

ORTHODOXY AND PIETY IN THE
NADERE REFORMATIE:
 THE THEOLOGY OF SIMON OOMIUS

by Gregory D. Schuringa

Introduction

AS SCHOLARSHIP has demonstrated, delving into the theology and program and representatives of the church-historical period known as the *Nadere Reformatie* has the promise of great reward. This article seeks to fill one of the many gaps in scholarship on the period by illuminating the theology and theological program of Simon Oomius (1630-1706). Dr. Oomius was a Reformed pastor with over thirty-five, many substantial, works to his name. Scholars in the Netherlands recently have been exploring Pastor Oomius' body of theological literature.¹ This article seeks to illuminate in general terms the theology of Simon Oomius for the church and scholarship today. Before that joyous task can happen, however, one must wade through some obstacles related to the history and current state of scholarship on the *Nadere Reformatie*, a Dutch Reformed movement in the post-Reformation period, spanning, roughly, the years 1600 – 1750.

1. An Overview of Obstacles in the Way of *Nadere Reformatie*
 Studies Today

A first small obstacle is that of terminology. The term *Nadere Reformatie* has been translated most often in one of two ways: “Dutch Second Reformation” or “Further Reformation.” Each presents its problems, as

¹ Most notably, K. Exalto, K. van der Pol, and J. van den Berg have written short pieces on him: K. Exalto, “Onderzoekvoorstel betreffende Simon Oomius,” *Nieuwsbrief SSNR* 7 (1997): 15-16; *idem*, “Simon Oomius (1630-ca 1706),” in *De Nadere Reformatie en het Gereformeerde Piëtisme*, T. Brienens, K. Exalto, et al., eds. ('s-Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum B. V., 1989); F. van der Pol, “Simon Oomius in Reactie op zijn Tijd,” *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 23 (1999): 44-62; *idem*, “Religious Diversity and Everyday Ethics in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch City Kampen,” *Church History* 71:1 (2002): 16-62; J. van den Berg, “Het Geopende en Wederleyde Muhammedisdom of Turckdom. Beschrijving van een werk van Simon Oomius (1630-1706)” (Doctoraalscriptie THUK Kampen, 1998). See also my “Embracing *Leer* and *Leven*: The Theology of Simon Oomius in the Context of *Nadere Reformatie* Orthodoxy” (Ph.D. diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2003). Also, the sixth volume of the *Biografisch Lexicon* will include an article on Simon Oomius.

many translations of technical terms do, though “Further Reformation” appears to be the English and Puritan origin of *Nadere Reformatie*.² The choice has been made here simply to use the Dutch term for the period. Church historical scholarship knows and acknowledges various terms, periods, and movements left untranslated. As the breadth and depth of the *Nadere Reformatie* becomes more known, perhaps it will more and more become known by its proper name, which goes back to the period itself.³

Another obstacle related to the study of this period is that so little is known of it outside the Netherlands. While especially the last twenty-five years have produced numerous Dutch language articles and monographs on the period—especially instrumental has been the *Documentatie Nadere Reformatie*, a journal begun in 1977—still little scholarship has been attempted in English. Awareness of even the major representatives, such as Jean Taffin, Willem Teellinck, Gisbertus Voetius, Jodocus van Lodenstein, Jacobus Koelman, Herman Witsius, Wilhelmus à Brakel, Bernardus Smytegelt, Wilhelmus Schortinghuis, and Theodorus van der Groe, well known among church historians in the Netherlands, is lacking. Lesser known figures, as yet to be studied in-depth by Dutch church historians, are almost unheard of. Joel Beeke, one of the few who have written on the subject in English, mentions in this context Theodorus G. à Brakel, Adrianus Hasius, Abraham Hellenbroek, Nicolaas Holtius, David Knibbe, Johannes à Marck, Petrus van Maastricht, Gregorius Mees, Franciscus Ridderus, and Rippertus Sixtus.⁴

