

PREFACE

H. Evan Runner: An Assessment of His Mission

Introduction

It is too early to assess the full significance of the work of H. Evan Runner. However, the contours of the significance of his mission can today be sketched in broad outline. In this preface I will present my personal sketch.

The heart of Runner's mission consists of an attempt to contribute to the spiritual reformation of evangelical Protestantism in the United States and Canada in the conviction that wholehearted obedience to the Word of God on the part of a significant segment of God's people is an indispensable condition not only for the continued presence of Biblical religion in these lands but also for the renewal of North American culture, which is disintegrating under the impact of humanist materialism in its liberal, pragmatic form. Runner's work at reformation-his reformational mission-was directed primarily toward three major interrelated concerns.

In the first place, Evan Runner wanted to contribute to a new consciousness of the relation between the revelation of the Scriptures and the civilization of the West, specifically in the context of the culture of the United States. In the second place, he pressed for a distinctly new way in which Christians should attempt to help shape the culture and the society which they share with humanists in the modern age. This new way consists of organized communal witness

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and action on the part of Christians outside the realm of the institutional church. Finally, Runner attempted to develop a new Christian mind which he considered essential for radical Christian leadership in the culturally decisive spheres of modern society. I will comment briefly on each facet of this mission. Then I will turn to the context within which Runner attempted to realize his mission. In conclusion, I will state what I think his work means for our common future. It should be kept in mind that what I am writing here is based on my close association with Runner since the early 1950s.

Biblical religion and the culture of the West

The overriding concern which Runner addressed is the relation between Biblical religion and the civilization of the West. Human life, he argued, in its individual, societal, cultural, and civilizational scope, is obedient or disobedient response to God's revelation in creation, in Christ, and in the Holy Scriptures. Obedience to that revelation leads to blessing in human life; disobedience leads to disintegration. The magnitude of this concern led Runner again and again to focus on critical junctures in the history of the West: the introduction of the Christian religion in the mediterranean basin at the

beginning of our era; the synthesis of Graeco-Roman culture and Christianity; the arrested sixteenth-century Reformation; and the efforts at a new reformation in the post-Enlightenment period, notably the efforts of Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, historian and political reformer, Abraham Kuyper, church reformer and shaper of modern Dutch society, and Herman Dooyeweerd, legal thinker and Christian philosopher.

Runner viewed Christianity and Greek culture as the two main spiritual forces in the birth and early development of western civilization. His interpretation here runs parallel to the views of neoclassical philosophers like Eric Voegelin and George Grant, for whom the synthesis of Greek thought and the revelation of the Bible is the single sustaining foundation for human life in the West. For Runner, this initial synthesis, intellectually shaped in the theology of the early Church Fathers and societally embodied in the symbiosis of the Roman Empire and the Roman Church, constitutes the fundamental error in the history of early Christendom, the negative consequences of which have never been overcome. In Runner's view this synthesis was an attempt to fuse two incompatible elements-the worldview and philosophy of the Greeks with the revelation of the Scriptures-which

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would inevitably lead to the destruction of the integral, all encompassing nature of Biblical religion. The disintegrating impact of this synthesis evidenced itself quickly in the way human nature was viewed in the early church and in the Middle Ages as a composite of a material body and a spiritual soul; in the way human society was structured in terms of a natural element organized by the temporal state and a spiritual element embodied in the Roman Church; and in the way human theoretical activity was allocated to two distinct domains, that of philosophy, where natural reason is the guide, and that of theology, where divine revelation is the guide. Any effort at the reformation of Christianity, in Runner's view, will have to come to grips with this initial synthesis.

The dialectical synthesis of the major forms of Greek thought with Biblical revelation ultimately led to the split in human existence between "the natural life" and "the spiritual life" in the late Middle Ages. This split gave birth to three new spiritual forces in the West: the Renaissance, which declared the independence of natural life from divine revelation; the Reformation, which was an attempt to return to the radical and all-encompassing authority of divine revelation but which quickly lost its cultural and societal impact because of the revival of rationalism in Protestant scholasticism; and the Counterreformation, which was the answer of the Roman Church to both Renaissance and Reformation and which contributed to the preeminence of the Roman Church in the new nation-states of southern Europe and the colonial regimes in South and Central America. Runner interprets the history of the modern age as the history of the gradual victory of the spirit of the Renaissance, which unveils itself as the permanent revolution, that is, the revolt of autonomous man against the divine order for human existence. For two centuries the spiritual forces of the Reformation and the Counterreformation contained the impact of the new Renaissance religion of the autonomy of human personality upon the culture and the society of the West. But after the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the new religion gradually began to shape both the cultural and material aspirations of western man and the societal structures needed to realize those aspirations. The historical turning point here was the French Revolution. In the nineteenth century the

new religion of autonomous human personality persistently eroded the Christian ethic which had guided ordinary men and women in their concrete daily life. The Christian churches increasingly lost their hold on the mass populations, especially in the industrialized metropolitan centers of western Europe and North America.

