

Sunday, January 27, 2013—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 90 Grace and Glory Days: The Relationship Between De Haan, Bultema, and O’Hair

Who Was M.R. De Haan?

- “Martin Ralph De Haan was born in Zeeland, Michigan on March 23, 1891, the son of Reitze De Haan and Johanna Rosema. While at Hope College he was an effective member of the debate team. Martin went on to earn the degree, Doctor of Medicine, in 1914 from the Abraham Lincoln Medical School of the University of Illinois in Chicago, as Valedictorian of the class of 110. He entered the practice of medicine in Byron Center, Michigan. M.R. married Priscilla VenHuizen.” (Boslooper, 2)
- “At the height of Dr. De Haan’s medical career, he was struck down by an event in which he became patient, rather than physician. He suffered an infection after cutting himself while attending to a patient, developed blood poisoning, and lay in Blodgett Hospital on the brink of death. He was conscious enough to cry out to the Lord to save him, and with his pleas he made a pledge—to serve the Lord, and Him alone, for the rest of his life. He survived the ordeal, and was committed to become a missionary.” (Boslooper, 2)
- “Martin R. De Haan, MD, sold his practice, his home, and his horse for \$10,000 and moved his wife Pricilla, and two little girls, Ruth and June, to a home on Central Avenue between 15th and 16th Street, in Holland Michigan, and enrolled in Western Theological Seminary. He continued to practice medicine in an office on the second floor of his home while he was a student, and sired two sons, Richard and Marvin.” (Boslooper, 3)
- “M.R. De Haan graduated from Western Seminary as a member of the class of 1925. He received a call from the Calvary Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. His examination for Ordination by the Classis of Grand Rapids was sustained on May 21, 1925 “with great satisfaction to the Classis. . . In 1925 the Calvary Reformed Church had 182 members. In the Spring of 1926 it was reported that Calvary Church has been richly blessed, 54 having been received on confession, of which 32 were married people.” (Boslooper, 4)
- “On April 5 at the Spring session of the Classis of Grand Rapids in 1927, “Calvary Church reports the most successful year in its history. Sixty members were added on confession and forty-eight by letter. Absolute peace and harmony now prevail, and the mid-week prayer meetings are attended regularly by 150-200 people.” By the Spring of 1927 the congregation had grown from 183 members to 360 members. The budget increased in two years from \$9,000 to \$25,000. A \$45,000 building project increased the seating capacity of the church from 650 to 1,422. During this time De Haan’s annual salary was \$3,000. He declined a salary increase of \$1,000 and accepted instead the same amount for a pastor’s discretionary fund.” (Boslooper, 4)
- “By the Spring of 1928, 223 more new members had been received. Early in 1929 Rev. M.R. De Haan, MD was preaching to throngs crowding his church, and to a citywide audience on the

radio. Ads appearing in the Grand Rapids Press pointed out that services at Calvary Reformed were broadcast on the radio, and the ministry held to a specific doctrinal statement:

- We believe in the Bible as the inspired word of God; that Jesus is the Son of God and the only means of salvation and that He was born of a Virgin; that He died on Calvary and rose victorious over death and the grave; that he has ascended to Heaven and is now our advocate and that His premillennial return is imminent. We do not compromise with the world or modernism.” (Boslooper, 4-5)

De Haan’s Removal From the Reformed Church

- “Meanwhile, however, it had become apparent that De Haan’s preaching was in conflict with the doctrinal standards of the Reformed Church in America. His dispensational, Fundamentalist, premillennial interpretation of the Bible based on his use of the *Scofield Reference Bible* was in conflict with the teachings of his denomination. In addition, he rejected the Reformed view of infant baptism and came to believe only in baptism by immersion to be administered to believers only at the time of their conversion and public confession of faith in Christ.” (Boslooper, 6)
- “A committee of Classis Grand Rapids learned that, not only De Haan, but also 17 (out of 24) members of his Consistory at this point clashed with the doctrinal standards of the Reformed Church in America. The Consistory of the Calvary Reformed Church at the Classis meeting on January 25, 1929 requested that a committee of Classis be appointed to meet with the Consistory of Calvary Reformed Church at its regular meeting of February 5, 1929 to discuss the matter pertaining to the relations of Calvary Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America “caused by doctrinal differences.” (Boslooper, 6)
- “At the Classis’ next meeting on February 26 the chairman of the committee, Dr. John A. Dykstra of the Central Reformed Church, reported that the consistory of Calvary affirmed that a thorough study of God’s Word based on a dispensational division of the Scripture led them to hold that infant baptism is not in accordance with Holy Writ.” They furthermore stated that they could not continue under the program of the Reformed Church in America under existing conditions, standards, and government. On February 26, a set of six charges against De Haan signed by nine men of one of the churches of the Classis was filed. Neither the nine men nor their church was identified in the records of that meeting of the Classis. The charges were shortly thereafter published in a local newspaper.” (Boslooper, 6-7)
- “A Special Session of the Classis was set for March 14 at the Seventh Reformed Church when Classis was to hear the charges and De Haan was to be confronted with them. De Haan, however, did not appear. Another meeting was then called for April 2 at which time neither De Haan nor an Elder from Calvary Reformed appeared. Classis did proceed with the presentation of, and action on, the charges. The charges were:
 1. Conduct unbecoming a minister of the Gospel
 2. Maliciously maligning his fellow ministers through slander and libel