A further significant obstacle related to scholarship on the period, less easy to solve than the previous two, is a problem of perception. Precisely what originally caused some to avoid study of the *Nadere Reformatie* beginning especially with the analyses of Heinrich Heppe and Albrecht Ritschl in the late 1800s is what has caused renewed interest in recent years: namely, the piety of the period.⁵ The *Nadere Reformatie* has been widely admired—and rightly so—as a rich movement of piety with a desire for practical outworking of the faith in the believer’s personal life, home, church, and even in all of society. As such it resembles and is closely connected to Puritanism in England.⁶ But the movement is misrepresented and done an injustice when it is viewed as a movement of

² For a good discussion of the terminological problem see Joel Beeke, “Appendix: The Dutch Second Reformation (*De Nadere Reformatie*),” in *The Quest for Full Assurance* (Grand Rapids: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1999), 287-293. Dutch scholars today seem to prefer the term “Further Reformation,” as seen, for example, in the English summaries of articles in the *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 28:1 (2004): 33, 62, and 79, and in Fred van Lieburg’s “From Pure Church to Pious Culture: The Further Reformation in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic,” in *Later Calvinism. International Perspectives*, W. Fred Graham, ed. (Kirksville, 1994).

³ See on the origin of the term, “De oorsprong van de uitdrukking ‘Nadere Reformatie,’” *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 9:4 (1985): 128-134.

⁴ Beeke, “Appendix: The Dutch Second Reformation (*De Nadere Reformatie*),” 305.

⁵ H. Heppe, *Geschichte des Pietismus und der Mystik in der reformirten Kirche, namentlich der Niederlande* (Leiden, 1879); A. Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus in der reformirten Kirche*, vol. 1 (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1880), 101-363.

⁶ See on this, for example, W. van ‘t Spijker, R. Bisschop, and W.J. op ‘t Hof, *Het Puritanisme* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2001), 271-339.

piety in isolation from its context. Specifically, a problem in the scholarship is that the seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed orthodox and scholastic context of these pastors and theologians is either inadequately acknowledged, or worse, seen as opposed to the pietists of the Further Reformation.

Sometimes this has happened because of a distaste for Reformed scholasticism and orthodoxy. For how could a movement of piety be connected at all to a movement that has been characterized negatively by some scholars as consisting of rigid, rationalistic systems, dogmatic precision, and dry theology? While recent studies of post-Reformation Reformed theology have done much to disprove past negative theses concerning Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism, these studies have not yet thoroughly been applied to the *Nadere Reformatie*.⁷ An overview of the theology and theological program of Simon Oomius, an as-yet lesser-known, but representative figure of the *Nadere Reformatie*, suggests it is time for a reassessment of the relationship between the Dutch pietists and their Reformed orthodox contemporaries. These theologians were not only *not* in opposing camps as sometimes suggested by the literature, but these theologians—*Nadere Reformatie* representatives and Reformed scholastics—were often the same people!

2. The *Nadere Reformatie* Versus Reformed Orthodoxy

Several examples will suffice to show that past scholarship has created a bifurcation between the *Nadere Reformatie* and Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism. Krull, in his introduction to what is still one of the only significant works on Koelman, a major representative of the *Nadere Reformatie*, writes that Koelman was reacting against the stagnation of “dogmatism” and “dead, fine-print theology” which had developed at the cost of the practice of Christianity and heartfelt piety and spirituality.⁸ This view is typical of early *Nadere Reformatie* studies from around the turn of the last century.⁹

More recently Graafland speaks of the “biblical consciousness” of the *Nadere Reformatie* as helping to correct the “damaging influence” of scholasticism.¹⁰ Brienens speaks of the *Nadere Reformatie* as a “reaction

⁷ See as examples of the reassessment: Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); *Scholasticism and Orthodoxy in the Reformed Tradition: An Attempt at Definition* (Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary, 1995); *Ad fontes argumentorum: The Sources of Reformed Theology in the Seventeenth Century* (Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht, 1999); Willem J. van Asselt, P. L. Rouwendal, et. al. *Inleiding in de Gereformeerde Scholastiek* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1998); W.J. Van Asselt and E. Dekker, eds., *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

⁸ *Jacobus Koelman: Eene Kerkehistorische Studie* (Sneek: J.Campen, 1901), 2.