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Runner's interpretation of the history of the West led him to struggle with a second major concern: is it possible to recover the integrality of the religion of the Bible in the modern age? Can western Christianity experience a new reformation? Can we move from a new consciousness of the spiritual predicament of the West to new forms of authentically Biblical witness and cultural action in a society whose structures reflect the autonomy of man and channel the acquisition of material abundance? Or, is the West, once set upon a path determined by Renaissance humanism, beyond responsible human intervention? Are not Jacques Ellul and George Grant correct in their diagnosis that the West is subject to a technological fate which we cannot change? And even if one rejects the notion of fate, isn't Marx correct in his indictment that the Christian church cannot assume the role of historical change in advanced capitalist societies because only the proletariat, which operates the technological means of production, can effectuate radical change?

Runner's answer to questions like these has always been simple. The Word of the gospel is a power that can change the direction in the lives of individual persons but also the direction in the existence of nations, cultures, societies, and civilizations. It is this belief in the power of the Word of God to give shape to our individual and collective lives that made Runner the kind of person he is. The Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, transcends every human situation, subjects every situation to the authority of the risen Lord, and thus can change every situation. Subjection to the Word of God is thus the first requisite for personal and communal reformation.

The fundamental weakness of Christianity in the modern age is, according to Runner, its acceptance of the confinement of religion to the so-called spiritual domains of the church, family, and private morality. This acceptance implies an acquiescence in the religious neutrality of the remaining spheres of life, notably the public realm. Concretely, however, it means that Christians accept the dominance of humanism in these realms and their accommodation to one of the above-mentioned ideologies, the particular choice often being dependent upon their place in the socioeconomic constellation. But Christians have largely surrendered the agenda-the set of priorities of things to be done-in politics, culture, the media, production, and the schools to the secular modernizers, hurrying along at one speed or another.

Runner's model for a new strategy was based on an analysis of the turnabout in Holland since the 1870s, when the concerted political

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action of the Calvinists and the Roman Catholics led to the demise of the conservative political party, the diminution of the impact of the liberal party, the stemming of the tide of radical socialism, and the constructive reordering of the public realm so that both humanists and Christians were accorded an equal opportunity in the shaping of Dutch society subject to the rules of the democratic process. This turnabout led to the

establishment of Christian political parties, national Christian school systems, and social welfare institutions paid out of public funds, Christian trade union movements, vigorous involvements of Christians in journalism, etc.

The third facet of Runner's mission flows immediately out of the foregoing. Integral Christian cultural witness and action requires the formation of new leadership cadres on the basis of a Biblically based worldview and philosophy. Runner knew that at this point the conflict with the dominant mind in the West would probably be the most acute since the dogma of the religious neutrality of philosophy and science lies at the foundation of the whole of western civilization. On this point traditional Christianity, in both its Roman Catholic and Protestant forms, and humanism had achieved agreement. The early synthesis between Greek thought and Christian theology had accorded philosophy a relative autonomy with respect to revelation. The dissolution of this synthesis gave birth to modern philosophy and science, in which any connection with the authority of revelation was viewed as a remnant of the dark ages. In the Enlightenment such connections were entirely severed, and the very progress of the human race was considered dependent upon the radical secularization of the scientific enterprise and its application in technological innovation and industrial modernization.