3. Taking his vow and entering the ministry of the Reformed Church with deceit.
 4. Maliciously having broken his ministerial vow
 5. Being unreformed in doctrine
 6. With perpetrating fraud on the denomination (Boslooper, 7)
- “While all of this was going on, what was soon to be known as Calvary Udenominational Church, was formally organized on February 26, 1929. The first public service was held on Wednesday evening, March 6, in the Orpheum Theater. . . De Haan explained that he did not appear at either session of Classis on March 14 or April 2 because he had resigned, and considered himself no longer under the jurisdiction of the Classis. He also stated publically that he was troubled by the fact that men appointed to be in charge of the meeting were known to be opposed to him, and he further explained to a friend on the telephone the night before the meeting of April 2, that he would have attended the meeting if other men had been in charge. He considered it a waste of time to attend a meeting where he would receive no chance of an honest consideration. Classis went ahead with the trial without De Haan. . . M.R. De Haan was found guilty of all charges and deposed from the ministry of the Reformed Church in America as of April 2, 1929.” (Boslooper, 8)
 - “On Sunday, morning March 10, De Haan began a new ministry in the Orpheum Theater at 322 Monroe Avenue. The building was filled to capacity with 1,100 persons. His sermon was No. 6 in a series on “The Tabernacle” . . . De Haan’s followers continued at the Theater, while the large Men’s Bible Class of more than 200 members, met at the Rowe Hotel. Subsequently, since the theater could be used only temporarily while it was undergoing renovations, the new congregation made a couple of moves that included the East Grand Rapids High School Auditorium (in June) and St. Cecelia Auditorium. In June of 1929 nearly 800 people were attending mid-week prayer meetings. De Haan’s following was growing so rapidly that larger quarters had to found. Suddenly the Michigan Street Elementary School property became available and was purchased for \$12,500. Within five months, at a cost of \$120,000 a new auditorium was constructed adjacent to the old school building, which was renovated and used for a Sunday School of 1,000, moved into the new structure on January 26, 1930. . . Dedicatory services were held on January 29, 30, and 31. The speakers on the three successive evenings on the subjects “The Dwelling Place of God,” “God’s Son in Me,” and “The Christian’s Relation to Abraham and Moses” were Harry Bultema and John Bennick of Muskegon and J.C. O’Hair of Chicago.” (Boslooper, 10-11)
 - In February of 1930 Calvary Udenominational Church hosted a fourteen day Bible Conference which included J.C. O’Hair of North Shore Church in Chicago. (Boslooper, 11) This means that De Haan was personal friends with two of the Grace Movements early leaders during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Harry Bultema and J.C. O’Hair.

Bultema Questions Water Baptism

- In his autobiography *Valiant and Diligent for Truth*, Harry Bultema recounts the influence his book *Maranatha* as well as his subsequent dismissal from the Reformed Church had in sweeping

many into the premillennial camp. Pastor Bultema recounts how many throughout West Michigan in cities like Grand Rapids, Holland, Kalamazoo and Grand Haven joined saints from across the country in severing their connections with the Reformed Church. In addition, Bultema recalls fondly how many of these men met regularly as The Berean Classis. (Bultema, 131)