⁹ See also, for example, P. Proost, *Jodocus van Lodenstein* (Amsterdam: J. Brandt en Zoon, 1880), 3-8; W.J.M. Engelberts, *Willem Teellinck* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Ton Bolland, 1898), i and ii; L. Knappert, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk gedurende de 16e en 17e Eeuw*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff & Co., 1911), 234, 273; J. Reitsma, *Geschiedenis van de Hervorming en de Hervormde Kerk der Nederlanden*, 5th ed. (’s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1949), 338.

¹⁰ C. Graafland, “Gereformeerde Scholastiek VI: De Invloed van de Scholastiek op de *Nadere Reformatie* (2).” *Theologia Reformata* 30 (1987): 340.

against dead orthodoxy.”¹¹ Stoeffler, in his major work, referring to the Dutch Reformed proponents of the *Nadere Reformatie*, writes of an attempt by them “to correct the then current dry-as-dust orthodoxy in favor of the Christianity of the reformers, which was a living, vital, and hence effectively satisfying faith.”¹² He claims that in contrast to the orthodox of their day, the Reformed pietists wanted a living faith. Further, Stoeffler writes, they disliked the “rigid objectivity” of orthodox theology and they “blew the roof off of the tight little structure of orthodoxy.”¹³ In Stoeffler, polemical and devotional theology, the seventeenth-century orthodox and the seventeenth-century pietists, simply do not fit together. This view is typical of numerous past studies of the *Nadere Reformatie*.

3. The Theology and Theological Program of Simon Oomius

An overview of the theology of Simon Oomius suggests that the above grid must not be placed over all post-Reformation Reformed theology in the Netherlands. In Oomius one finds piety and a practical drive in no way in tension with sharp polemics, technical precision, and orthodoxy.

Oomius displays elements typical of both of these supposed opposing camps: the orthodox Reformed and representatives of the *Nadere Reformatie*. As practical as his theological writings are, and as concerned for the spiritual life of the believer as he is, he works out of a Reformed scholastic training which he greatly valued and continued to draw from and use throughout his life. Particularly his *magnum opus*, the Dutch language *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*, and his other practical works as well show that he does not work out of a reaction to Reformed orthodoxy; on the contrary, a Reformed orthodox himself, he saw his “practical” theology as naturally flowing out of his orthodoxy and, indeed, as a legitimate and necessary element of it.

3.1. Piety and the Practical Drive of Oomius’ Theology

That Oomius was a self-conscious pastor and theologian of the Dutch Second Reformation is readily evident. Like other *Nadere Reformatie* representatives, Oomius wrote many works on the Christian life including, typical of the program of the *Nadere Reformatie*, the *Ecclesiola*. There he, like other *Nadere Reformatie* theologians, argues that it is vital to view the home as a little church, with parents and children growing in the Christian life. The home for him and his contemporaries was considered the foundation for a continuing Reformation in the seventeenth-century Dutch church and broader society.¹⁴

Also in his massive, but unfinished *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*, we see a classic *Nadere Reformatie* concern. Oomius displays there a

¹¹ Quoting J. van Genderen in *De Prediking van de Nadere Reformatie* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Ton Bolland, 1974), 10.

¹² F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17, 19.

¹⁴ See on this subject L.F. Groenendijk, *De Nadere Reformatie van het Gezin. De Visie van Petrus Wittewrongel op de Christelijke Huishouding* (Dordrecht: Uitgeverij J. P. van den Tol, 1984).

characteristic seventeenth-century understanding of “practical theology,” that is, that it refers to the application of all doctrinal *loci* to the life of believers and the church as a whole.¹⁵ Additionally, Oomius wrote a number of works which show that he had, like typical representatives of the *Nadere Reformatie*, concerns beyond the home and church. These writings indicate that he had interest in broader social and political developments and he wanted the whole of the Netherlands to experience continuing Reformation in his day and context. This is apparent in his *Institutiones* as well when he applies each doctrine in various ways to the everyday life of the believer.