The relation of faith and reason, Biblical worldview and modern science, theology and philosophy, occupied Runner's attention from the first year of his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College in the early thirties. His pursuit of a more adequate account of the relation between revelation and the academic enterprise led him to study with Cornelius Van Til at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Klaas Schilder at the Reformed Theological School in Kampen, and finally, after a stint with Werner Jaeger at Harvard, to Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd at the Free University in Amsterdam. The five years of study under Vollenhoven's tutelage leading to the completion in 1951 of a dissertation on the development of Aristotle's thought were decisive in Runner's life. This period of study forced him not only to surrender the dogma of the religious neutrality

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of philosophy and science, but also to come to grips with the two prior issues which I have discussed: the much broader question of the relation between Biblical religion and the civilization of the West, and the possibility of a recovery of integrally Biblical witness and action in a culture dominated by humanism. Runner had gradually come to the realization that the efforts of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd to bring the Word of God to bear upon the philosophic enterprise itself was part of a much more encompassing endeavor at reformation. He began to see that the theoretical problems which had occupied his attention for nearly two decades could only be resolved satisfactorily in terms of a greater drama: the salvation which the gospel brings about in the lives of ordinary men and women, caught up in the concrete struggle for meaningful existence in the cultures and societies on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

The strategy of Christian organizations

It is one thing to establish goals aimed at reforming a segment of the Christian church. It is quite another to accomplish them. Numerous factors play a role here, such as the willingness of God's people to listen to His Word, the clarity of the message preached, the abilities and personality of the reformer, his base of operation, and the possibilities for change in the culture and the society within which the church lives.

Runner's base of operation for thirty years has been the department of philosophy at Calvin College and Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which, in 1951, was the only post-secondary educational institution in the Christian Reformed Church. I believe that this was probably the only base which Runner could have used to accomplish what he did achieve. But I am also of the conviction that this base was far too narrow for his mission to contribute to the spiritual reformation of evangelical Protestantism in the United States and Canada.

In order to understand the potentials as well as the limits of Runner's base of operation, it is necessary to have a look at the Christian Reformed Church. This denomination has its origin in the second major migration of Dutch Calvinists to North America. The first migration took place in the seventeenth century; this wave resulted in what today is called the Reformed Church of America. The second one began in the 1840s, as a result of both religious and economic factors. The Dutch government had taken repressive measures against the Secession from the State Church in 1834, and many Seceders, under

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the leadership of pastors Van Raalte and Scholte, settled in western Michigan and Iowa to seek religious freedom. Upon arrival, they first joined the older Reformed Church but, finding this denomination spiritually lax, a number of them went on their own in 1857 to form the Christian Reformed Church. The third major migration of Dutch Calvinists took place between 1947 and 1960, primarily to Canada, but also to the United States, Australia and New Zealand. It is important to take note of the fact that the Christian Reformed Church became the home of three distinct groups: the Seceders of 1834, whose spirituality was largely pietist; the emigrants who entered the United States (and, in small numbers, Canada) between 1880 and 1930, and whose worldview was highly influenced by the reformed vision of Abraham Kuyper; and the thousands who settled in Canada after the Second World War, and who were also still mainly Kuyperian in outlook.

The migration of Calvinists from Holland to the United States finds its cultural and societal parallels in the migration of Scandinavian Lutherans, German Anabaptists, Polish and Russian Jews, Italian and Irish Catholics, etc. Most of these groups were able to maintain a kind of identity, but nonetheless an identity shaped and delimited by the overarching liberal humanism that dominated American culture.

America has always had its own version of the left-center-right dialectic of humanism, but the extremes of Edmund Burke's conservatism and Rousseau's radicalism never found many adherents. The centrist option of a "middling" liberalism, first in its laissez-faire Lockean sense and later in its welfare-state Keynesian sense, gave the United States

an ideological cohesion that helps explain its remarkable political stability for two centuries.

But it should be clearly kept in mind that the various immigrant groups that entered the United States in ever increasing numbers between 1820 and 1920-nearly thirty-five million-had to make a fun

damental adjustment. After initial recalcitrance, they were forced to accept liberalism-or "conservatism" in today's terminology-as the source of their public values. This was true of both Christians and socialists. The two major political parties, the public schools, the labor unions, the newspapers, and later radio and television, were the instruments for the "Americanization" of the new arrivals.

This meant that the distinct forms of spirituality which had shaped the cultural and societal experience of the various religious groups in Europe underwent a fundamental transformation. These

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forms of spirituality could no longer serve as a source for the norms and values in the public realm; their impact was limited to the private lifestyles of their adherents in home and church. This process of Americanization - "modernization" - is poignantly described in the novels of Bashevis Singer with reference to Polish Jews who had to find their way in New York. Authentic Jewish spirituality cannot exist in America except in the limits of ethnicity.

