a given time cannot be prescribed. That depends on the times and circumstances, on the situations and particularities of the congregation. In prophetic preaching the summons to conversion sounds the loudest; in apostolic admonition the emphasis lies on growing in the knowledge and grace of Christ, while in the letter of the exalted Savior to the seven churches, warning and threatening alternate with comfort and promise. In our churches the minister of the Word is not bound to any kind of lectionary system and is free in his choice of sermon text. But that choice is not therefore arbitrary. Choosing a preaching text ought to be determined by the knowledge that the minister of the Word, as a good and faithful shepherd, has of the flock and of each sheep. It should also be directed by the calling entrusted to him to administer not a part, but the entire Word—to preach the whole counsel of God.

With respect to a practical matter this double character of congregational preaching appears very clearly, namely, with regard to the administration of the Lord's Supper. On the one hand, all the confessing members of the congregation, without exception, are obligated by God to proclaim the Lord's death. On the other hand, only those may partake of the Lord's Supper who with true hearts have turned unto God. In reality time and again there are many painful conflicts between *must* and *may*, between obligation and permission. No human reasoning can solve this conflict; it exists and continues to exist despite all our

theories. For it is incorrect, on the one hand, that the obligation to commemorate the Lord's Supper should not rest upon every confessing member of the church, yes, even upon every baptized member who has come to years of discretion. But it is no less true, on the other hand, that all those who, though they are members of the congregation, yet lack saving faith, nevertheless have free access to and the right to take the Lord's Supper.

Therefore preaching ought continually to keep together both the obligation of the "must" and the right of the "may." God requires that from us in His Word. He desires that we allow this conflict to exist and that we not try through our human reasoning to eliminate the problem.

But He Himself resolves the conflict, by granting grace to those who in their need look to Him, and by holding inexcusable all those who resist His calling. The covenant is the pathway along which the Lord carries out His decree.