Oomius’ publishers and his close associates (as indicated by his forwards, dedications, and the poetry written to him on the occasion of his various publications) suggest he was in the midst of *Nadere Reformatie* circles, as do his regular references in his writings to a “further” or “continuing” Reformation. The context of these references indicate a desire to apply and continue the original Reformation in his seventeenth-century context—especially in the city of Kampen where he pastored for almost thirty years.¹⁶

3.2. The Orthodox and Scholastic Foundation of Oomius’ Theology

Oomius’ orthodox and scholastic context is also readily apparent. His own account of his academic training shows that he was trained under and had tremendous appreciation for a variety of Reformed orthodox, even scholastic, figures, but especially Gisbertus Voetius and Johannes Hoornbeeck.¹⁷ Oomius, like other theological students of his time, defended disputations, the great medium of the scholastics of the time to vigorously defend and expound doctrine, under both of them.¹⁸ Voetius was perhaps the leading Dutch Reformed scholastic of the seventeenth century and Hoornbeeck was one of the leading polemicists of the time. Oomius showed much appreciation and respect for both of them and they for him: Hoornbeeck wrote a glowing letter of recommendation for Oomius as he sought out pastorates after finishing his academic training, and both Hoornbeeck and Voetius signed the letter.¹⁹ Oomius tells us in his *Dissertatie vande Onderwijsingen in de Practycke der Godgeleerdheid*, where he describes and gives the background of his *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae* and shows his perceived need for them,

¹⁵ See on the definition of “practical theology” during the time, Gisbertus Voetius, “De Theologia Practica,” in *Selectarum disputationum theologiarum* (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1659), vol. 3, pp. 1-59; *idem*, *De praktijk der godzaligheid (TA ASKÉTIKA sive Exercitia pietatis – 1664)*, 2 vols., ed. C.A. de Niet (Utrecht: Uitgeverij de Banier, 1996), Ch. 1, Par. 1.

¹⁶ See especially Van der Pol, “Religious Diversity and Everyday Ethics in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch City Kampen,” 18 and 61. Van der Pol shows here how Oomius sought to promote the *Nadere Reformatie* ideals in Kampen.

¹⁷ See on Oomius’ academics and life in general especially his last published work: *Cierlijke Kroon* (Leiden: Daniel vanden Dalen, 1707), 296-366.

¹⁸ For an introduction to disputations during that time see W.J. van Asselt, E. Dekker, eds., *De scholastieke Voetius* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1995), 14-16.

¹⁹ See *Cierlijke Kroon*, 296-366.

that his professor Hoornbeeck, the great polemicist, is the one who gave him the idea to write a complete system of practical theology.²⁰

In this little bit of Oomius' biography, we find something that past literature pitting Reformed pietists against the scholastics would seem not to allow: polemical and practical concerns valued by the same person. Along these lines, we find that later in his life Oomius wrote a significant polemical work on Islam, polemical works against "papists," and, in his *Dissertatie*, he includes a lengthy defense of the practical nature of the Reformed faith against all the major opponents of the Reformed orthodox: Roman Catholics, Remonstrants, Socinians, Lutherans, and Enthusiasts and Libertines. Oomius shows in all of his more dogmatic works that he was concerned both to explain and expound doctrine as well as to defend it against adversaries of the Reformed faith.

3.3. Orthodoxy and Piety Together in Oomius' *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*

An examination of the three completed parts of this pastor's *Institutiones* further shows us that in Oomius, at least, we find Reformed scholasticism and orthodoxy and *Nadere Reformatie* piety wed. In the first part of his *Dissertatie*, the introduction to this practical theology, Oomius shows a concern for theological prolegomena which is in line with the Protestant scholastics. In that discussion of theological prolegomena he sometimes reflects early orthodox concerns and other times concerns typical of the orthodox of his own time. For example, the detail he goes into discussing the term, *theologia practica*, reflects the latter. Everything he writes on theological prolegomena, however, reflects Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the categorizing he engages in as well as the detail he often goes into, for example in the discussion of archetypal and ectypal theology, is typical of scholastic precision.