The same can be said of the Dutch Calvinists who settled in the United States. The best example of their Americanization can be found in the adjustment of the Kuyperians who came around the turn of the century. They introduced the issues which Kuyper had raised in Holland: the relation between Christianity and modern culture, the relation between church and state, and the channels of Christian witness outside the realm of the church. Kuyper's Stone Lectures, presented at Princeton University in 1898, gave them a clear statement of the issues. Their influence was not negligible. Partly because of their presence, the members of the Christian Reformed Church became the most active supporters of Christian schools in the United States outside of the Roman Catholic Church. And again, partly because of them, Calvin College developed into one of the most significant intellectual centers of evangelical Protestantism.

But in the long run the Kuyperians were forced to accept the public ideology of liberalism. By and large, the Christian schools, still avidly supported by members of the Christian Reformed Church, are not viewed as a repudiation of the monopoly of liberal humanism in the public realm but as a spiritually and morally protective rampart against the evils of the outside world. Instead of being an expression of Calvinian pluralist democracy in the public realm, they reinforce the ethnic cohesion of Dutch reformed people in the American melting pot.

This adjustment to the dominant cultural milieu has had another impact on the Christian Reformed Church. The more outstanding theological leaders were quickly alienated from

the denomination itself. This is evident not only in the continued tension between the grassroots membership and the intellectuals in the denomination, but also in the fact that several of its outstanding thinkers made their mark outside of the denomination: Geerhardus Vos left for Princeton in the 1890s; Herman Hoeksema was expelled in 1924; and Cornelius Van Til taught at Westminster since its founding in 1929.

The interpreter of Runner's work is clearly confronted with a number of interesting questions. Runner is of Irish Presbyterian

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stock, whose forebears from Ulster settled in rural Pennsylvania just outside of Philadelphia. Runner grew up in the mainline northern Presbyterian church until the secession of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the 1930s. How could he ever maintain himself as an "outsider" in the intellectual center of the Christian Reformed Church? It is one of the paradoxes of the Christian Reformed Church that it provided Runner with a platform for his work while it had no room for the scholars mentioned above, who grew up within its own bosom.

At the same time, the question must be asked whether the paradox is present on Runner's side as well? Was he able to transcend the limits of the Christian Reformed Church in realizing his goals? What kind of strategies were available to him within this basis of operation: a professorship in philosophy in a small evangelical college owned and operated by a largely ethnically introvert denomination with then just over a hundred thousand members?

The question of a viable strategy was complicated by additional problems. Runner's professorship at Calvin was the first regular position he had held in his life. Though he was already thirty-five years old when he assumed this position, he had spent about half of those years in college and university as a student in classics, theology, and philosophy. He had little organizational experience. Though he later proved to be a good strategist and a keen tactician, he was not particularly tactful, able to handle delicate situations with studied care. And tact was necessary, as is illustrated by the simple fact that his colleagues in the philosophy department had not recommended his appointment. That he was nonetheless given the post was due to a quite courageous and unusual decision on the part of the Calvin Board of Trustees, which felt that someone from the Vollenhoven-Dooyeweerd school of thought should join the faculty. And then there was something distinctly un-American about Runner. He was not adept at things at which Americans are adept, like driving a car. (Ellen, his Dutch wife, served as a helpmeet in this and many other matters!)

In spite of these obstacles, Runner pursued a clear strategy from the outset. I have argued above that Runner, in his attempt to contribute to the spiritual reformation of evangelical Protestantism, considered these matters essential: a new understanding of the relation between Christianity and western civilization; a new way in which Christians should attempt to shape American culture; and the development of a new Christian mind. His strategy was an attempt to meet these essentials within the severe restrictions of his base of operation.

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In order to contribute to a new understanding of Christianity and culture, Runner did two things. At carefully chosen moments during his entire career he presented a series of lectures to audiences outside of his classroom where he dealt with the meaning of current issues in the light of the underlying movement of spirits in our culture. The first of these was “Het roer om!” - “Rudder Hard Over!”- in 1953; the last one “On Being Anti-Revolutionary and Christian-Historical at the Cutting Edge of History,” presented in 1979 at the centennial of the Antirevolutionary Party in Holland, a year before its fusion with the other major Christian political parties into the Christian Democratic Party. Taken together, these speeches constitute Runner’s manifesto to orthodox Christianity.