- Pastor Bultema makes an ambiguous statement about a Brother Gerard Knol (Pastor of Reeds Lake Baptist Church at time of his writing) showing “that we had the baptismal question from the start. Regarding this reference to the “baptismal question,” Pastor Bultema goes on to state, “Brother VanDyke of Holland differed on this point with the brethren. Add to this that there were various debatable questions, such as the law, Pentecost, hymn singing, and the place of the Creeds.” (Bultema, 131) While these comments are not as clear as one might like, they do appear to be proof that the subject of water baptism as well as other dispensational subjects were being discussed by The Berean Classis in the early 1920s.
- What is clear, however, is that it was about 1925 when Pastor Bultema began to question the necessity of water baptism for the present dispensation. Regarding this matter Bultema states,
 - “In the midst of all the confusion, I dreaded to add to the confusion, and after 1925 I have never urged any soul to leave any church in order to make a new denomination. It was about that time that I began to get doubts about the whole baptismal question for this age. It’s horrible confusion, disagreement, and diversity among godly brethren first of all raised doubt in my mind, but for a considerable time I could not find interest or time to enter into this not-so-easy question. Speaking at the Gull Lake Bible Conference I once gave many reasons why the one baptism of Ephesians 4:1-5 could not be water baptism. That settled my ministry there, or course.” (Bultema, 132)
- According to this testimony, it appears that Bultema had seen for a “considerable time” the issue of the one baptism in Eph. 4 not involving water before he publically taught it at the Gull Lake Bible Conference.

Grace and Glory

- In January 1929 five men teamed up to create a Bible study magazine titled, *Grace and Glory*. The men included: John E. Bennink as editor and M.R. De Haan, Harry Bultema, A.H. Waalkes, and Moses Klerekoper as associate editors. The address for the periodical was 692 Catherine Avenue, Muskegon, Michigan. (Boslooper, 49)
- “From the first issue until its last, in November of 1930, the magazine consisted of 32 pages with opening editorials by Bennink, followed by De Haan’s columns on “Evangelism,” Bultema’s “Signs of the Times,” Klerekoper’s “Israel and the Promises,” and Waalkes’ “The Sunday School” . . . At its inception, the Editor of *Grace and Glory*, John Bennink, tried to make it clear that the magazine was not intended, contrary to what reports had implied, to set the editor and his associates up against the Reformed Churches. Klerekoper especially emphasized his desire to express his views as compatible with the Reformed churches at that time. . . Although *Grace and*

Glory began in January 1929 as an apologetic for what was deemed to be the best in Reformed Church circles, by May of the same year it had become an apologetic for Fundamentalism and within a short time became a polemic against the Reformed church and its institutions.” (Boslooper, 50-52)

- Thomas Boslooper’s *Grace and Glory Days* presents the five men associated with the magazine as being united in their position against the Reformed Church, however, early issues indicate strong differences between the men with respect to baptism. “Bennink and De Haan strongly questioned infant baptism and advocated baptism by immersion as the New Testament and Biblical mode. Whereas, however, De Haan had a baptistery installed in his new Calvary Udenominational Church, Bennink did not do so in his Bethel Gospel Tabernacle. . . Waalkes did not believe infant baptism could be proven biblically but was willing to practice it. All during this period of time (1929-1932) Bultema practiced infant baptism even though his own heart and mind had begun to question it. However, Bultema never advocated or practiced water baptism by immersion. Instead he always questioned it. Bennink insisted that these differences with respect to baptism were no reason to break the fellowship of the *Grace and Glory* men.” (Boslooper, 56)
- Unfortunately, due to the lack of clear dating in his autobiography, it is difficult to prove whether or not Boslooper’s depiction of Bultema’s view on baptism from 1929 to 1932 is accurate.
- “Both Bennink and Bultema insisted that Paul, when he wrote to Timothy (II Timothy 2:15) and instructed him to “rightly divide the word of truth” meant to divide Scripture into dispensations. . . According to this line of thinking the Epistles of Paul then become the character of the Christian life (quotes the *SRB* page, 1252) In Paul’s writing alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.) . . . What this “dividing” of Scripture accomplished was to make the preaching of the Word from the Epistles of Paul preeminent in dispensational circles, sometimes almost to the exclusion of the Gospels for some “grace preachers” (although not so for Bultema and O’Hair). According to the dispensational view of M.R. De Haan, the “kingdom teachings” of Jesus had reference primarily to a future kingdom, and many were irrelevant to current Christian thought and life. For this reason, too, the Lord’s Prayer, intended for the future kingdom, was never used in M.R. De Haan’s church.” (Boslooper, 58-59)
- “A larger Fundamentalist context may also be noted. In 1930 M.R. De Haan was elected President of the Independent Fundamental Church of America at a five day session held in De Haan’s church.” (Boslooper, 56)

O’Hair Testimony About De Haan

- J.C. O’Hair, in *The Accuser of the Brethren*, paints a slightly different picture of the relationship between De Haan, Bultema, and O’Hair than Thomas Boslooper depicts in *Grace and Glory Days*.
- J.C. O’Hair states the following in *The Accuser of the Brethren*:

- “These two men (Haggia and Fuller) know full well that Dr. Martin De Haan agreed with my dispensational teaching and “no-water” teaching one hundred per cent at the time when he was pastor of the Calvary Undenominational Church in Grand Rapids. Dr. DeHaan, with full knowledge of what I taught concerning water baptism and the transitional period in the Book of Acts, after he and Pastor Harry Bultema had gone into every detail of the teaching, invited me to speak for a week to his congregation when they were dedicating their new building (January, 1930). He endorsed from the pulpit what I taught. He sold many of my books to his people, books that set forth in no uncertain language what I believed then and now. He publically expressed endorsement of my ministry and graciously asked me to come back again (at least in February 1930) to give more of the same “dispensationalism.” While I was with him in the first series of meetings, he ridiculed the zealous immersionists and he continued for some months to preach to his own members what I had preached in the special meetings. He was as dry as I was.” (O’Hair, *Accuser*)
- Another one of O’Hair’s pamphlets is titled *An Epistle to Mr. Albertus Pieters*. Fortunately this pamphlet is dated December 1, 1931. This helps establish several important facts. First, as of late 1931, Pastor O’Hair and Pastor De Haan were still friends and enjoying fellowship one with the other.
 - “I have just received a copy of “The Leader” in which you continue your abuse, and I now feel it my duty to reply to same for the sake of the Truth of God. My candid opinion is that you want to include me in your malicious enmity against Pastor M.R. De Haan because of my fellowship with him. . . Your charge that I am immoral because I am a friend of Dr. De Haan is so utterly unkind and unreasonable that my only remark is a suggestion that you avail yourself of the Throne of Grace and get forgiveness and rid yourself of that root of bitterness lest you be consumed.” (O’Hair, *Epistle*)
 - “You further state in the same paragraph that Mr. Bultema, Mr. Bennink and Dr. De Haan have made premillennialism as interpreted in the Scofield Bible, a stench in the nostrils of honest Christian men. I do not doubt that his blessed doctrine is a stench in your nostrils, and it is my honest opinion that your relentless hatred for the Blessed Truth is the chief cause of your continuous attacks upon Dr. De Haan and other brethren, including myself.” (O’Hair, *Epistle*)
 - “Of course, you are already aware of the fact that Dr. De Haan and I do not fully agree as to the “why and how of water baptism.” But there is such a vast difference between your “why and how” and his “why and how,” that if one is scriptural, the other is altogether unscriptural: they have nothing in common.” (O’Hair, *Epistle*)
- The second important fact established in *An Epistle to Mr. Albertus Pieters* is the pamphlet *Unscriptural Cathedral* in which O’Hair states, “I have always believed and taught that the Church began at Pentecost. . .” was already in print by December 1, 1931. Consider the

following statement:

- “That thought-provoking question, even provoking me to write my booklet entitled, *Unscriptural Cathedrals or Are We Children of the Covenant?*” (O’Hair, *Epistle*)
- We are now in a position to more accurately date *Unscriptural Cathedrals* (*UC* hereafter) and understand more of the chronology of O’Hair’s theological development. We now, based upon the above quotation, think that *UC* was written before December 1931. The *UC* pamphlet itself contains advertisement for both *The Great Blunder of the Church* and *Have Ye Received the Holy Spirit Since Ye Believed?* Therefore we know that *UC* was written after *The Great Blunder of the Church* and *Have Ye Received the Holy Spirit Since Ye Believed?* The pamphlet *Have Ye Received the Holy Spirit Since Ye Believed?* contains in the back a letter by Pastor O’Hair addressed “Dear Christian Friend” that is dated January 1, 1929. All of this means that *UC* was written between January, 1929 and December, 1931. This can all be surmised just by considering O’Hair’s booklets.
- When one considers that the *O’Hairism* booklet by W.A. Haggai first appeared in print in 1930, a more precise date comes into focus. On page twenty six of Haggai’s pamphlet there is a footnote reference to O’Hair’s *The Great Blunder of the Church*. Please recall that *UC* advertised *The Great Blunder of the Church* thereby indicating that it was already in print before *UC*. If *O’Hairism* was written in 1930 and it makes reference to *The Great Blunder of the Church* and this work was written before *UC*, then that places the earliest possible date of *UC* at late 1930.
- Therefore, we appear safe in concluding that *UC* dates from late 1930 or early 1931 thereby placing it in print before O’Hair addressed his *Epistle to Albertus Pieters* in December 1931. This of course means that O’Hair was still holding the traditional view that the church began at Pentecost as late as 1930/1931. When one considers that by the time O’Hair wrote *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* in 1941 it becomes apparent the 1930s were a decade of great change in the dispensational thinking of J.C. O’Hair.

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