As Oomius thoroughly handles theological prolegomena he arrives at some noteworthy points which help determine the rest of his theology. At one such point, he defines theology as a kind of *sapientia*—in other words, he writes, it embraces both the theoretical and the practical. For this reason, for him, theological formulation must be followed with application of the theology formulated. His definition and discussion of *theologia practica* also lead him along this route.

One finds that it is exactly out of Oomius' carefully formulated theology that his desire to apply theology to the life of believers flows. His concern for piety and application arises out his very desire, instilled by a scholastic training at the Universities of Leiden and Utrecht, to precisely define theology and its various parts. His detailed discussion on the nature of Reformed theology led him to find that theology is, in its very nature, not dry or dead or speculative, but practical. Precise theological

²⁰ Simon Oomius, *Dissertatie van de Onderwijsingen in de Practycke der Godgeleerdheid* (Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672), 390.

formulation led to this and thus led to the plethora of pages written throughout his life on the topic of *theologia ascetica* and to the painstaking details on what particular doctrines mean for the life of the believer.

When Oomius handles the doctrines of Scripture and God as he continues his *Institutiones* we find what we might expect given his foundation in his prolegomena. In the doctrine of Scripture he displays similarities with many other orthodox Reformed.²¹ He offers a full *locus* like many Reformed of his time did, a natural outgrowth of the *sola Scriptura* principle of the Reformation. Also, his description, general discussion, and organization of the attributes of Scripture are typical of the Reformed orthodox of his time, and generally quite technical.

While other Reformed had written on the application of the doctrine of Scripture, Oomius provides something new in the sheer massiveness of what he accomplished. While others sought to apply the doctrine to the life of believers in similar ways, Oomius appears somewhat unique in the tremendous amount of material he wrote. In addition to the length of the writing, the practical section of the work is highly structured and organized, pointing to Oomius' aim—and success—at applying the doctrine.

In his doctrine of God we see something similar.²² While, as his definition of theology dictates, Oomius starts out by explaining the doctrine of God in all of its parts, he moves, in line with his aim, to what the doctrine means practically at each point. His initial explanation of the doctrine shows a concern for technical precision and right doctrine displayed by all the Reformed scholastics. His application of the doctrine, as in the doctrine of Scripture, is lengthy, detailed, and highly structured. This fact in itself betrays a scholastically trained mind.

The wedding of doctrine with praxis in the thought of Oomius is further illustrated in his doctrine of God by the fact that he regularly includes polemics in his practical sections. For example, when he speaks of what each divine attribute means to the believer, he often includes a point on how it serves to refute those who do not believe the doctrine or who do not have a right conception of it. Despite those who suggest that the polemics of the orthodox among the seventeenth-century Reformed were a distraction from, or worse, an enemy of practical application, Oomius does polemics and application in the same breath, even subsuming the polemical section of parts of the doctrine of God at times as subsections under the broader heading of practical application.

²¹ See his *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae. Ofte Onderwijsingen in de Practycke der Godgeleerdheid. Eerste Deels Eerste Boeck, Vervattende de Verhandelinghe der Theologia Didactica* (Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672).

²² See his *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid. Eerste tractaet des tweeden boecks van het eerste deel, vervattende de verhandelinghe der theologia didactica* (Bolsward: Weduwe van Samuel van Haringhouk, 1676) and *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid. Vervolgh van het eerste tractaet des tweeden boecks van het eerste deel, vervattende de verhandelinghe der theologia didactica* (Schiedam: Laurens vander Wiel, 1680).