However, these speeches were isolated clarion calls to reformation which Runner was not able to follow through since he lacked a power base in the church, in politics, or in the media. The only power base he had was his professorship at Calvin. This he used to do something else. He organized the Groen van Prinsterer Society -popularly known as the Groen Club-at Calvin in 1953. Formally, it was simply a student. club. Substantively, it was Runner’s instrument in molding students into a new consciousness of their task in American and Canadian society. He needed a place where he could systematically introduce students to issues outside of philosophy, such as:

the question of who the Puritans were, the meaning of the Enlightenment, its influence in America, the basic ideas of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the nature of Scholasticism, particularly as manifested in Reformed theology, the concept of natural law, the religious ground-motives that have successively given order to the experience of Western man, the origins of capitalism, the rise of the labor movement, and so on and so forth. (*Hearing and Doing: Philosophical Essays Dedicated to H. Evan Runner* [Toronto: Wedge, 1979], p. 351.)

The fluctuating membership of the Groen Club consisted largely of the sons-very few daughters!-of immigrant families that had settled in Canada after the last world war. Some represented the earlier Dutch settlements in Canada, like Jim Olthuis who was a link with later social action movements in Edmonton. Most of the Americans were also sons of immigrants, like myself. But there was always a handful of others, indigenous Americans who did not join the club for mainly social reasons but principal ones as well.

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The high percentage of Canadian students in his philosophy classes and in the Groen Club was Runner’s first significant link with Canada. The controversial reaction to his public pronouncements made him realize quite quickly that a spiritual turnabout in the Christian Reformed Church in the United States, though certainly not out of the question, would take a longtime. This led to a change in tactics with a specific focus on Canada. He began to view the settlement of approximately forty thousand Dutch Calvinists in Canada, from Halifax to Vancouver Island, as the base for a reformational effort.

This change in tactics also brought to the fore the second facet of his mission: the advocacy of organized Christian action in society. Runner sensed that if this small but nonetheless substantial group of Christians with a common heritage could maintain its

spiritual identity long enough, it might in the future constitute a base for wider cultural witness and action. But this would require that from the outset these Christians not get absorbed into the mainline Protestant denominations, into the public schools, and into the labor unions and political parties.

A number of factors coalesced here. The Christian Reformed Church in the United States had established a very efficient system of absorbing the Canadian immigrants into its denominational structure. Christian schools were established. The Christian Labour Association of Canada was organized in the early fifties and the Christian Action Foundation was set up in Edmonton in the early sixties (later it joined with the Ontario-based Committee for Justice and Liberty). In 1956 the Association for Reformed Scientific Studies was founded in the Toronto area with nothing less as its aim than the founding of a Christian university. Runner saw an opportunity and seized it. In the midst of intense personal and cultural dislocations which immigrations bring with them, Runner took it upon himself to give spiritual direction to the postwar Dutch reformed settlers in Canada.

Radically Christian leadership and a new Christian mind

The third facet of Runner's mission concerned the development of a Christian mind and the formation of a group of students educated to give leadership in a wide range of cultural sectors. The avenues were his classroom at Calvin College; the ARSS student conferences in Canada; the publication of the lectures presented there under the titles *The Relation of the Bible to Learning* (1960, 1961) and *Biblical Religion and Political Task* (1962); and the founding of the Institute

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for Christian Studies in Toronto in 1967. Runner's contribution to the development of a Christian mind was distinctly shaped by the philosophical school of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd. He in effect introduced this philosophy in an existentially relevant way to hundreds of students in the United States and Canada. In the fifties and the sixties he sent these students who wanted to pursue an academic career to the Free University. In recent years the students who have become part of this intellectual movement tend to complete their studies on this side of the ocean. Dozens of them occupy teaching posts, at colleges within the Christian Reformed orbit and elsewhere, in the wider evangelical world, and, occasionally, at public universities.

Runner's mission was the reformation of evangelical Protestantism. Reformation must be distinguished from conversion and revival. A conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a person so that he submits himself to the claims of Christ, the Savior and Lord. A revival is the renewal of faith on the part of a significant number of persons within a particular part of the church at a particular time in history. A reformation is a revival so radical and widespread that it affects the direction of the culture and the structuration of society.