Adding to the idea that *Nadere Reformatie* in general was not a reaction to “damaging” orthodoxy and scholasticism, it should be noted that it is plain in Oomius’ writings that he considered his conclusions and his theology to be mainstream orthodoxy, not anything odd or different or new. He believed he was engaging in the same theology and program as the early church, the several generations of Reformed pastors before him, and his contemporaries, pastors and professors alike. Furthermore, many of his writings indicate, especially his *Dissertatie*, that he was engaged in an international program. He valued Puritan theology greatly as his references and translation endeavors show. He saw himself engaged in the same Reformed practical-theological project as contemporary theologians and pastors in England, Scotland, France, Switzerland, and elsewhere.

Oomius did, however, think there was a significant way he was contributing to this program. According to his analysis, though it was in the very nature of Reformed theology to apply doctrine, given the many groups the Reformed had to continually defend their faith against around the time of and after the Reformation, he saw a need for more instruction in practical theology—more instruction as well as instruction in the common tongue of the people, rather than the academic Latin. Though even with the tremendous amount of polemics the Reformed were engaged in they still had more practical writings than other Christians, such as the Catholics and Remonstrants, finds Oomius, more practical theology was needed in the schools of theology, in the churches, and by way of books and pamphlets.

Thus, though not unique in what he was doing Simon Oomius did see a need for two things which prompted him to write: a need to write a complete system of practical theology and to do so in the Dutch language. Though some theologians had begun or were planning a system of theology in which the doctrines were applied at every point, no one had as of yet come close to completing such a project. Certainly no one had done this in the Dutch language.²³

Oomius felt there was a strong need to lay out Reformed theology and defend it, all with the view toward applying it in the Dutch language so that students training to be pastors, pastors themselves, and the layperson in the church could grow in the faith. He saw this need too because enemies of the Reformed faith often wrote in Dutch. He thus reasoned a response was necessary in the same language so that people would not be led astray.

Conclusion

This overview of the theological program of Simon Oomius suggests that with him, at least, there was no neat split between the *Nadere Reformatie* and Reformed orthodoxy as some scholarship has claimed. At the very least these findings should give us pause in making a distinction between the two too rigid. Especially given the contents of Oomius’ *Insti-*

²³ For Oomius’ own analysis of the need for a complete system of “practical theology” see his *Dissertatie*, 368-389.

tutiones Theologiae Practicae, as well as an overview of the rest of Oomius' works and his stated theological purposes and program, one can simply not say that the *Nadere Reformatie* concerns were a reaction against dead orthodoxy or sought to work against the damaging influence of scholasticism.

Leer ("doctrine") and *leven* ("life"), as Oomius puts it, the theoretical and the practical are not to be separated, but embraced as two necessary elements of theology and of the life of the believer. And while Oomius was unique in attempting the most expansive practical-theological system of his time in the Dutch language, his overall view of theology and even his project was not unique, nor an exception or aberration. Petrus van Mastricht shortly after him completed such a project in Latin, though it was not as expansive as that of Oomius. His beloved professor, Johannes Hoornbeeck, suggested the project. Gisbertus Voetius, had he had the time according to Oomius, would have been the best person to complete such a project. The more well-known *Nadere Reformatie* pastor, Wilhelmus à Brakel, whose major work is available in English, though far less expansive and less technical than Oomius, actually completed a practical-theological system in the Dutch language during Oomius' lifetime. Oomius shows awareness of others internationally who were engaged in similar projects and he particularly indicates appreciation for, and even at times dependence on English pastors and theologians who had been quite prolific in producing practical-theological works.

Given all this, these findings suggest that studies filling the gaps in *Nadere Reformatie* scholarship and illuminating the theology of other pastors and theologians of the period, would affirm the thesis that it is too simple and, in fact, outright untenable to make out the proponents of the Further Reformation to have been involved in a program that was in reaction to the Reformed orthodox and scholastics of the same time period. This does an injustice to the *Nadere Reformatie*, Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism, and worse, the intentions of these theologians themselves.

While correcting false premises and avoiding certain obstacles, there is much fruit to be harvested from further *Nadere Reformatie* studies. The church would do well today to follow in the footsteps of the representatives of this period, for God's people need a strong orthodoxy and a rich spirituality—the true, balanced, and biblical faith—to continue reforming in the home, the church, and society within the challenging context God has placed His people today.