The great sixteenth-century Reformation occurred in the first place because Luther and Calvin heard again the radical message of the Word of the gospel revealed in the Scriptures. This Word they preached, in season and out of season. And this Word proclaimed brought new life in a decadent church in such proportions that its exuberance spilled over in the culture and society of northern Europe. To be sure, there are numerous other "causes" that contributed to the Reformation. But at its heart there was the power of the Word of the gospel preached by men who, with a keen sense of the crisis of the times, made such decisions and established such alliances and institutions that the Word of the Lord could "speed on and triumph" (II Thess. 3:1). Without now commenting on their "theologies," I believe that John and Charles Wesley were reformers in eighteenth-century Great Britain and that Abraham Kuyper was a reformer in nineteenth-century Holland.

In the history of Christianity in North America there have been several revivals-conversions and renewals of faith in large segments of the various denominations. The outstanding leaders of American Christianity have indeed been revivalists, from Jonathan Edwards to Billy Graham. The impact of these revivals has indeed not been confined to the private lives of persons and the churches of which they were members. There was a spillover to the larger context of culture

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and society, but never to the extent that one can speak of a reformation. The main reason for this absence of a reformation in North America is the fact that the revivalists did not so preach the Word of the gospel that its redeeming power was brought to bear on the entire life of the people of God. This meant that the liberal-conservative ideology of humanism was never challenged at its roots and continued to guide both Christians and non-Christians alike in their cultural and societal life.

Runner was fully aware of this from the beginning of his mission. He came from the heart of typical American culture and received his spiritual nurture precisely in the interplay between evangelical revivalism and the modernism of the mainline churches. But Runner's base of operation within the Christian Reformed Church was outside of the mainstream of American Christendom, in its liberal Protestant, evangelical Protestant, or Roman Catholic forms. His base of operation was located at the periphery of American society.

Moreover, Runner's office was that of professor of philosophy. He used this office as much to preach as to philosophize. But his message was directed to students, not to the church in its grassroots existence. In the fifties and the sixties he spent a great deal of time and energy articulating the *raison d'être* for distinct Christian communal action among the Calvinist immigrants in Canada. Together these two activities on his part led to "the reformational movement," which is significant in its intellectual potential as a prime paradigm in Christian thought today. But this potential is not taken seriously by Christian theologians and philosophers, not even within the resurgent evangelical world, as is evident from the benign indifference of Christianity Today. And the Christian action organizations? The Christian Labour Association in Canada? The Committee for Justice and Liberty in Toronto? The Association for Public Justice in the United States? They are signposts to which few pay attention.

Did Runner then fail in his mission? In a very specific sense he did. His efforts did not contribute to a reformation, not even within the limits of the Christian Reformed Church, whose average member does not know who H. Evan Runner is. I think that during the last decade of his career Runner became more and more aware of the limits of his potential accomplishments. This awareness did not affect the direction of his mission, but it did change its embodiment. In

1970, he disbanded the Groen Club, which, at the height of the counterculture, apparently no longer served the reformational purposes for which it was founded. A few years later he declined an ap-

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pointment to the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto because he felt that the kind of contribution he wanted to make there would not be wholeheartedly supported by its staff. This meant that the shift in the base of operation from Grand Rapids to Toronto did not occur. From the vantage point of the reformational movement in Canada the loss of Runner's immediate leadership cannot as yet be measured. That it was substantial is without question. But there is another angle to this. The United States is the heartland of Anglo-Saxon civilization. And Calvin College is today the most significant undergraduate institution within the evangelical orbit. Runner's decision to stay at Calvin not only meant that he continued to reach its students but also that a much more positive attitude toward his work developed within the institution as a whole.

But Runner also decided to do something else. With his wife, he prepared a translation, not of any of Vollenhoven's or Dooyeweerd's writings, as one might have expected, but of S.G. De Graaf's *Promise and Deliverance*. This is a four-volume book written to help Sunday school teachers and evangelists explain the Word of the Scriptures to anyone who wants to listen. It is significant to note that Runner, in the light of his intense concern for the future of non-Western cultures, has been highly interested in getting precisely this book translated not only into Spanish but also into Chinese and Japanese. Philosophy does not lead to reformation; hearing and doing the Word does.

We cannot today speak of a reformation in North America. Runner is not a reformer. Nonetheless, he did not fail in his mission. He is a pre-reformational figure in the Christian church, somewhat like John Huss was in Bohemia and John Wycliffe in England towards the end of the Middle Ages. They were precursors of Luther and Calvin and Zwingli. As a pre-reformational figure, Runner's spiritual legacy is phenomenal. The final significance of such precursors depends upon what following generations do with their legacy.

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